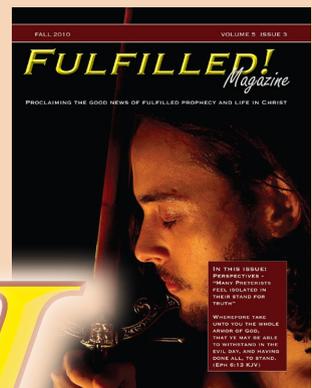
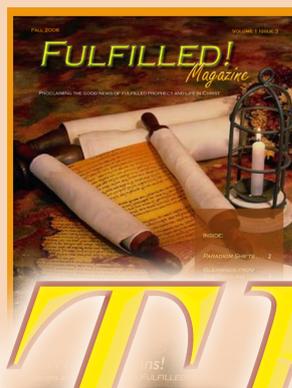
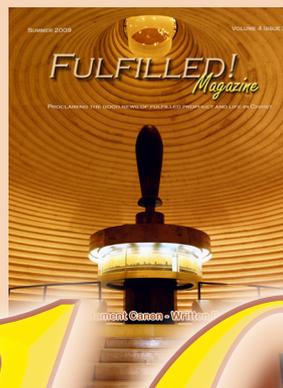


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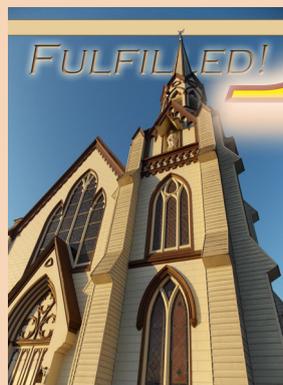
VOLUME 11 ISSUE 1

FULFILLED! Magazine

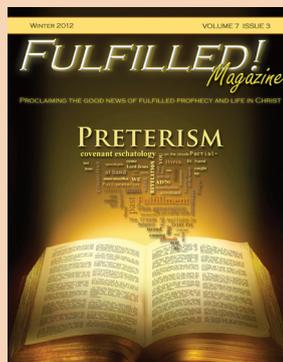
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Published by
FULFILLED
COMMUNICATIONS
GROUP

Subscriptions
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FCG
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
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Editor's Note...

As you undoubtedly surmised by the cover, this issue marks our 10th anniversary. I'm amazed that we've been at it this long, and grateful that God, in His graciousness, has sustained the ministry and allowed us to continue. I actually began contemplating this issue nearly two years ago, conjuring up grandiose ideas of a double page-count edition with lots of extra articles, perhaps a reprint of one of the articles from our very first edition, etc., etc. But as I struggled just to produce the regular issues, and could only carve out enough time to publish three issues last year, I had to let go of many of those dreams.

Nevertheless, I was able to squeeze in a few ideas. This issue's "Perspectives" column has several well known preterists giving their thoughts on the progress of preterism over the last decade. I've also included an article that chronicles the production of an issue of *Fulfilled! Magazine*, replete with a layout throw-back to our beginning issues. I hope that you enjoy this "behind the scenes" look at producing the magazine.

I first conceived the concept of a magazine after realizing that many Christians simply don't have the time, and sometimes the desire, to read book-length treatments of theology—especially "strange" theology. I thought that perhaps a magazine, with several short articles, would be more palatable to browse through, and though a single issue wouldn't likely convert anyone to preterism, they just might read something that piqued their interest, or made them uneasy enough about their current beliefs to study further.

I also hoped that a magazine would provide a sense of community to preterists, many of whom are without any meaningful connection with other preterists. Though there was a growing preterist presence on the web, I knew that many preterists were not active online. Furthermore, I was often put off by the tone and attitude that I found online. Therefore, even though I envisioned presenting differing views within preterism, I was determined to keep the tone gracious and uplifting.

In 2006 we decided to "test the waters" and publish an initial issue. I shared my vision with some well known preterists and asked them for some articles. I wrote some articles, pulled together some other material, and created our first issue. That first issue went out to only two to three hundred individuals, a small list of names we had collected of preterists or individuals who had expressed an interest in preterism.

The response was overwhelmingly positive so we decided to continue. Thankfully, Garrett and Beverly Brown graciously funded the magazine until it became self-supporting via donations.

Given the growth of preterism, I am somewhat surprised that our readership has hovered between 2,000 – 2,500 for several years. Yet that is likely to our advantage, for two reasons: 1) We sometimes struggle just



***First Issue of Fulfilled!
Spring 2006 (all past
issues are available online)***

keeping up with the logistics of what we have now. Rapid growth would likely throw us into a tailspin. 2) Being supported by donations, we can only grow as fast as our support allows us. Although we have upwards of 2,500 readers worldwide, we typically derive our support from fewer than 100 individuals. Furthermore, about 50% of that support is provided by an average of 6-10 very generous individuals. This is not to say that we regard those donors any differently than the others; rather, we are grateful for everyone who contributes, whether financially, prayerfully, or with words of encouragement. God knows the heart of each contributor and I have no doubt that some of those \$5 donations required more sacrifice than the larger amounts.

It currently costs about \$3500 for a 16-page issue, and \$4000 for a 20-page issue, to be printed and mailed to the US and Canadian readers. It costs around \$400 per issue for the overseas mailings. Add incidentals like ink, sign-up mailings, internet connection, etc., and it takes a ballpark figure of \$16,000 a year for 4 16-page issues and \$18,000 a year for 4 20-page issues. With annual donations for the previous five years averaging about

\$13,000, my inability to produce 4 issues in several of those years has been providential in keeping the budget in the black.

After this issue I'll return to 16-page issues and, if necessary, drop the page count to 12. I mention this not as a plea for funds, but simply to provide some insights and background information in this 10th anniversary edition.

I have many ideas and hopes for the next 10 years and, if God sees fit to allow me to retire from my secular job in the next few years, I'll hopefully be able to bring many of those to fruition. Now that my work schedule has returned to normal, I hope to focus on updating the mailing address in our "Kidding" video and have more DVDs produced. Thanks for all of your support over the last decade—let's see what God has in store for the next decade!

Blessings,

Brian

HOW SHALL WE THEN LIVE?

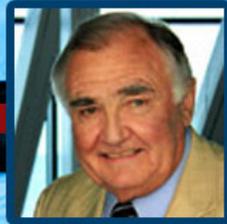
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Perspectives

The Progress of Preterism

As part of *Fulfilled! Magazine's* 10th anniversary, I asked several prominent preterists to share their thoughts on how preterism had changed over the decade, for better or for worse, and what changes they felt were necessary moving forward. I provided several short questions as conversation starters to give them the gist of what I was looking for, and then allowed them to respond to as much or little as they felt led. Here are the thoughts of those who responded.



Don Preston

HOW HAS THE PRETERIST COMMUNITY PROGRESSED OVER THE LAST DECADE?

The growth of the preterist movement has been nothing less than stunning, from my perspective. I well remember the days in the early 1990s when us “Old Timers” (then much younger) would sit and dream about preterist radio shows, preterist television, an increase in preterist materials (There was precious little back then!). All of those things—and much more—have come to pass in an amazing way!

HOW HAS IT DIGRESSED?

As with any movement, and history verifies this, there are always those who join a given movement for their own personal agendas. They draw away the unsuspecting and in many cases, depending on their influence, they have been a disgrace to the movement. One only has to examine the movement in the time of Calvin to see some truly sad examples of this kind of “diversion.” In my time in the preterist movement I have seen many, many people come and go, with varying degrees of negative influence. Is this sad? Incredibly so! Do we lament the “falling away” of some who once played a somewhat prominent role? Of course. But, are such unfortunate defections an indication of the weakness of the preterist view? Absolutely not! If so, one would have to conclude that Christianity itself is false, since Jesus said that the majority of believers would fall away in his generation, and Paul chronicled the falling away of many churches—not just individuals!

