

WINTER 2014

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 4

FULFILLED! *Magazine*

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A Futurist
Church?**





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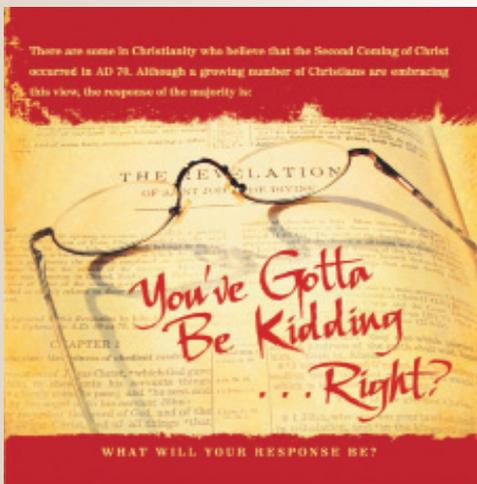
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Editor's Note...

In this issue we are introducing a new column.

SHORTLY AFTER THE “Satan” issue mailed out I received an email from Jeff McCormack informing me that he had just recently spoken on the topic of Satan at David Curtis’ church, Berean Bible Church. My wife and I listened to the podcast on a recent road trip and were both intrigued by the hypothesis that Jeff presented, which is different than the views presented in the previous issue by Ed Stevens and Kurt Simmons. Jeff posits that Satan is an actual spiritual being, but rather than being the supreme evil/fallen spiritual being, is simply one of many evil spiritual beings recorded in the Bible. While Baal, Molech, etc., were associated with other nations, and were viewed by those nations as their gods, Satan specifically attempted to thwart God’s plan of redemption through the ages, which for centuries focused on the nation of Israel. Therefore, Satan plays a more prominent role in the Bible than these other evil beings which resulted in the misconception that Satan was/is the preeminent evil being. If you are interested in watching or listening to Jeff’s presentation here is the link:

<http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/satan>

In this issue we are introducing a new column, tentatively titled “Living after the Fact.” The focus will be on our present-day life in view of past fulfillment. Several preterist pastors have agreed to contribute articles on topics that

they find relevant to our current walk. Because all of the contributors are preterists, the articles will come from that background even though the articles themselves may not touch specifically upon preterism. An excellent example of this is my pastor, who has provided this issue’s article titled “What Am I to Do as a Preterist in a Futurist Church?” Although my pastor is a preterist, rarely does he speak or teach about preterism. Rather, he challenges us to daily living and applying the Word to our lives. Yet, because he is a preterist, our studies are absent of the false concepts of an imminent coming of Christ, Armageddon, Last Days, etc. Because my role as editor of this magazine requires me to spend the majority of my “theological time” in the realm of eschatology, I am grateful for his weekly studies which help to balance my theology.

I mentioned above that this column is only tentatively titled. We’d like your input on this column’s title and have provided a list of suggestions at the end of this issue’s article. Let us know which you like best, or suggest your own. In that same vein, we welcome your request/ideas for the other columns in the magazine. Do you have an objection to preterism that you’d like Don Preston to overrule? Or a topic for Ed Stevens, or the “Perspectives” column? Would you like to see an occasional revival of older columns like “Gleanings

from the Past” or “The Greek Column”? (Past issues are available for viewing and download online [www.fulfilledcg.com] if you are unfamiliar with these older columns.) I didn’t have time to solicit articles for the “Perspectives” column this issue, but I plan on resuming it in the next issue. Keep in mind that the topics need to be relevant to preterism. Although we have published articles on a variety of topics we strive to print only material related to preterism and/or the preterist community.

There is another topic for which I would appreciate your feedback; in light of the internet and social media, how relevant is a printed magazine? I know that I much prefer reading from a printed page than from a computer (or tablet or phone) screen, yet I also know that many secular magazines have phased out their printed version and gone electronic. In addition to the

accessibility of online material is the speed at which it is delivered. It can take up to three months from the time I receive my first draft article until you have a printed issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine in your hand. (I know that I have been painfully slow in posting issues on the web site, and I will strive to be timelier.) I have no intention of stopping the printed version of *Fulfilled!* Magazine, but in the rapidly changing environment of communications I don’t want to become a poor steward of God’s resources by becoming irrelevant. Therefore, I would appreciate your feedback on this.

We are continually grateful for your encouraging words, prayers, and financial support, and are blessed to be able to serve the preterist community.

Blessings,

Brian

Mailbag...

I appreciate the Spring 2014 magazine. Also, the brief letters in this summer’s issue are interesting too. I will have to go back and reread [them] again.

Now this Satan business—I am shocked. I will have to study, study on this. I never heard discussion on this before.

Lorese, MS

In response to Kurt Simmons article “Preterism and Satan,” is he really denying the existence of demon possession? Has he not considered the following passages:

Matt 8:28-29 (NKJV): When He had come to the other side to the country of the Gergasenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with you, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

Mark 1:23-24 (NKJV): Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. and he cried out, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with you,

Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

Brother Brian, how can Kurt overlook these passages? I’m no Bible scholar, but the Scriptures are very clear. His expressed view is puzzling.

Eric, VA

[If the articles we print cause readers to, as Lorese writes, “study, study on this,” then I feel we have been successful. As I have said in the past, “We’re not telling you what to think, but giving you something to think about.” As for Kurt Simmons’ position, he has certainly given me something to think about. Yet I find myself, like Eric, a bit puzzled by Kurt’s seemingly far-reaching conclusions. I can easily see how mental illness and epilepsy may be perceived as demon possession by a superstitious culture. But why, after Christ exorcised the Gergasene demoniacs, did two thousand pigs suddenly rush down the hill and drown themselves in the lake? (You may read a more detailed article on Kurt’s web site www.preteristcentral.com).- BLM]

What Am I to Do as a Preterist in a Futurist Church?

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:1-6)

AS PRETERISTS, WE MUST set the example of Christian conduct in hopes of bringing about constructive dialog and study. It is far easier to be a “Bible Answer Man” than a loving, humble disciple who seeks to please God in thought, word, and deed.

We must give constant consideration to those texts that deal with “Church life,” that is, the assembling of believers together. No body of believers agrees on everything, but eschatology should not be the primary basis for meeting together; Christ should be. If Christ is being taught and preached, we can be faithful disciples wherever we are without being antagonistic or divisive. Sadly, some truth that God sends to enlighten and teach has been used by some professed believers to further distance and separate brethren! Upon what details of eschatology must we agree in order to maintain the bond of peace and the unity of the Spirit? What eschatological difference is so important that it forces us to separate from brethren for whom Christ died? We must not bite and devour one another!

If we have been so led and taught to perceive the doctrines of Preterism, we are not just privileged, we are obligated—obligated to faithfully follow the biblical example and “charge” to seek, lovingly and faithfully, Spirit-led opportunities to present or teach Preterism. Do not look at Preterism as a doctrine that divides, but rather as an opportunity for us to grow in grace and love. Be the godly, loving example that many Futurists and (unfortunately) Preterists are not! Earn the right to be heard because of our own godly life and testimony.

I personally do not believe that debates and “put downs” accomplish much of anything but further controversies and separations of brethren. If God does not reject Futurists, neither should we. There is no hurry

to convert others to our eschatology, just God-ordained opportunities for those who live godly, faithful, and patient lives.

What pursuit is more important: possessing all the answers to our eschatological questions, or the understanding and living out the “mystery” of the Gospel? As identified by the Apostle Paul throughout his New Testament writings, the “mystery” was always Gospel-centered. While the pursuit of a scripturally accurate eschatology is important, there is nothing better than pursuing the Gospel and discovering more and more about living out this “mystery”!

If we are compelled to separate from a “Futurist” congregation Church, we must ensure we are doing so over errors concerning the Gospel, not eschatology. We may miss the Kingdom if we hold to a faulty gospel, but I see no such warnings in all of Scripture concerning holding a faulty eschatology!

We are to be faithful where we are and where God has providentially placed us unless there is serious error with preaching Christ and His Gospel. We love the brethren not because of their eschatological belief but because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ:

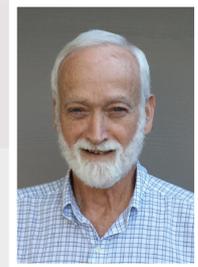
“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Is Futurism such a barrier as to cut off fellowship with brethren for whom Christ died? Futurists call us heretical; should we return the slander? Is that what Christ did when reviled? The term, title, and doctrines of Pre-

Will there be no the heavenly king dare we reject G our brothers and Christ for whom C

Present day living in light of past fulfillment

Jim Moore



Jim is pastor of Sovereign Grace Fellowship in Vacaville, CA.
email: jwm2serve@yahoo.com

erism have suffered criticism by many of the brethren because of the attitude and actions of some of Preterism's own adherents; sadly, some of that criticism is well deserved!

If we left Futurism for Preterism, who is to be credited with discovering this biblical Truth—our brilliance or God in His grace? To what part of our paradigm shift do we attribute God's Providence; the Holy Spirit's leading; our own spiritual perception and knowledge; the influence of godly brethren?

If we are enabled to see spiritual realities or biblical Truths, are we going to take credit for our knowledge and spiritual understanding, or will we give God the glory for opening our mind to the knowledge? How then can we cast off the Futurist brother or sister whom the Holy Spirit has not yet been pleased to enlighten?

Preterists have nothing for which to be proud and thus pull away in rejection and pride from other believ-

*be no futurists in
ly kingdom? How
ject God's people,
rs and sisters in
whom Christ died!*

ers. Rather, we have a greater responsibility to await God's opportunity and time to present Preterism—not as the proverbial bull in the china shop—but in humility and love.

Will there be no Futurists in the heavenly kingdom? How dare we reject God's people, our brothers and sisters in Christ for whom Christ died! Act carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully before turning out God's sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters who are united to us by the blood of Christ. There is need on the part of both camps to act carefully and in the love of Christ in their attitudes toward each other. I personally have seen great "ugliness" among the differing camps within Preterism, let alone how Preterists regard Futurists and how Futurists regard Preterists! While it may be far easier to "write the Futurists off," turn our backs to them, and reject them as ignorant rebels to God's Truth, we are to kindly, patiently, and humbly love them for Jesus' sake regardless of their eschatological view; they are brethren.