So, with defections and even betrayals by some, the movement has progressed and continues to progress, at an astounding rate. We cannot be discouraged by the distractions of those who attack the movement from within or without. Truth is not determined by who follows it, or falls away from it. We must keep our eyes on the Lord and His Word, not on the weakness of human beings.

HOW HAS PRETERISM GAINED MORE ACCEPTANCE WITHIN CHRISTIANITY?

It is becoming increasingly common to hear ministers—even those who do not accept true preterism—to say that it is not heresy! Even Harold Eberle, with whom I had a formal debate in Oregon, has gone on record since then saying that while he does not accept Covenant Eschatology, adherents

of true preterism should be considered as brethren in Christ. In similar fashion, in my formal debate with James Jordan, he offered an apology to the preterist community for labeling preterists as heretics. While he still maintained that preterism is false, he retracted the “heresy” label. These are dramatic changes and they have and will open the door for more dialogue, and that can only lead to great things!

WHAT DOES PRETERISM NEED TO DO MOVING FORWARD TO GAIN RECOGNITION/CREDIBILITY WITHIN CHRISTIANITY?

Not only must preterists share their convictions with their friends, family and neighbors, i.e. the grassroots, we must continue to promote true academic pursuit by some of the up and coming younger preterists. It is truly unfortunate that I have read and heard some preterists decry pursuing scholarly studies. Historically, however, there has always been a “trickle down” effect, as scholarship has accepted and promoted any given perspective, and those views were printed and read. In other words, we need preterists on every level to spread the message in whatever venue, in whatever way possible. And, I would add here that there are some extremely exciting things happening in the world of academia, that will, in my estimation, encourage more and more investigation of the true preterist view. Some highly recognized academics—not preterists—are writing things that logically lead to the true preterist view, and this is already being recognized! This is a great thing!

WHAT SIGNIFICANT PRETERIST MILESTONES/EVENTS STAND OUT TO YOU IN THE LAST DECADE?

I am not sure I can point to any one event. There is an accumulative effect going on that has brought us to where we are now, and that will continue to convince more and more people of the validity of our message.

WHAT SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE/EVENT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED BY THE PRETERIST COMMUNITY.

I am not convinced (yet) that any one event will serve as the launching pad for the preterist movement to suddenly “take over.” However, I will say that from my own personal correspondence that I am hearing from more and more “major” ministers, men with significant influence, and they tell me that they are seeing the logical, Biblical consistency of our message. (I will not mention names, but one senior pastor of a church of over 2500+ told me to my face that he is “very excited” about what he had heard as we studied

How has preterism changed in the last decade, and how does it need to change moving forward?

together. What will become of that? I do not know).

Some of these men are clearly concerned with the implications of accepting Covenant Eschatology publicly but, they see its power. Should one or more of these “movers and shakers” openly espouse full preterism, it would be like the ripples on a pond.

I sometimes read or hear the detractors of Covenant Eschatology speak of the small numbers of those who espouse Covenant Eschatology, as if this somehow determines the truthfulness of our message. These men are whistling as they walk past the graveyard! They want people to think that nothing is happening! They hope nothing is happening, but, in truth, they know differently! To say that exciting things are happening is a huge understatement. Let me offer just a few examples. I cannot testify about other preterist ministries, but here are just a couple of examples of things that I know are going on:

1. In Myanmar, there is a confederation of 100 churches that are being taught Covenant Eschatology. I correspond fairly regularly with one of the key missionaries involved in this work.
2. In just one area of India, there are over 50 small preterist churches. Lord willing and funds permitting, William Bell and I will be traveling to India to work there within the next year.

3. I have been in contact with ministers from Mexico that want me to debate the leaders of the Assemblies of God there. Who knows if that will come to pass, but the fact that this individual is in personal correspondence with that leadership—once being one of them—is significant! There are preterist churches in Mexico.

4. Preterism is growing in Ethiopia!

5. There are preterist churches in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

6. FaceBook is alive with preterist discussion forums—some better than others to be sure, but, the number has grown incredibly!

7. Preterist fellowships continue to pop up in the states, everywhere!

This is a very small sampling of what is going on. Covenant Eschatology is on the move. There will continue to be detractors and attackers, to be sure. But, as more and more men and women of faith and courage speak out, progress is being made and will continue to be made!

I am more excited about the future than I have ever been! To God be the glory! ✚



Tony Denton I'M CONVINCED THAT THE full preterist community worldwide has definitely doubled at least a couple of times during just the last decade or so. Though I obviously have no way to prove this statistic, one of the reasons I'm convinced of this is due to the increasing amount of time I've spent during the last 8-10 years interacting with Christians (especially online) on the topic of eschatology. Another reason this appears so evident to me is that the numerous partial prets in Christianity, who carry so much clout in the theological world, have not only brought folks by the myriads out of full futurism and into partial preterism (which in turn eventually led many of those converts into full preterism), but also because many of those very partial prets with clout, due to interaction with full prets, have been forced to change their views on certain passages (like Daniel 12), moving even them that much closer to consistent/full preterism (and Christians aren't so naive they don't notice such things). So I believe the full pret community has increased greatly in number, and I'm convinced it will continue to do so.

Sadly, however, because full preterism is an interdenominational paradigm, along with every additional “convert” also comes numerous beliefs they must either abandon or find a way to make correspond (i.e. fit in) to their new eschatological paradigm; and since we humans, for various reasons, tend to want to hold on to as many of our previous beliefs as possible, this has created, and is creating, more and more factions among full prets. So while I've seen full preterism growing numerically, I also see it digress-

ing in the sense of there being an increasing lack of unity over the previous decade. This, I believe, is due in large part because there aren't (as I believe there needs to be) official written and/or public debates among full prets over issues that are creating divisions. If, relative to any single topic of division, two well-versed and respected representatives of the differing positions on that topic would go head-to-head over it, such a discussion would provide the rest of us great understanding on both sides of the issue, allowing us to study these issues and develop our own personal conclusions. Although *FULFILLED!* Magazine has actually involved itself in sharing some variant perspectives on differing issues (and I appreciate that), it's my opinion that this other option would be extremely advantageous, but it isn't happening.

Looking to the future, three things come to mind that I feel would help preterism grow and become more recognized and accepted as a credible theology:

1. Encourage full prets to support full-time preterist ministers and ministries (too many have decided that even the principle of 1 Cor 11:9 no longer applies, so the funds they previously gave to their futurist churches have now simply become extra pocket money).
2. Encourage closet full prets to come out of their closets (especially if they aren't supported ministers who have to be more cautious); and . . .
3. Convince the numerous full prets who spend nearly all their daily religious time bantering with other full prets on various sub-topics to instead spend most of that time promoting the basics of fulfilled eschatology to the world. ✚

continued on p. 13

THE PRETERIST NETWORKING R

Are you a lonesome fulfilled-prophecy

THOUGH UNBEKNOWNST TO ME at the time, I embarked upon my trek into full preterism following an in-depth study of Matthew 24 the year I was a newlywed (1985) and during a decade when I was engrossed in mission meetings, as well as trying to establish myself as a serious “grower” of local churches. I say this because, subsequent to that study, passages throughout the Bible began spawning all sorts of questions for me, but they were pieces of a puzzle I had to keep placing on the



“back burners.” Years later (1992) I attended a seminar featuring speakers from several divisions within my denomination who gathered to defend their theological differences, with one of those differences being what those who set up the meeting called *The AD 70 Theory*. During a 45-minute speech de-

fending this “theory,” Don Preston (of whom I had never heard) picked up numerous of my back-burner-puzzle pieces and gently placed them right where they belonged. However, since there were still pieces remaining (as well as others to come), I became a thorn in Don’s side over the next few years with email after email after email.

From 1992 onward there were very few lulls in my growth from amillennialism to partial preterism and finally to full preterism. Of course this progressively created problems for me in my full-time ministry by continually limiting what I could teach. But I was fortunate enough that my church income continued up until just over 26 years into my career, at which time our support was terminated with no warning, no severance, and right after I was diagnosed with MS without insurance.

Now why did I just share the preceding? Because during those many years of being a full-time minister among amillennialists, I had an *extremely* small amount of contact (especially in person) with other preterists! For instance, I knew about seminars, even close by, that I couldn’t attend much less speak at due to my situation, and that especially bothered me when there was a seminar covering the book of *Hebrews* (which was my baby at the time, having developed 37 Power Point lessons on that letter). It wasn’t until around the time I received the proverbial “boot” from my support as a full-time minister (just months after the *Hebrews* seminar) that I accepted Sam Dawson’s invitation to join a Yahoo study group of full preterists. And you know

what? Those guys, some who had been disfellowshipped and some who had gone through the same experiences I was going through, helped me *immensely* with their encouragement through my ordeal. And as I then began to break into the national full-preterist community (trying really hard to remain a full-time minister for the “true” gospel now), I was constantly encountering people who were feeling profound loneliness in their respective locales merely due to their acceptance of the tenet that Jesus accomplished what He promised to accomplish when He promised to accomplish it.

Therefore, although a now-defunct preterist locator map had been created online by Michael Fenemore with 15 or 20 people on it, I (due to the country-wide circumstances of preterists) felt compelled to spend the time and effort necessary to get around to creating a personally involved, private, comprehensive, United States registry that would tenaciously network as many lovers of eschatology (and its innate soteriology) together as possible. (For one of many reasons why I felt so compelled to do this thing, read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.)

So just over three years ago I at last got that “round-tuit,” writing up an article for *FULFILLED!* Magazine, describing what I wanted to do and encouraging as many as received this periodical to jump on board. Since then general editor Brian Martin has graciously aided in this effort by placing an advertisement for my PNR in every issue, and I believe I’ve added people to it following each mailing. Over the span of the last three years, I’ve registered around 520, and among those I’ve made over 3,000 connections; that’s an average of hooking up six people with every listing (the vast majority of whom previously didn’t know one another). However, these estimates will always fall short of the true totals. Why? Because the listing number doesn’t include spouses, which then of course affects the number of connections made.

As I indicated above, due to believing they were the only ones in their locales, I was constantly having bereft folks asking me if I knew any fulfilled believers in their areas; so it’s no wonder I’ve received countless notes of appreciation in creating this program, especially since I stay “on the ball” with it by being personally involved in it on a daily basis. (Yes, very few days go by each month that I’m not working on it; I’ve expended much more effort and time in this endeavor than originally expected, but it’s very well worth it.) So how am I personally involved? Well, “let me (re)count the ways of my love” for my registrants: {1} Every registrant is urged to keep his/her contact information current; but since folks often fail to keep me apprised of changes, I send a message every three months to each email address on the list, and when

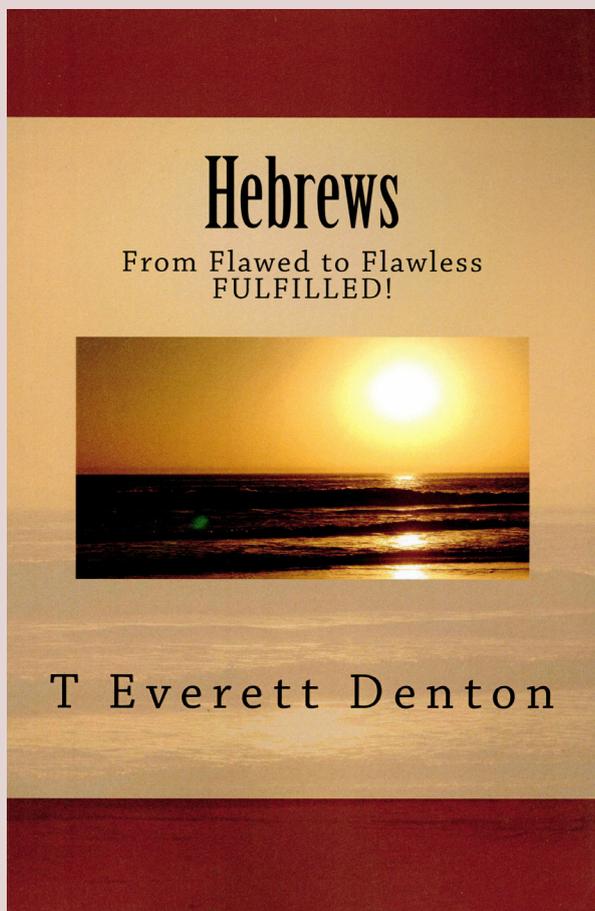
'G REGISTRY (PNR) TURNS THREE!

hecy believer? Read on! by Tony Denton

I receive returned (undeliverable) emails I'm "on the case." {2} Every registrant is urged to truly make use of this program or get removed; in other words, if someone isn't keeping a check on his/her email and actually connecting with others (and I've received notes of disappointment from some in this regard), then "I'm on the case" again. Lastly, {3}, every registrant is urged to motivate those in his/her area to make use of this program by launching a (hopefully) once-a-month gathering to share with one another where they are on their journeys, study the Bible together, encourage one another after another month of living in a futurist world, and perhaps even share ideas concerning what can be done to spread the fulfilled-Bible-prophecy movement. And, thank the Lord, there are now several meetings going on around the country due to the PNR. (I actually drove to a couple areas in order to kick-start them; very little pleases me as much as knowing about such things, for it's all about making us a stronger and stronger force in our world!)

So what of the future for this program (especially since it's a private/offline registry)? Well, that's a good question and one I've pondered upon quite often. Firstly, I definitely do need to find at least one other person as a backup in case my wife takes me out . . . ummm, I mean . . . in case something happens to me. With all the literally hundreds (perhaps even by now thousands of hours) I've put into this, and with all who are benefitting and could potentially benefit from it, this has quickly become a necessity on which I'm working. And, secondly, at some point in time it will most likely become an online program; it's just that getting it set up so that contact information remains as private as it is presently, while retaining the personal involvement of an owner/manager, will be no small feat.

Those are just a few comments about the program and the good it has done for numerous people—space limitations prevent me from sharing even more. So if anyone out there in the USA (or even Canada) would like to know more about this program or would like to join, please email me (tedenton64@hotmail.com) with the name, zip code, and email address you'd like registered. Also please consider supporting my full-time ministry, and may many blessings be to one and all. ~Tony E. Denton (tedenton64@hotmail.com) †



Why another commentary on Hebrews? Well, a casual persusal of the remarks on just the initial verses will instantly demonstrate why this work has been deemed necessary by many who have heard/read this material over the past six years.



With the objective of performing a detailed study of this magnificent New Testament epistle, I have read/studied many writings and collected numerous bound volumes on Hebrews over the last few decades; from that experience, I believe I can accurately state that this exposition is different—in its approach—from any other bound work on Hebrews ("bound" because there are at least two good major web-works similiar in approach at beranbiblechurch.org/hebrews.htm and christinyou.net/pages/hebrewsindex.html). Since this work is different, and since it's so important to do this, I beg the reader to consult every reference provided in this commentary.

Furthermore, it has become my conviction that *The Epistle to the Hebrews* is the single most important piece of New Testament literature relative to an accurate understanding of biblical eschatology (end-times) and soteriology (salvation). As long as the foundational theological information in this treatise is misunderstood, misapplied, and mistaught (long before interpreting *The Book of Revelation* is ever attempted), God's people—we—will not enjoy the contentment that our Lord intended for us to experience. Hence my prayer is that all who open this book will also open their minds to the approach employed that they, like the Acts 17:11 Bereans, may also be commended by their God for displaying such a life-changing attitude.

Tony Denton - ASiteForTheLord.com/id20.html

Creation to Consummation

‘See the Kingdom Having Come’ (Mark 9:1)

by Ed Stevens

AS PRETERISTS, WE SEE it as certain that Mark 9:1 and its parallels (Matt 16:28 and Luke 9:27) clearly teach that “some” first-century disciples would remain alive on earth *until the Parousia*. What is not as clear, however, is what these texts say would happen to those saints *at the Parousia and afterwards*. There are at least two different views on this within the preterist community.