If you are in a Futurist congregation Church and they are being faithful to preach the biblical Christ, support them as best you can, as we are all sinners dealing with

sinners. Before you is a great opportunity to grow in grace and win the opportunity to speak of the blessings of Preterism. Earn the right to engage them in loving conversation concerning this teaching of Scripture by faithfully loving them for Jesus' sake no matter how they regard you. We should not be disruptive but an encouragement in studying the Truths in Scripture and history. Do not "brow beat" and argue; rather, pray for and wait for the leading of God through the Holy Spirit. Remember this: How long did it take you to embrace Preterism?

Resist the danger of making everyone follow your course of discovery and awaken to Preterism. Grace! Grace! This is the modus operandi! Be wary of establishing your arrival at Preterism as the "norm" for all others. Just as all believers do not have a Damascus Road conversion, neither will all converts to Preterism follow your path. God will accomplish His purposes in His time; believest thou this?

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."
(Colossians 4:6) †

We're looking for a name for this column, which will feature articles relevant to present-day living in light of past fulfillment. Below are some suggestions; let us know which you like, or submit your own.

- Living after the Fact
- Life after the Fact
- Life in the Kingdom
- That Was Then, This Is Now
- Kingdom Living
- Living Today
- The Fulfilled Life
- Past Fulfillment, Present Life
- Back to the Present
- Right Now
- Here and Now
- Life after Revelation

Creation to Consummation

Continuation of the Church after AD 70?

by Ed Stevens

A FELLOW PRETERIST RECENTLY asked me, “If the first-century saints were looking for a rapture, what New Testament texts support the continuation of the Church on earth after AD70?” This is a much larger question than it first appears, since it applies to all Full Preterists, not just to rapture preterists. Here is why I say this:

The Question of Hyper-Cessationism

There exists a sub-category of Full Preterists who are also *hyper-cessationists* who teach that the concept of the Church was merely temporary, and that the Lord’s Supper, Baptism, and everything else about Christianity ceased to be applicable to Christians after AD 70. They ask other Full Preterists for scriptural support that the Church was supposed to exist on earth after the Parousia.

Both Paul and Peter resolved this issue for us when they wrote that Jesus’ death upon the Cross covered all our sins *once for all* (Rom 6:10; Heb 7:27, 9:12, 9:26, 9:28, 10:10; 1 Pet 3:18). Jesus does not need to re-Incarnate Himself multiple times after AD 70 to die again for our sins today. Once was enough, *once for all*. Thus, the benefits of the Cross apply to all saints from the Cross onward throughout all generations of the eternal kingdom. This phrase “once for all” is also used in reference to the Parousia and the completion of the New Testament Scriptures (see Heb 9:26-28; Jude 3). Just as there were not two or more different Parousia(s), neither were there multiple closings of the New Testament canon. Both of those things were *once for all* events with *eternal ongoing benefits and application* to all believers, just like the Cross.

This “*once for all*” principle also applies to the Church, as Paul demonstrated when he wrote that there would be “*glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations of the age of the ages*” (Eph 3:21 lit. trans.; cf. Eph 2:7 “*in the ages that are coming*” YLT). The phrase “*all generations*” necessarily implies that he is speaking of the Church *on earth* in “*all generations*” of human history, not just the first generation up until AD 70. If he had only been speaking of the Church in heaven, he could simply have said “*for all eternity*.” There are no “generations” (births and deaths) in heaven. Generations are something which only pertain to the physical world of humanity. Therefore, Paul is teaching that the Church would not come to an end at AD 70, but continue bringing glory to God throughout

all generations of human history for eternity.

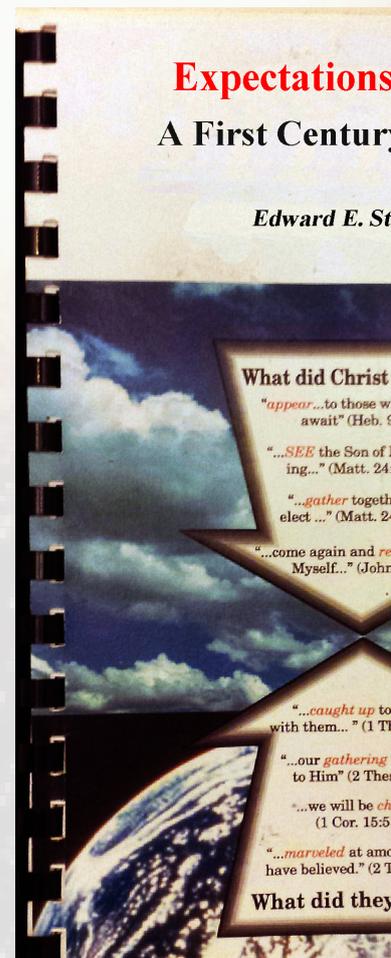
Furthermore, there are numerous texts (e.g. Luke 19:15, 21:31; Acts 14:22; 1 Cor 15:24; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb 12:28; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15; 12:10) which teach that the *Kingdom*, when it arrived in its fullness at the Parousia, would be an *Eternal Kingdom* (Dan 2:44; 7:14; 7:22; 7:27), the *continual increase* of which there would be *no end* (Isa 9:7). The Church and the Kingdom are the same group of people, and they both *exist forever* to bring glory to God throughout “*all the generations of the age of the ages*” (Eph 3:21 YLT).