Some preterists believe that the saints who were alive at the time of the Parousia remained alive on earth to live out their lives and die sometime later, while others of us believe they were changed into their new immortal bodies and taken to heaven at the Parousia (1 Cor 15:51-54; 1 Thess 4:17). Since many who believe that the saints remained alive on earth after the Parousia use Mark 9:1 to support their theory, we will examine that text in this article and explain why we believe those saints did not remain alive on earth after the Parousia.

Fellow preterists who question the literal rapture interpretation of Mark 9:1 raise the following objection:

In contrast to the other two synoptic accounts of this saying of Jesus, Mark uses the *perfect participle* (having come) to indicate that some of those standing there would remain alive on earth after AD 70 (i.e., not raptured), and would be able to *look back* on the destruction of Jerusalem to *witness* that Christ and His kingdom *had already come* in power.¹

At first glance, that sounds like a good argument. However, it proves too much. Notice that it says those living saints would *look back* on the destruction of Jerusalem *to witness* that the kingdom *had already come*. Yet where do we find that “witness” in the historical record? Dr. Charles Hill reminds us that “an early Christian writer *who is even aware* of a hyper-preterist eschatology in the church [is] *yet to be found*.”² And Don Preston agrees:

Stevens is correct to say that we have no [patristic] authors who point to AD 70 as the time of Christ’s final coming, the judgment and resurrection of the dead. This silence is indeed perplexing . . . for which we have no easy answer. . . . how in the name of reason did they *fail to see* that the Parousia had indeed occurred? . . . Are we to suppose that the post-70 saints were *so ignorant that they could not see that connection*?³

Preston admits that those saints who supposedly lived through the Parousia and remained alive on earth afterwards “*failed to see* that the Parousia had indeed occurred.” But how could they fail to see it occur after Jesus promised that they would not die until *after they had seen* the Kingdom *having come* in power (Mark 9:1)?

In one breath, critics of the rapture claim that “some of those standing there” remained alive on earth after the Parousia with the ability to not only *look back* and *know* that the kingdom had come, but to also bear *witness* to that fact.

But in the next breath, they acknowledge that we do not have a single post-70 patristic writer who *witnessed* to that fact. Do you see their inconsistency? They cannot have it both ways.

If those saints were still alive on earth after witnessing the Parousia and the arrival of the Kingdom, why didn’t they speak up and set the record straight when Papias, Polycarp, Ignatius, and other late first- and early second-century patristic writers started saying that the Parousia was still future? Apostle John is a prime example. His book of Revelation was fulfilled in AD 70, yet there was not a single peep out of him after AD 70 testifying to the fact that the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled. This becomes even more problematic when we learn that Polycarp of Smyrna was supposedly a *hearer* of the Apostle John in nearby Ephesus, only 35 miles away.⁴ How can it be that the inspired Apostle John “failed to see that the Parousia had indeed occurred” and failed to mention that fact to Polycarp and the others? Yet all we have from those pre-Parousia saints after AD 70 is, as Preston noted, “perplexing silence.” [I have a free article, “Did John Live Beyond AD 70?”, which discusses this in much detail. Simply email me and request it.]

Thus, the non-rapture preterists have falsified their own argument against the rapture. They claim that “some of those standing there” were definitely aware of the Parousia after it occurred, and were fully able to testify about it to the next generation of Christians, but, for some unknown reason, every single one of them completely failed “to *look back* on the destruction of Jerusalem to *witness* that Christ and His kingdom *had already come* in power.” That ought to be cause for pause. [There is a free article available, *Historical Problem*, which explains this dilemma in more detail. You may request it by email (preterist1@preterist.org).]

Jesus was not wrong when he promised that some of His disciples would see the kingdom come in power. Nor was Mark mistaken in the way he recorded that promise (as we shall see below). So the fault has to be in our interpretation of the text. And we intend to show that those saints who remained alive until the Parousia *did* see the arrival of the Kingdom, and that the reason why they did not speak up afterwards to testify about it was because they were taken to heaven, and were no longer on earth. They were *silent* because they were *absent*. So let’s open our Bibles to Mark 9:1, and dig into the text.

GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 9:1

The subjunctive verb “*taste*” (3 pl. aor. mid. subj.) is preceded by a double negative (*ou mē*), which gives it a strong sense of negation: “they shall *by no means* taste.” The subjunctive verb “*see*” (3 pl. aor. act. subj.) is *conditional*, indicating that the situation of not tasting death would endure at least until they saw the Kingdom come in power. Dr. David Warren notes

They were not expected to live through the Parousia with no perceptible change. Christ had come without experiencing any cognitive work.

There are some standing here

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that “the temporal [time] aspect of *heōs an idōsin* (‘until they see’) comes from the subordinating conjunction *heōs* (‘until’).”⁵ Parker Voll notes that “the particle ‘*an*’ in the phrase *heōs an idōsin* (‘until they see’) sets up a contingency. Jesus is saying that they will certainly see or perceive the arrival of God’s reign, and that they will not die before they see it come.”⁶

The word “see” can mean to see either *literally* with the physical eyes, or *metaphorically* to perceive, understand, realize, or recognize, depending on the context. In Mark 9:1, it could be used both literally and metaphorically, since they did see some things with their eyes, and experience some things which enabled them to perceive that the Kingdom had come.

The perfect participle “having come” (perf. act. part. fem. sing. acc.) is in the accusative case, and is used as an *Accusative of Time*, answering the *when* question: i.e., When would they see the kingdom? *After it had come with power*. Several commentaries confirm that “having come” is the correct translation (e.g., *Hermeneia*; *NIGTC*; *Lenski*; and *Robertson’s Word Pictures*). So this analysis provides the following rendering of the text:

Mark 9:1 *And he is saying to them, “Amen I say to you, that there are certain ones of those standing here, who shall by no means taste of death until they shall see the kingdom of God having come in power.”* (cf. YLT, Lenski, and others)

ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN?

Even though Jesus clearly affirmed that some of His disciples would not die before the Parousia, He does not indicate *where they would be* after the Parousia when they looked back on the arrival of the Kingdom. They could be either on earth or in heaven.

The non-rapture view assumes that those saints were *still alive on earth* after the arrival of the kingdom, simply because it fits their non-rapture paradigm. But there is nothing in this context, or in other related passages, to force that interpretation. And the rapture view is just as plausible, if not more so.

Furthermore, we need to know what Jesus meant when He said that they would “see” the Kingdom after it had come. Even if it was only *seen* or *perceived* by their eyes of faith, it still implies that they *knew* the kingdom had arrived, and were therefore able to testify about it to the next generation of Christians if they were still on earth. Yet no such testimony ever surfaced after AD 70, and that *silence* can certainly imply that they were no longer on earth.

Moreover, when *the Perfect* arrived, their understanding of the kingdom was *perfected*, not obliterated and confused (1 Cor 13:8-12). They understood everything *perfectly* after seeing the Kingdom come in power. So why didn’t they speak up and set the record straight when Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius started teaching that it was still future?

Therefore, it is this visible, experiential, and perceptual

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Edward E. Stevens

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aspect of the Parousia which tilts the interpretation away from an earthly location and toward a heavenly one, even if there were no other related texts to support that interpretation. But fortunately, there are lots of other clearer texts, in addition to the immediate context here (Mark 8:34-38), to help us settle the issue.

CONTEXT AND RELATED TEXTS

There is an unfortunate chapter division here at Mark 9:1. “This verse (Mark 9:1) properly belongs to the preceding chapter, and the preceding discourse.”⁷ The *Hermeneia Commentary* notes that Mark 8:34-9:1 should be taken together as a thought unit.⁸

The context begins with “a call to responsible commitment (Mark 8:34), [and] is followed by the contrast between a man who secures his own existence through denial and one who is killed because of his unwavering confession of Jesus and the gospel (Mark 8:35).”⁹ Speaking to the crowd, as well as His disciples, Jesus noted that following Him faithfully would be costly, maybe even requiring the *loss of one’s life*. But denial of Him had an even greater price tag of *forfeiting one’s soul* (Mark 8:36-37). And at the judgment, when the Son of Man came in glory with the angels, He would disown those who had denied Him (Mark 8:38). They would lose their souls and their inheritance of the kingdom.

It must have been difficult for that crowd to listen to these disturbing words. That may be why Jesus referred to their possible martyrdom using the Semitism¹⁰ or Hebrew idiom¹¹ of “tasting death,” which “is a [metaphorical] reference to violent death for the sake of Jesus.”¹² It was similar to His reference to the Cross as “drinking my cup.” Martyrdom has a very bitter *taste*, and is always a difficult *drink* to swallow.

But Jesus did not let them dwell long on that frightful thought. He immediately reassured them that some of those standing there would not have to drink that bitter cup, but would instead remain alive until the Kingdom came (Mark 9:1; cf. 1 Cor 15:51).¹³ And their experience of suffering for the Kingdom, whether as martyrs or not, would be gloriously rewarded when they “saw the kingdom having come in power.” They would not only see it arrive, but would receive, inherit, and enter into it (Dan 7:18; Matt 24:34; Mark 9:47; Acts 14:22). They were not expecting to live through that event with no perception that Christ had come, nor without experiencing it in any cognitive way. And Jesus assured them with oath-type language (“*Amen, I say to you*” Mk 9:1) that they would indeed “see” it, and experience it, and know about it afterwards.

What an astounding reward he offered to those disciples who would faithfully “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him” (Mark 8:34). As Apostle Paul noted later, the intensity of those sufferings “were not worthy to be compared” to the infinitely greater glory that they would experience at the Parousia (Rom 8:18; cf. 2 Cor 4:7-17; Eph 1:18; Col 3:4; 2 Thess 1:7-10; 1 Pet 1:13). It was definitely an understatement

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Seeing the Kingdom

by Edward E. Stevens

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when Apostle Peter said they would “rejoice with exultation” (1 Pet 4:13; cf. 2 Thess 1:7-10). That was not a *silent*, passive, or non-experiential reception of the kingdom! And it did not occur on earth, but in the unseen spiritual realm with Christ. That is why no one on earth saw it or heard it.

No wonder those saints were willing to suffer so much. They knew the reward would be infinitely greater, and would more than compensate for their “light afflictions” (2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18, 36-37). Elsewhere, Jesus and the apostles reveal that the dead saints would be *raised immortal* to inherit the kingdom, while the living saints would have their mortal bodies *changed* to immortal, and would then be caught up to stand in the glorious presence of Christ in the unseen realm (1 Cor 15:51-54; 2 Cor 5:2-4; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Matt 24:31; Mark 13:27; Luke 21:36; John 14:3; 1 Thess 4:17).

There are numerous other statements like this which clearly show that the disciples who remained alive until the Parousia were expecting to have their mortal bodies changed into immortal bodies without experiencing death, and then be caught up to be with Christ in the unseen realm forever afterwards.

CONCLUSION

Here in Mark 9:1, Jesus is simply promising that some of them would remain alive until He returned. He did not need to say

what would happen to them at the Parousia, nor where they would be afterwards, because they knew that they would be gathered by the angels (Matt 24:31; Mark 13:27) and “*enter into the kingdom of heaven*” at His return (Matt 5:20; 7:21; 18:8; Mark 9:43-47).

They were not expecting to be left on earth in ignorance and confusion, completely unaware that the Parousia had occurred! Rather, they were anxiously waiting to be changed and taken to heaven without experiencing death (disembodiment).

So they were no longer on earth when they *looked back* upon the kingdom after it had come. They were in the unseen realm of heaven, experiencing the full benefits of their kingdom inheritance. And their *absence* from the earthly realm explains their *silence* about the Parousia and the other end-time events such as the coming of the kingdom in power. †

NOTE: I have several FREE articles in PDF format which explore what the first-century saints were expecting to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia, including an extensive list of the New Testament expectation statements. If you would like to have these articles, simply request them by email (preterist1@preterist.org).

1. Paraphrased from a post on the PretCosmos Yahoo Discussion list written by Michael Sullivan on Jan. 10, 2006
2. Charles Hill, chapter in *When Shall These Things Be?*, Keith Mathison, ed., p. 107, brackets and emphasis added
3. Don Preston, *We Shall Meet Him in the Air*, pp. 286, 287, 291, 299. bracketed word and emphasis added
4. Eusebius quotes Irenaeus who supposedly claimed that Polycarp had received some of his instruction from John and others who had seen the Lord (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 5, Ch. 20, sections 4-6)
5. Personal Email from Dr. David Warren, dated Jan. 21, 2016
6. Personal Email from Parker Voll dated Dec. 14, 2015
7. *Albert Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, comments on Mark 9:1
8. *Hermeneia Commentary* on Mark 9:1. Footnote 146: Michael J. Cook takes 8:34–9:1 as a unit: *The Structure and Persuasive Power of Mark: A Linguistic Approach*, p. 226. (SBL Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995)
9. *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (NICNT) on Mark 9:1
10. *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (NICNT) on Mark 9:1
11. *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (BKC) on Mark 9:1
12. *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (EBC) on Mark 9:1
13. *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (NIGTC) on Mark 9:1

Perspectives

Progress of Preterism

... continued from p. 7



Ed Stevens

HOW HAS THE PRETERIST COMMUNITY PROGRESSED OVER THE LAST DECADE?
There are lots of new names and faces in the preterist movement. It is growing rapidly, not only here in the USA, but around the world. I regularly interact with, and send information to, fellow preterists in India, Ethiopia, Australia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Central and South America. Quite a contrast from the way it was 40 years ago when I first became a full preterist (1975). Back in those days, I could count all the full preterist teachers and writers on two hands with fingers to spare (i.e., less than ten). But now they are innumerable, like the sand on the seashore or the stars in the sky!

HOW HAS IT DIGRESSED?

Whenever we Christians become weak in our understanding of the Bible and history, we become susceptible to attack by the cults, skeptics, and other religions and philosophies. Universalism, Christadelphianism, and Annihilationism have become a serious problem. We have compromised with the hedonistic and materialistic culture around us, and are like a ship adrift on the ocean, being tossed around by every wind of doctrine that blows through. This is a problem for all Christians, but we preterists have our fair share of it. We simply need to get our heads back into the Word and follow it faithfully.

HOW HAS PRETERISM GAINED MORE ACCEPTANCE WITHIN CHRISTIANITY?

The growth in the movement has come from all of us sharing the preterist message with our family and friends. The scriptures which teach a first century TIME of fulfillment are the foundation on which our preterist apologetic is built. Jesus was not a false prophet. He kept His promise. The New Testament is reliable. That is what makes the preterist message so compelling. We just need to keep sharing that message wherever we go.

WHAT DOES PRETERISM NEED TO DO MOVING FORWARD TO GAIN RECOGNITION/CREDIBILITY WITHIN CHRISTIANITY?

The first-century Jewish Christians had to keep the law better than the unbelieving Jews in order to make

Christianity attractive to them. Kosher Jews will not drink from an unclean cup. That same principle applies to sharing the preterist message. We need to be better Christians, and more holy in our words and deeds and doctrines, than those whom we wish to teach. Our godly lifestyle adorns the message and makes it attractive to others.

WHAT SIGNIFICANT PRETERIST MILESTONES/EVENTS STAND OUT TO YOU IN THE LAST DECADE?

For the first thirty years of my full preterist adventure (1975-2005), it seemed that we preterist teachers and writers were forced to focus mainly on the TIME of fulfillment. But now that the movement has grown, especially within the last ten years, we are seeing a shift toward more study of the NATURE of fulfillment, as well as the historical documentation of that fulfillment. That is a good sign that the movement is beginning to mature, and is further developing its theological and historical underpinnings.