Moreover, the book of Revelation shows that after the *New Jerusalem* came down from heaven in AD 70 (in the unseen realm), from that time onward into eternity “*the nations [on earth] will walk by its light and bring their glory into it.*” This sounds like the same glory that the Church would bring to God for “*all generations*” of eternity after the Parousia. How could the nations on earth after AD 70 walk by its light and bring their glory into it if there were no Christians among the nations? That necessarily implies that there would be Christians and a Church on earth after the Parousia. In view of all this, the error of hyper-cessationism is now obvious, and the request for scriptural support for the continuation of the Church on earth after AD 70 has been more than adequately provided. But wait—there is more!

The Gates of Hades Did Not Prevail

Jesus declared, “*I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her*” (Matt 16:18). What are the gates of Hades? When someone died, their souls went into *Hades* (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Sheol*). Death was that gateway into the Hadean realm. Jesus seems to be alluding to Death personified as the gatekeeper of Hades. So what did He mean when

... it is clear that the intention of re-creating the Church after the Parousia was how did He do it?





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Studies in Redemptive History

He said that Death (the gates of Hades) would not prevail against His Church?

Some have suggested that Jesus was alluding to the fact that His own death and descent into Hades could not prevent Him from building His Church. That certainly may be included in the meaning, but His Church was not yet in existence at the time of His death on the Cross. If Jesus was only referring to His own death, we would have expected Him to say, "prevail against *me*," instead of "prevail against *her*." The personal pronoun "her" is feminine, referring

that He had every
of restarting the
the Rapture. But
do it?

to the Church, thus implying that Death (personified) would attack and try to annihilate an existing Church. We see that very scenario happening in the book of Acts when the Jewish leaders and Saul of Tarsus "tried to destroy the Church" (Gal 1:13). However, Jesus said that Death would not be able to kill all of the Christians.

There was a specific occasion, predicted by Christ and documented in Roman history, when Death and Hades desperately tried to annihilate the Church. Both Jesus and John referred to it as the *Great Tribulation* (Matt 24:21-22; Rev 7:14), while in Roman history it is known as the *Neronic Persecution*.

After the Holy Spirit established the Church at Pentecost, we see it constantly growing during that first generation before AD 70, even though it was under heavy persecution. Yet immediately after AD 70, the Church seemed almost non-existent. None of the hundred-plus saints named in Acts and the epistles ever resurfaced after AD 70 to say anything, write anything, or do any more mission work. Therefore, historically, it appears that something tried to wipe out the Church, and evidently came very close to doing it. Jesus described the Great Tribulation as being that kind of threat:

"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days

had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."
(Matt 24:21-22 NAS95)

The Neronic Persecution only lasted roughly two years (AD 64-66), but it was extremely intense, and well deserving of Christ's "great tribulation" label. Had the Great Tribulation not been cut short by the outbreak of the Jewish revolt in AD 66, "no life would have been saved." The Gates of Hades (Death) tried to snuff the "life" out of the early Church during the Neronic persecution. But Jesus "cut short" the days of that Great Tribulation "for the sake of the elect." So there were **some of the elect who lived and remained until the Parousia**. Not all of them were killed or fell away during the Great Tribulation and Great Apostasy.

Jesus went on to say seven verses later that "immediately after" that Great Tribulation He would come on the clouds with power and great glory, and would send forth His angels to "gather together His elect," referring to the faithful saints who remained alive until the Parousia and Rapture (Matt 24:29-31; cf. John 14:3; 1 Thess 4:17).

Jesus knew in advance about both the Neronic Persecution and the Rapture, and yet He asserted that the Neronic persecution would not prevail against His Church. He cut short the Great Tribulation so that His elect would live and remain until the Parousia, at which time He would send forth His angels to gather the elect to Him (Matt 24:31). If Jesus had the power to "cut short" the Great Tribulation to protect His elect, then He also had the power to keep His Church safe from permanent extinction after the Rapture. And from the above Scriptures, it is clear that He had every intention of restarting the Church after the Rapture. But how did He do it?

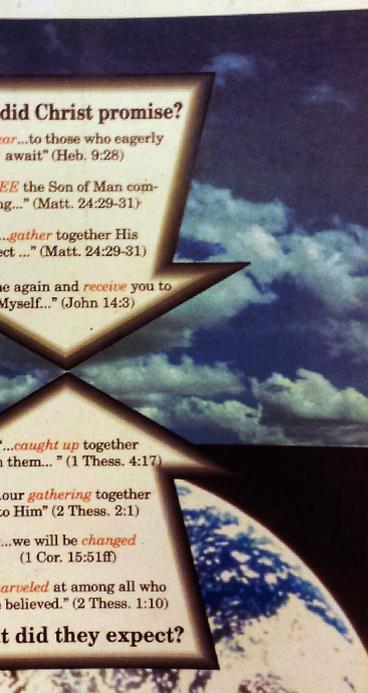
How Did the Church Restart After the Rapture?