WHAT SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE/EVENT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED BY THE PRETERIST COMMUNITY.

On questions like this, my mind immediately flashes back to the Protestant Reformation five hundred years ago. The Reformers started out with a call to reform the existing church, but that did not work. The Catholic Church refused to reform. So the Reformers broke away and started their own independent churches. That was a milestone event! And that is exactly what we preterists need to do. Futurist churches are not going to change. They would rather die than change. So we need to shake the dust off our feet, and go start new churches. That is what is holding us back from the kind of explosive growth that the previous religious awakenings experienced. Local churches are not only an essential support base for individuals and families, but also for reaching out to the needy in our local communities, and sending out missionaries. Local churches have a much larger pool of resources than individual Christians, so they can finance a lot more efforts to promote the preterist message. The Protestant Reformation was successful because it started new churches everywhere. That is a milestone that we preterists need to achieve real soon now. †

Objection Overruled!

Was John the Baptizer Elijah?

by Don Preston

In FCG's video "You've Got To Be Kidding," the point was made that John the Baptizer was the promised Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6. Brian Martin made the excellent point that John was the "second coming" of Elijah, but not the literal physical return of the great prophet. Just recently, Brian was made aware of a lengthy critique of FCG's video written by Bob Thiel (www.COGwriter.com), in which Thiel attempts to negate John the Baptizer's fulfillment of the Elijah prophecies. I am happy to respond to the objection which is given here. (I am currently working on a major book on John and his eschatological role. It is a subject sorely ignored by too many Bible students).

Thiel states the following in his critique:

"In one part of the DVD by Brian Martin, he cited Malachi 4:5-6 about Elijah to come, but failed to cite Jesus' teaching in Mark 9:12 that an Elijah will still come to restore all things. John the Baptist did not restore all things and was not the final Elijah to come of Malachi 4:5-6 (see also The Elijah Heresies).

"Later in the DVD, Brian Martin makes a lot about John the Baptist being spiritual and cites Matthew 17. He claims this is why no one should think that Jesus is literally coming in clouds, etc. as he says that physically, John the Baptist was the only Elijah to come and John did not do certain things one would expect from various Old Testament prophecies. I consider this to be a 'sleight of hand' move—he uses this several times in the DVD.

"One theological error Brian Martin makes is that he fails to realize that the Greek in Matthew actually tells of a future 'Elijah' to come after John the Baptist. Notice:

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things' (Matthew 17:11).

"In Matthew 17:11, the term translated 'will restore' is the Greek term *apokathistemi* which means 'to reconstitute' or 'restore (again)' (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.) and is preceded by the Greek term *men* which means 'truly' in the asseverative sense. In Matthew 11:14 the Greek term *mello* is used which means 'was,' this term is not used in 17:11.

"Matthew 17:11 itself COULD NOT refer to John the Baptist, because he was beheaded (Matthew 14:10) earlier than Jesus spoke this and taught that Elijah still needed to restore all things. Also, John the Baptist did not restore all things. Thus, the Elijah prophecies must have a fulfillment beyond John the Baptist. While it is also true that Jesus said that John the Baptist was a type of Elijah, John could not in the future restore all things unless he was resurrected in the future to do so.

"Thus, Brian Martin's use of John the Baptist not literal [sic] fulfilling certain 'Elijah' prophecies as proof that Jesus would not physically return is in grave error."

(<http://www.cogwriter.com/preterism.htm>)

Thiel claims that the Greek of Matthew 17 proves that Jesus was predicting a still future Elijah, who would come after John. This is false. Note that this objection implicitly admits that John was in fact Elijah *in some manner!* If not, why even discuss John in the context of the coming of Elijah? If John was not Elijah, why didn't Jesus say, very clearly, that John was not Elijah and that Elijah would one day truly come?

What did Jesus mean by saying "Elijah truly must come"? Look closely at the context, which Thiel apparently ignores. The disciples asked, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come?" Jesus' response, "Elijah must come" is a confirmation of what the scribes taught, and had taught for four centuries. But, you see, *the scribes simply reiterated what the ancient prophecies foretold!* Jesus was not pronouncing a new prophecy of a future coming of Elijah. He was simply confirming that the scribes were correct to say Elijah would come, because the prophets foretold Elijah.

It is highly significant—and fatal to the objection—that after confirming the scribes' teaching concerning the coming of Elijah, that Jesus then said, plainly and unequivocally: "But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands" (Matt 17:11-12).

Thiel essentially ignored these interpretive words from Jesus, waving them aside as if they carried no meaning. Could words be any clearer: "Elijah has already come!?" After clearly stating that Elijah had come, and, "they have done to him (who is him? Elijah!—DKP) what they wished" the text then declares, "the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist." Again, words could not be clearer—either John was Elijah or Jesus was wrong; either John was Elijah, or the disciples were wrong to make the connection between John the Baptizer and Jesus' declaration that "Elijah has already come."

Notice Thiel's presuppositional claims:

"Matthew 17:11 itself COULD NOT refer to John the Baptist, because he was beheaded (Matthew 14:10) earlier than Jesus spoke this and taught that Elijah still needed to restore all things. Also, John the Baptist did not restore all things. Thus, the Elijah prophecies must have a fulfillment beyond John the Baptist. While it is also true that Jesus said

Is there a future coming of Elijah?

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that John the Baptist was a type of Elijah, John could not in the future restore all things unless he was resurrected in the future to do so.”

Thiel claims that Jesus said John was “a type of the Elijah” that is yet to come. Jesus said no such thing: “*Elijah has already come,*” is not, “*John is a type of the true Elijah that will one day come.*” It is wrong to turn Jesus’ statement “*Elijah has already come*” into “*Elijah has not come.*”

Look closely at the reason Thiel rejects John as Elijah: John could not be Elijah because Elijah would restore all things. John did not restore all things—he was beheaded. Thiel’s presuppositional theology about the nature of the restoration of all things leads him to reject—to distort—Jesus’ emphatic identification of John. But once again, Thiel fails to grasp the power of Jesus’ words.

Note that Jesus, speaking of John’s death, said, “*they have done to him what they wished.*” This places John in the category of one of God’s martyrs. John was joining Jesus and all of the Old Testament prophets and martyrs in filling up the measure of suffering that would result in the great Day of the Lord (of Malachi 4:5-6) in vindication of the martyrs.

In Matthew 23, Jesus spoke of Israel’s internecine history:

“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation” (Matt 23:31-36).

Jesus was emphatic—all of the blood of all the martyrs would be avenged at the judgment of Jerusalem in His generation. This motif is critical to understand.

In the parable of the wicked vineyard keepers, the martyrs were to be avenged at the coming of the master of the vineyard, who would “*come and utterly destroy those wicked husbandmen*” (Matt 21:40f). According to Jesus, the martyrs would be avenged at His coming and He promised, “*he will avenge them speedily*” (Luke 18:7-8). (Some claim that “*speedily*” here does not suggest imminence. This is specious. See my lengthy discussion of the Greek of this text in my *Who Is This Babylon?* book. In short, there is not one occurrence of the Greek term used here [*en tachei*] that emphasizes rapidity of action over the imminence of occurrence).

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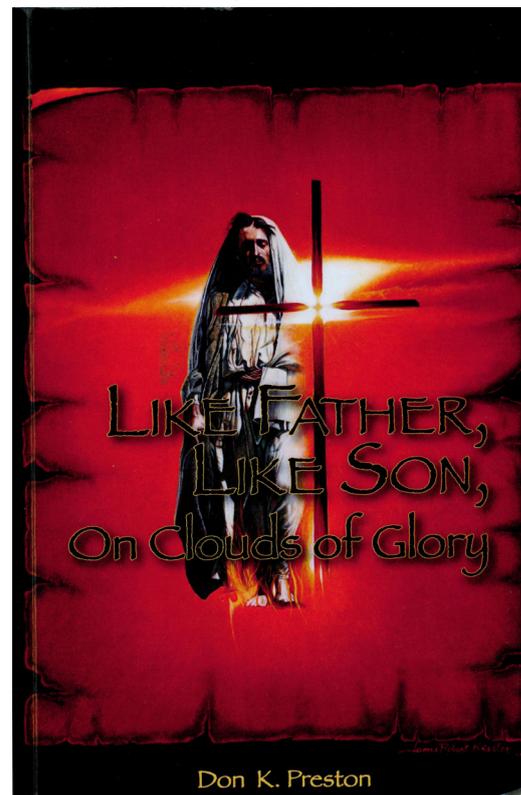
In Revelation 6:9-17, John saw the martyrs crying out for vindication. They were told that they would be vindicated very soon (cf. Luke 18!), when the number of martyrs would be fulfilled. Of necessity, that had to include John! That vindication would occur at the Great Day of the Lord when no man could stand before Him (Rev 6:17). This is a direct citation of Malachi 3:1-3, which declares that *The Messenger* would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord in judgment, and asks the question, “*Who shall stand before Him when He comes?*” This is none other than *the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord to be proclaimed by Elijah!* (Mal 4). So we have these facts:

The Messenger would prepare for the coming of the Lord in judgment when no one could stand before Him (Mal 3:1-6).

The Day of the Lord in vindication of the martyrs, when no man could stand before Him, would be the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Rev 6:17). (Don’t forget that, per Jesus, this would occur at the judgment of Jerusalem).

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord is the Day to be heralded by Elijah (Mal 4:5-6).

Therefore, the Day of the Lord in vindication of the



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Elijah

by Don Preston

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martyrs, when no man could stand before Him, is the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5-6, the Day to be heralded by Elijah.

But, John was *The Messenger* heralding the imminent coming of the Lord in judgment (Matt 3/Mark 1:1-2)—the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

Therefore, as *The Messenger*, John was Elijah.

It is critical to understand that the Day of Malachi 3 would be *the time of judgment on Israel for violating Torah*—just as in Matthew 23. This is demonstrated in v. 6, where the Lord said, “*I will come near to you in judgment.*” That judgment would be for violating Torah, specifically the mandates against sorcerers, extortionist, abusers of widows, etc. (Exod 22:21f and Deut 27:19f). Those passages make it clear that the judgment for those sins would be *national judgment on Israel* (Exod 22:24)! With this in mind, note the following:

John was *The Voice in the wilderness*, preparing for the coming of the Lord in judgment. This is undeniable (cf. Isaiah 40:1-12 with Mark 1:1-3/John 1:23).

John was *The Messenger*, who would prepare for the coming of the Lord in judgment of Israel for violating Torah. Once again: undeniable (Mal 3:1-6/Mark 1:1-2).

But, if John was *The Voice* and *The Messenger*, then without doubt, he was Elijah—unless one is willing to say that as *The Voice* and *The Messenger*, John heralded an entirely different coming of the Lord in judgment than the coming that Elijah was to proclaim! That is untenable.

As *The Voice*, *The Messenger*, and Elijah, did John “successfully” fulfill his role to warn of the Great Day of the Lord? If he did, then he fulfilled his role of “restoring all things.” He certainly fulfilled his role as a martyr, helping to fill the measure of end times, eschatological suffering. (What was John’s message, as *The Voice*, *The Messenger*, and Elijah? Space forbids lengthy discussion of the “restoration of all things,” but see my *Like Father Like Son, On Clouds of Glory* book for an in-depth study of this fascinating issue).

John said to the Pharisees and Sadducees: “*Who has warned you to flee from the wrath that is* (Gk. *mello*, literally, “about to come”) *to come?*” (Matt 3:7). This wrath is none other than the Day of fire of Malachi 4:1-3, the Great Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5-6! John draws directly from Malachi.

“*And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. . . . His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” (Matt 3:10, 12)

In Malachi 4:1, the Day of the Lord to be heralded by Elijah would be against the wicked and would leave them “*neither root*

nor branch.” This was John’s message! So, Malachi said Elijah would herald the Great Day of the Lord when the wicked would be cut down, leaving neither root nor branch. John (who Jesus said was Elijah) said the axe was already at the root. We are given no recourse but to see John as Elijah.

John said, “*his winnowing fork is already in his hand.*” The imagery tells us that the end-of-the-age harvest, when the chaff would be burned up, was already approaching! Once again, this is the Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:1-2—the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5-6—the Day for which Elijah (John) was *The Voice* and *The Messenger*! [Side Bar: Significantly, I have not found a single commentary (perhaps I have missed one) that denies that John was *The Voice*, or, *The Messenger*! Well, if John was undeniably *The Voice* and *The Messenger*, then he was equally Elijah! There is no distinction!]

John’s message in Matthew 3 was Elijah’s message in Malachi 4. And John, as *The Voice*, *The Messenger*, and Elijah, proclaimed that Malachi’s Day of the Lord was imminent. That Day, the time of the vindication of the martyrs (Matt 23, Rev 6), did fall on Israel in AD 70! Prophecy fulfilled! The roles of *The Voice*, *The Messenger*, and Elijah were fulfilled by John the Baptizer!

Let me summarize:

Jesus unequivocally said, “Elijah has already come.” It is wrong to deny this. Jesus did not say that John was a “type” of the true Elijah that will one day come.

The disciples understood that Jesus was talking about John as the promised Elijah. Were the disciples wrong? There is not a hint in the text to suggest this.

Jesus put John in the company of the martyrs. Jesus said the eschatological, last days number of the martyrs would be filled in His generation. He said that all of the blood, of all the martyrs—which of necessity included John—would be vindicated at His coming in the judgment of Jerusalem that occurred in AD 70. That Day of the Lord in vindication of the martyrs is the Day of the Lord foretold by Malachi 3-4, which John, as *The Voice* and *The Messenger*, heralded. But, that is also the Great and the Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5-6, thus making John the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophesied Elijah.

John was irrefutably *The Voice*. But *The Voice*, just like *Elijah*, was to prepare for the Day of the Lord in judgment.

John was undeniably *The Messenger* who, just like *Elijah*, was to prepare for the Day of the Lord in judgment—the Day of the Lord against Israel for violating Torah!

Thus, to reiterate, unless John, as *The Voice* and *The Messenger*, foretold a totally different Day of the Lord from that of Malachi 4—and his message in Matthew 3 falsifies this premise—this serves as *prima facie* proof that John was Elijah.

The contrast between Thiel and Jesus could not be more stark. Jesus said, “Elijah has already come.”

Thiel says Elijah has not come.”

The objection has been overruled! †

Life in the Kingdom

Present day living in light of past fulfillment

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LIVING TO THE LIGHT WE HAVE

I THINK THAT MANY preterists have an inherent desire to work out the details of their theology, rather than simply going along with the flow. After all, if we wanted to go along with the flow many of us would still be futurists! But we're not, and, having come to an understanding of audience relevance and the biblical time statement regarding Christ's coming, we are not content to rest there. There are ongoing debates on the nature of the resurrection, rapture, and millennium, to name a few of the bigger issues. As I edit articles for *Fulfilled!*, and see the supporting quotes, references, Greek notes, etc., I'm amazed at the depth and breadth of study that many individuals have put, and are putting, into their theology. Though I don't have time to read the books I already own, as I edit I usually find a reference or two to books that I'd like to add to my reading list. And every time I come across a Greek term I remind myself that I'm going to learn Greek someday . . . you know, when things slow down.

Yet even as I experience chagrin over what I'm not able to currently accomplish in life, I'm reminded (perhaps "nagged" would be a better term) of a saying my pastor uses: "Live up to the light you have." Even though I am not an academic theologian, and have but a spattering knowledge of Greek, I understand enough about the Bible that I could spend the remainder of my life just trying to live up to the light I already have. Someone once said, "It's not the things in the Bible I don't understand that trouble me, it's the things I do understand."