The Gospel, which is the *seed of the Kingdom* (Matt 13:18), was sown all over the Roman Empire before the End. Not all of that seed sprouted before the Parousia. Some of it sprouted after the Parousia. Others who had not heard the Gospel before AD 70, learned about it through the New Testament writings which had been left behind. So it was not a complete "restart" from scratch, but rather the sprouting of the seed that had already been planted beforehand. It was only a matter of time before a new "crop" of Christians arose, and they now had the written Word to guide them throughout "all generations of the age of the ages."

Continued on page 11

ations Demand Century Rapture

ard E. Stevens



Can't Get Enough of *Fulfilled!* Magazine?

Many of the content contributors to *Fulfilled!* Magazine, along with a growing number of other writers, can be found online at *The Fulfilled Connection Magazine* (not affiliated with *Fulfilled!* Magazine or *Fulfilled Communications Group*).

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The Sword & The Plow



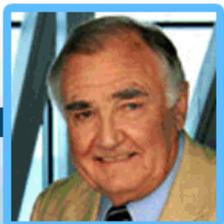
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Church Continuity

by Ed Stevens

...continued from page 9

The Seed is where the *continuity* is, both in the Gospel that was orally preached beforehand, and in the written Word that remained afterward. So there was never any danger of the Gates of Hades prevailing against the Church, as long as the Seed remained. Neither the Great Tribulation, nor the Rapture, could prevent the regrowth of the Church. That seed began to sprout and grow immediately after the Parousia and Rapture. †

Resources for Further Study:

Books Available for Purchase from Website: <http://preterist.org>

Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture by Ed Stevens

First Century Events in Chronological Order by Ed Stevens

Taken to Heaven in AD 70 by Ian Harding

Free Articles (PDF) by Email Request: preterist1@preterist.org

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Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us . . . (Heb 12:1)

The Greek term for cloud isn't νεφέλε (an isolated, definable cloud), but νεφος (an indefinable cloud, covering the entirety of the visible sky). The use of “cloud” for a mass of people became an idiom: Homer wrote of “a cloud of footmen, a cloud of Trojans,” and Themistocles referred to Xerxes’ army as “so great a cloud of men.” Why? Probably because of the clouds of dust that armies of men, horses, and chariots created in those days of dusty roads.

Hence we shouldn't deem it strange that Jesus spoke of His coming against Jerusalem on a cloud (Luke 21:27) since He would do so via the Roman army led by Titus (cf. Rev 1:7). For examples: God spoke of the army of Gog attacking Israel as “COMING LIKE A STORM, COVERING THE LAND LIKE A CLOUD” (Ezek 38:9, cf. 38:16). When God prophesied about His coming against Egypt, He said, “THE LORD RIDES ON A SWIFT CLOUD AND WILL COME INTO EGYPT” (Isa 19:1). And how did He do that? Via the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek 32:11ff, cf. 30:18). Similarly, when Jeremiah prophesied of God's coming against Jerusalem via the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar, he said, “HE SHALL COME UP LIKE CLOUDS, AND HIS CHARIOTS LIKE A WHIRLWIND” (Jer 4:13). Probably because of such apocalyptic language, Nahum said of God, “THE LORD HAS HIS WAY IN THE WHIRLWIND AND IN THE STORM, AND THE CLOUDS ARE THE DUST OF HIS FEET” (Nahum 1:3).

So why would we have a problem with Christ's idiomatic, Jewish language when He spoke of coming against Jerusalem via the Roman army in/on/with clouds (Matt 24:30, Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27, etc.)?

The point? Interpreters should permit the Bible to explain or expound upon the Bible in every possible case, keeping in mind that, before he can ever accurately apply what he reads, he first must discover how the initial audience understood it; the rule is that a statement can never mean what it never meant.

***Hebrews: Flawed to Flawless—Fulfilled*, pp. 245-246; T. Everett Denton**

www.ASiteForTheLord.com/id2.html

Objection Overruled!

The Millennial Martyrs

by Don K. Preston

Objection To Preterism: “Full-preterism generally views the Millennium as the forty-year transition period of ca. AD 30-70, and the Great Tribulation as the Jewish-Roman war of AD 66-70. In this view, how can the martyrs of Revelation 20 reign with Christ during the Millennium (ca. AD 30-70) if they were not martyred until the AD 66-70 war?”

THE MILLENNIUM IS A daunting topic that has challenged the finest of scholars throughout the ages. Amillennialists and postmillennialists generally say the Millennium began in the ministry of Jesus, and spans the entirety of the Christian age. However, a new proposal, expressed in the “Objection” above, has arisen. In my formal debate with James Jordan (2004), he argued that the Millennium began in AD 70 (a book of the debate is available on my websites).

There are some flawed presuppositions underlying the objection that we will address. This article will only touch on a fraction of the evidence that falsifies the idea that the Millennium began in AD 70 (the reader may be interested to know that a book on the differing “preterist” views of the Millennium is “in the works.” I will keep the readers informed on the progress).

The foundational presupposition underlying the objection is that none of the souls mentioned in Revelation 20:1-4 were martyred prior to AD 64 in the Neronian persecution. The argument is:

- The Millennium begins with the vindication of the martyrs—and only the martyrs—slain by The Beast
- The Beast of Revelation 20 is Nero
- Therefore, the Millennium began when the Neronian martyrs were vindicated, i.e. AD 70

If one accepts that Nero (distinctly and exclusively) was the Beast, this argument initially sounds plausible. However, we must keep in mind some critical facts.