I have a mental list of what I call "lifetime" verses. These are verses that I could spend the rest of my lifetime trying to attain, without needing to appeal to commentaries or Greek expositions. Here's one:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called . . ." (Eph 4:1 ESV)

Sure, I could look up this verse in multiple versions, read commentaries, and even explore the Greek of the text. But that would just be putting off what I really need to do—walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which I have been called. Do I examine my actions to see if they are worthy? Does my lifestyle bring glory to the God who called me, or dishonor Him? What about my attitudes? My thoughts?

Do you see what I mean about a "lifetime" verse? I could literally spend the rest of my life focused on applying this verse to my life and even on my dying day find some facet in which I did not conduct myself in a worthy manner (which helps put grace into perspective!).

Here's another one:

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt 6:33 ESV)

Is everything in my life predicated on the concept of seeking first the kingdom of God? Is my desire to learn Greek for the purpose of better knowing His kingdom, or is it to stroke my theological pride. Are the extra hours I sometimes put in at work ultimately for the purpose of His kingdom, or are they for my personal material kingdom? While an exposition of the Greek of this passage would undoubtedly provide some insightful nuances, the plain old English is convicting enough for me. Again, I could (and should) spend a lifetime trying to apply this verse to my life (and my life to this verse).

I'm not saying that theological studies or learning Greek are bad things. But might we allow them to become distractions in living out our daily lives? Might we allow the pursuit of more light to distract us from living up to the light we have? Perhaps. We need not abandon one for the other, but, as with most things in life, maintain a proper balance. As Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"These things you ought to have done without neglecting the others." (Matt 23:23 ESV) †

Anatomy of a Fulfilled! Issue

LONG-TIME
READERS WILL
RECOGNIZE THIS
THROW-BACK
STYLE TO THE
BEGINNING YEARS
OF FULFILLED!
MAGAZINE.

Shortly after I send an issue of Fulfilled! to the printer, and sometimes before, I begin gathering articles for the next issue. I begin by reviewing articles that have already been submitted, and then determine the number and type of articles for which I must solicit others. This includes informing Ed Stevens and Don Preston that I'm ready for their next articles. If readers have sent in topics that they'd like to see addressed I'll determine which column would be the most appropriate for the topic: for example, if someone provides an objection to preterism, I'll let Don handle that in his column; if the subject matter is the different views within preterism of a particular topic, I'll make that a "Perspectives" column topic. I'll then attempt to get at least two preterists whom I know hold different views on the topic to present their views. The "Perspectives" column is a favorite with readers, who enjoy the presentation of differing aspects of preterism. We're all on a journey, and it's helpful to read the insights of others as we endeavor to work out our personal theology.

If I don't have any suggested topics or objections from readers I'll take advantage of that by addressing a topic I've been mulling over. If I don't have a nagging objection to preterism that I've recently encountered, I'll go to my library and peruse my "anti" preterism books for an objection for which I'm unaware of any formal response, and then pass that along to Don.

Early on in the article gathering stage a theme may present itself in the initial articles. If this occurs, I'll then try to tailor the other articles I solicit toward that theme, so that the issue generally revolves around a particular topic. Usually the issue is more of a potpourri of unrelated topics.

As I receive the initial drafts from the various authors, I begin the editing process. I go over the articles and edit for grammar, syntax, and style. I'll often dialog with the author during this process about certain points looking for clarification, more information, etc. Once I feel comfortable with the article, I'll send it to Mike Beidler, who generally makes my editing look like child's play. Mike is blessed with both editing skills and a sharp theological mind. His edits come back with not just great wording and arrangement, but with theological comments as well ("how does the author resolve this point with such-and-such verse?" or "isn't this taking the passage out of context?," etc.). I'm embarrassed by how much red ink Mike has on articles I've already edited, but I find myself accepting most of his suggestions. Unfortunately, because I've been so far behind in everything pertaining to FCG lately, I have been unable to afford even the short time that Mike takes to edit the articles. I hope that changes soon.

After reviewing Mike's edits, I'll have a "final" edit that I can give to the author for their approval. We might dialog over a couple points here and there, but usually get to the print version pretty quickly once we're at this stage. During the editing process I'll also call upon my wife, Kayla, to help me decide between sticky editing options, both mine and Mike's. I try to not involve her too heavily at this stage because I know that she is going to read the entire magazine cover-to-cover before I send it to the printer. A couple of exceptions are getting her thoughts on unsolicited articles (Do you think readers would like this? Is this too "over the top"?), and articles I write.

While the editing phase is ongoing I'll begin plugging the draft versions of the articles into my magazine template to get a feel for how much space each will take. This helps me determine if an article is longer than a single spread (a left- and right-side page layout), if

by Brian L. Martin

I'll have room for graphics, if I'll need any short "filler" material, etc. If it looks like I'll need some filler I'll start thinking about what to use, and looking for material of the appropriate length.

During this entire process I try to remember to review my emails for any ad material that has been requested for print – upcoming conferences, The Preterist Bible, etc. I then have to find the space for these items amongst the various articles.

Once I have replaced the drafts in my layout with the final articles, and have tweaked all the ads, filler material, etc. so that it looks good to my eye, I'll print it out for Kayla to review. Of course, she helps me in the tweaking process by picking colors, balancing pages, etc. However, once she has the printed version, she gets out her fine-toothed comb and reads everything on every page. By this point, I've read the articles so many times that I read what I think is there, not what is actually there. She goes over everything with a fairly fresh set of eyes and I'm always amazed at how much she finds (you have "the" here twice; you need a "to" in this sentence). She checks the Table of Contents, the page numbers, the issue number – all things that I've checked myself, but have somehow missed. Often the printed colors don't match the colors on the computer screen, and text in colored boxes that may have looked good on the computer are difficult to read on the printed page. So we'll tweak and print, tweak and print until we're satisfied (even at that, our printed colors don't exactly match the professional printer's colors).

Somewhere during all this process I've been mulling over in the back of my mind concepts for a cover. If the issue has a theme I'll design a cover along those lines. If there is no theme I'll pick one of the main articles and use a topic from it for a cover design. Sometimes the cover is the most challenging part of the issue. Once I have a concept for the cover I'll search the internet for public domain photos or graphics, or sometimes take my own pictures. Kayla and I will then narrow the photo/graphic options to our favorite, and then finalize any text for the cover. This also takes many "tweak and print" cycles.

Once we're happy with the final printed version, I send it to the printer. The issue typically mails out about one month from the time I send it to the printer. About one week after sending the issue to the printer Kayla sends an updated mailing list to the printer.

Currently we order about 2700 copies of each issue, 2300 of which the printer mails directly to our US and Canadian readers. The remaining 400 are shipped to us, and I give the bulk of those to my coworker and good friend Bill Greene. Many of you "met" Bill in FCG's "You've Gotta Be Kidding" video, and know him as the person who introduced me to preterism. Bill mails out all of our overseas copies, each of which has to be individually stuffed in an envelope and labeled. Because each destination has to be individually weighed and priced at the Post Office, he often makes multiple trips with armfuls, or boxfuls, of stuffed envelopes for mailing. The clerks at the Post Office have come to know Bill and when they see him coming they race to go on break or file for early retirement.

Kayla uses the remaining 100 or so copies to send to new sign-ups, replace missing or damaged copies, etc.

And then it's time to start on the next issue!

“BY THIS POINT,
I’VE READ THE
ARTICLES SO
MANY TIMES
THAT I READ
WHAT I THINK
IS THERE,
NOT WHAT
IS ACTUALLY
THERE.”

In This Issue:

Progress of Preterism

Seeing the Kingdom
Come

Preterist Registry
Network turns 3!

Elijah and John the
Baptist

Fulfilled Communications Group
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
Ione, CA 95640-9614

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!



Preterism
Preterism

...maybe it's about time you looked into it!