In Revelation there is a partnership of persecution against the saints. Jerusalem/Israel was in a partnership with Rome to persecute the saints. *This partnership dated back prior to AD 64*, but received the official imperial approval during Nero’s reign.

Consider the following:

- The Beast and Harlot Babylon were in a partnership of persecution against the saints.
- The Harlot was Old Covenant Jerusalem.
- If, therefore, Revelation 20 is exclusively about the vindication of the martyrs persecuted by the Beast, i.e. Nero, as suggested by the “Objection,” then

when were the saints slain by *Babylon* vindicated? If the Beast is to be identified exclusively as Nero, who committed suicide in 68 AD, that means the Millennium could not have begun prior to that point. But, *that leaves us hanging in regard to the saints slain by Harlot Babylon!*

The objection implies that the martyrs of Revelation 20 cannot be linked to those martyred by Babylon. But this denies the partnership of persecution between the Beast and Babylon that is established in the earlier chapters. But, if one agrees that Revelation 20 includes those slain by Babylon, *then the objection itself falls to the ground.*

Consider:

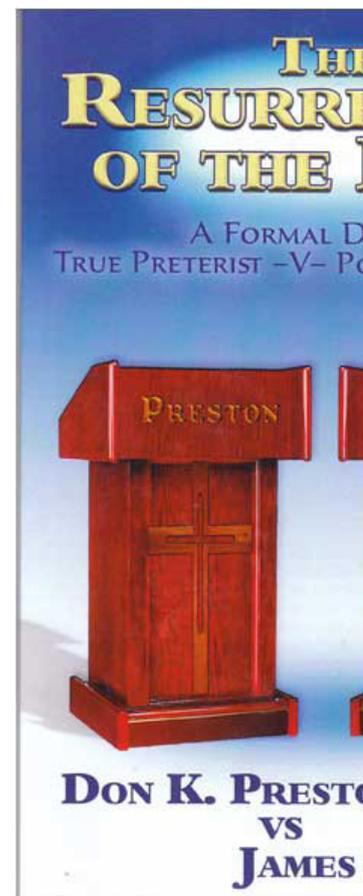
In Matthew 23 Jesus said that all of the blood, of all the righteous, all the way back to Creation, would be vindicated *in the AD 70 judgment of Jerusalem.*

So, AD 70 was the vindication of *all the martyrs* from Abel onward, *not just from Nero onward!*

But, if Revelation 20:1-4 is the judgment of AD 70 as suggested in the objection, then of necessity, the martyrs in view must include those martyrs of Matthew 23—all of the blood, of all the martyrs, *all the way back to Creation.*

In other words, you cannot say AD 70 was the vindication of only those slain by Nero because Jesus said the judgment of AD 70 would be the vindication of *all the blood* of *all the righteous*, all the way back to Creation! There is no dichotomy between the martyrs of Revelation 20 and the martyrs of Matthew 23.

The Objection above fails because it demands that the full measure of martyrs/sin had been reached at *the initiation of the Millennium in AD 70.* However, the fact that the martyrs were enthroned to rule—and to wait—for a



The Millennial Martyrs

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thousand years belies that suggestion. What were they waiting for during the Millennium? *They were waiting for the measure of the martyrs to be filled up.* And, as we shall see, they were awaiting the Resurrection and the New Creation. This is critical.

Notice now the relationship between Revelation 6:9-11 and Revelation 20:

Revelation 6:9-11 – Past martyrdom, (royal) robes given, indicating an initial vindication, a (short) time of waiting for the filling up of the measure of martyrs, the promise of full vindication at the Great Day of the Lord.

Revelation 20 – Past martyrdom, the seating on thrones, indicating at least initial vindication, a time of waiting (the Millennium) for the filling up of the measure of martyrs, the promise of full vindication at the Great Day of the Lord, the resurrection and the New Creation.

Jesus said the measure of sin/suffering would be filled up in His generation before judgment in AD 70. Thus, if Revelation 20:1-4 describes the AD 70 judgment, it demands that the full measure of martyrs had been reached in those verses. *But, that would mean that the millennial time of waiting had nothing to do with Revelation 6:9-11 and the filling up of the measure of suffering and martyrdom.* So, the burden of proof would lie on those who posit Revelation 20:1-4 as AD 70 to prove that the millennial period was not a time parallel to Revelation 6 (or Matthew 23) and the filling up of the measure of sin. The parallels between Revelation 6, (not to mention chapters 12 and 16-18) prevent such an idea.

Look now at a comparison between Hebrews 11 and Revelation 20.

Both texts speak of the martyrdom of the saints. Hebrews chronicles martyrdom all the way back to Abel, just like Matthew 23. See my extensive

discussion of these parallels in my *We Shall Meet Him In The Air, the Wedding of the King of kings*. The relationship between Matthew 23, Hebrews 11-12, and Revelation is seldom explored in the commentaries but is tremendously important.

It is significant to note that Moses, and thus the rest of the Hebrews 11 saints, were said to suffer for Christ. Hebrews 11:24f: *“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”*

Do you catch that? *Moses was a martyr of Christ!* He suffered the *reproaches* of Christ.

Notice also the direct parallel between the nature of the persecutions in Hebrews and Revelation. In Hebrews 11:35-38, the faithful “. . . were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.”

Do we not have the right to ask: What is the difference between these martyrs and those in Revelation 20? (And this does not even consider the issue of the martyrs mentioned earlier in Revelation 6, 11, 12, 14, 16-18). The reality is—as noted—that you cannot claim Revelation 20 was AD 70 without including the martyrs in Matthew 23 and Hebrews 11. But, once that is conceded, the objection under consideration is falsified.

Is there a substantive difference between being “beheaded” and being “sawn asunder”? If so, what would that be? To hold to a wooden literalism of “beheading” in Revelation is inappropriate. The reference to beheading should be seen as a metonymy for any type of martyrdom—e.g., the martyrdom of those in Matthew 23 and Hebrews 11.

Notice that Moses suffered martyrdom because he looked for “*the reward.*” What reward was that? It was the same reward anticipated by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,



Continued on page 14

After AD 70

by Don K. Preston

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et al., which was the heavenly city, the heavenly Fatherland, and, it was “*the better resurrection*”: “*Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.*”

Notice that in Revelation 20-22, the reward of the martyrs is the resurrection, the heavenly City, the heavenly Country, and the New Creation!

So, all of the Old Covenant saints, from Abel onward, were *martyrs of Christ*. They looked for the better resurrection and the New Creation, just as those slain by the Beast in Revelation 20 longed for the resurrection and the New Creation—at the end of the Millennium.

Hebrews and Revelation do not discuss two different groups of martyrs, or two different eschatological hopes. There was *one hope*—the end-of-the-millennium resurrection and New Creation. But of course, this presents a daunting challenge to the “Objection” under consideration.

Jesus said Abraham longed to see His day (His generation) and he saw it, and was glad. Why? Because Abraham realized that the promised

resurrection, his New Creation hope, would be fulfilled in Jesus’ day! Hebrews affirms that the promised heavenly Zion was “*about to come*” (13:14, Gk. *mello*). But of course, if Abraham’s resurrection hope, the New Creation, was to be fulfilled in Jesus’ day, then of necessity that meant that *the end-of-the-millennium resurrection and the arrival of the New Creation would be in Jesus’ generation.*

Let me put it succinctly:

The eschatological hope of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, et. al. (Hebrews 11) was the resurrection and the heavenly Zion/New Creation of Revelation 21f.

The resurrection and heavenly Zion/New Creation of Revelation 21f would arrive after The Millennium (Revelation 20:1-22).

The eschatological hope of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—the resurrection and the heavenly Zion/New Creation was to be in Jesus’ day and was “*about to come*” (Heb 13:14).

Therefore, the end of The Millennium was “*about to come*” when John wrote Revelation.

Unless one can divorce Abraham’s eschatological hope of Zion and the New Creation from the end-of-the-millennium eschatology, then it is *prima facie* evident that the end of the Millennium was to be in the first century.

This is confirmed in a variety of ways.

Jesus said all of the martyrs would be vindicated and their persecutors judged in His coming in judgment of Jerusalem in the first century (Matt 23:29-37; 24:29-34). This would occur only after the full measure of suffering and martyrdom was reached, which was synchronous with

THIS BOOK IS A 'GAME CHANGER!
Amillennialists and Postmillennialists have been forced to recognize the “redemptive significance” of the end of the age events of AD 70. They even admit “a” parousia and resurrection, occurred! However, to avoid the implications of this admission, they have sought refuge in the fallacious doctrine that the coming of Christ in AD70 was but a foreshadowing of the “real” end.

In *AD 70, A Shadow or the (Real) End?*, Don K. Preston, D. Div., has thrown down the gauntlet in his critique of the leading opponents of Covenant Eschatology, (i.e. Full Preterism). The clarity and execution of Preston’s logic and ease of style kept me riveted, page after page, as he dismantled the non-sense from those opponents. Their attempts to maintain their end times paradigms are simply obliterated by the power of the gospel. This book is an exciting, scholarly read flowing beautifully from one argument to the next.

Preston has proven that to say AD 70 was typological means:

- That another Elijah must come as a precursor to the ultimate end.
- That the end of the age demands the end of the “unending Christian age.”
- That Christ must divorce the church which is only a type of a new people to come.
- That the bride of Christ must become a harlot and be destroyed!
- That Christ does not marry the church at his coming but divorces her... and much more.

This book is a lesson in logic, a master’s course in hermeneutics and a systematic theology of Covenant Eschatology. I predict it will be a classic study for ages to come. -William Bell, Lecturer, Author

“Having come from an A-millennial eschatology background and briefly passing through the post-millennial camp I am often befuddled wondering why the usually sharp thinkers in the latter camp continue to be stuck there. In this book, Don Preston seeks to build the bridge that will allow them to cross the gap and complete their trip to fulfilled eschatology. In my view, Preston has reached fulfillment in that which he sought to do. “Shadows” gives the reader the ability to put the final puzzle pieces in place. There is no reason left for anyone to remain in the “partial” Preterist camp.”
- Jack Gibbert, Lecturer, Debater, Bible Student and Minister of over 45 years.

Don K. Preston, D. Div., is the founder and director of the Preterist Research Institute. He is a 1975 graduate of the Northside School of Preaching, and his preaching ministry spans 35 years. He is an experienced debater, having performed several formal public debates as well as radio debates with some of the leading evangelists of the day. He is also a prolific author, with some of his books receive critical acclaim.

AD70: A SHADOWS OF THE ‘REAL’ END? PRESTON

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the filling the measure of sin on the part of the persecutors.

Hebrews posited the imminent rewarding of all the martyrs, all the way back to Creation, as coming in a “*very, very little while*” (Heb 10:32-39), the time of the reception of the “*great reward.*” This “*great reward*” is the heavenly Zion of Revelation 21, which would only arrive *after the Millennium.*

Likewise, Revelation anticipated the filling up of the measure of martyrs (6:9-11; 12:8-17), the synchronous filling up of the measure of sin (17:6f; 18:4ff). Chapter 20 is simply another view of the filling up of the measure of that sin and suffering, as the martyrs reigned with Christ, awaiting the Parousia, The Judgment and the better resurrection at the end of The Millennium. Just as Jesus posited the filling up of those “cups,” and just as Hebrews spoke of the imminent realization of the great hope of the ancient faithful, Revelation posited the coming of Jesus in judgment, The Resurrection and the time of the great reward as imminent: “*Behold, I come quickly!*” (22:10f). Of necessity, this demands that *the end of the Millennium/ time of the great reward of Hebrews 11 was on the cusp of consummation.*

Summary and Conclusion

The claim that the martyrs in Revelation 20:1-4 are to be identified as exclusively Neronian martyrs, and that their vindication in AD 70 was the initiation of the Millennium, is unjustified.

To identify the martyrs in Revelation 20 as Neronian only martyrs—vindicated in AD 70—demands that you

divorce the martyrs of Matthew 23 and Hebrews 11 from AD 70. This violates Jesus’ words.

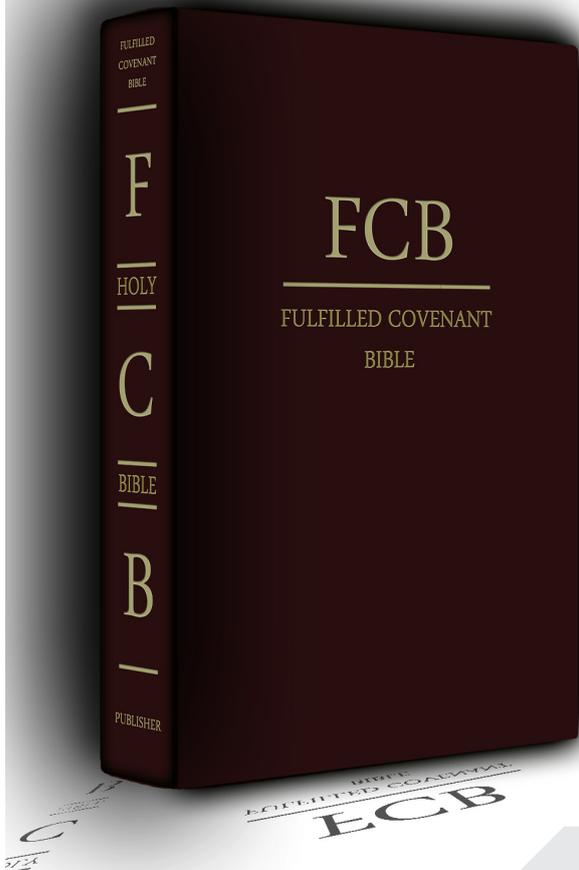
If you include the martyrs in Matthew 23 and Hebrews 11, you have falsified the Neronian-only martyrs claim—thus opening the door to the Millennium beginning *before Nero.*

As just suggested, to identify the martyrs in Revelation 20 as Neronian-only divorces them from Matthew 23 and Hebrews 11—not to mention from the rest of the biblical narrative that is focused on the vindication of the martyrs of God *at the end of Israel’s covenant age* (e.g. Deut 32:43; Isa 2-4; 26:21-27:13; 59).

The organic unity between the martyrs from Abel onward, *inclusive of those in Revelation,* cannot be denied. Yet, that unity must be broken to sustain the “Neronian-only martyrs” argument—an argument I find untenable.

There are many, many other major problems with the objection, including the issue of the Reign of Christ and His saints as an already present reality in Revelation 20, the Tribulation, the doctrine of “The War” discussed in Revelation 16 and chapter 20, the time of the New Creation, the role of Israel in eschatology, etc., etc. Obviously, space forbids a discussion of these additional tenets here. Perhaps those will be discussed in more details in the work mentioned above, so be watching for it!

When we couple all of the facts above with the undeniable temporal statements of the imminent judgment—the end-of-the-millennium judgment—there is truly no merit to the idea that the Millennium began in AD 70. The Objection is Overruled! †



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Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

It's about the time Jesus told His disciples that He would return—this(His) generation!

It's about the time the New Testament authors told their readers Jesus would return—soon, near, at hand, shortly!

It's about time for a scriptural explanation other than delay!

It's about time for a "last days" view that doesn't conjure up gaps and parenthetical ages!



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