

SUMMER 2018

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 2

FULFILLED! *Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

Observations from the Feeding of the Five Thousand



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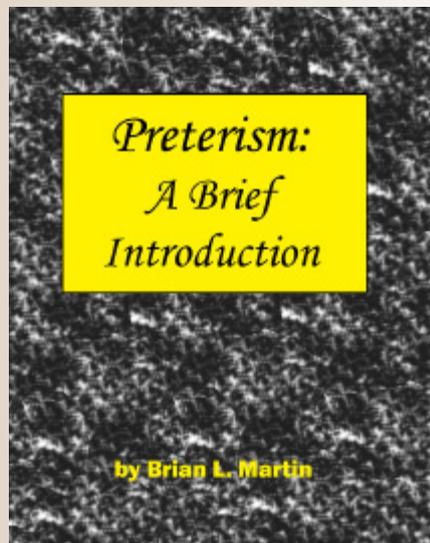


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(Please note that this booklet is currently not available from FCG.)

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Published by
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COMMUNICATIONS
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Editor's Note...

... receive your issue of *Fulfilled!* with all joy, but examine the Scriptures to see if these things are true.

THE FIRST DAY OF spring seems to have been only a couple of weeks ago, yet as I write, summer is already a week old. Which means that the summer issue of *Fulfilled!* is overdue. Thankfully, the fact that I'm writing my update means that the rest of the magazine is pretty much wrapped up and ready for Kayla to proofread; then it's on to the printer.

Kayla and I continue to devote a significant amount of time listening to and reading health-related materials, and incorporating them into our lives. As the psalmist proclaims, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and when we stop overwhelming our God-designed immune systems they are once again able to restore our health. I've heard it said that no doctor or medicine has ever healed anyone of anything; rather, all they do is help put the body in a state where it can heal itself. Kayla's medical test results continue to show improvement. By the time you read this she will have been cancer-free for 18 months. We appreciate the concern expressed by readers and for your prayers!

I caught Don Preston while he was on an out-of-state trip, with another trip scheduled the following week. In spite of his hectic schedule he was able to provide an article for his *Objection Overruled* column. For preterists who may feel unsure about how to respond to those who claim that modern Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy, I think you'll find Don's article very helpful.

This issue also has an installment of the "Life in the Kingdom" column, which focuses more on daily

Christian living than on defining and defending preterism. This issue's article is provided by my pastor, Jim Moore. Kayla and I are blessed to attend a small home-fellowship which Jim leads. Since I spend an inordinate amount of my "theological time" engrossed in eschatology and preterism, I particularly rely on the balance the study provides, since the topic of the study is rarely preterism. Rather, Jim's focus is on admonishing and encouraging our daily walks in Christ. I hope you are blessed by his article.

The two over-arching reasons that Kayla and I started *Fulfilled!* Magazine were: 1) to provide small, bite-sized articles to hopefully pique the interest of those who don't have the time to read an entire book about preterism; 2) to provide a sense of community to preterists scattered across the country who often have no like-minded believers with whom to fellowship. Judging by reader responses over the years, I believe that we have succeeded in those aspirations.

One of the recurring comments we receive is how readers appreciate having different views within preterism presented. I believe that this is because they, like me, are on a theological journey and are still working out the details of their preterism. I'm sure that I've stated it before, but for the sake of newer readers I should perhaps reiterate that I am not a theologian, at least in the formal sense (I believe that we are all theologians in an informal sense, because we each must individually work out our own salvation with fear and trembling). Rather, like many of

you, I'm still on a journey, analyzing and internally debating the various details of preterism. In a somewhat ironic twist, the time I spend producing *Fulfilled!* Magazine is time that is robbed from my personal study of the topics presented in its pages. Not that I'm complaining; while I'd love to have a deeper grasp on all things preterist, I feel that producing the magazine is where God wants me to be at this time. Nevertheless, I am looking forward to having more study time once I retire (hopefully early next year).

While it probably goes without saying, the different views presented in the magazine obviously cannot all be correct. At least one view has to be wrong (I say "at least one" because, though unlikely, it is possible that *all* the views are wrong). Therefore, it is incumbent upon us as readers (I consider myself a reader also) to examine these views in light of Scripture, holding to those which are true, and letting go of the others. But this is not achieved by reading one issue of *Fulfilled!* Some topics may take a lifetime of study, and many more resources than those cited in these pages. *Fulfilled!* is simply a launch pad, providing a starting point for your own personal studies. As I have stated before, we're not telling you what to think, we're giving you something to think about. Therefore, I encourage you to be like the Bereans—receive your issue of *Fulfilled!* with all joy, but examine the Scriptures to see if these things are true.

As always, we are grateful for your prayers, encouraging words, and financial support.

Blessings,

Brian

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Observations from the Feeding of the five thousand

by James W. Moore

“And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.” (Mark 6:51-52; ESV)

AS I HAVE MOVED through life I have found myself at times faced with situations and circumstances that were (and are) quite difficult for me to deal with as a believer and as a father, a husband, and an old man. As I mull over these situations and circumstances, I find that I can quote the right Scriptures, I can give biblical answers, I can reason through these things in the language of Scripture, yet the conclusions at which I arrive do not always result in an understanding, trust, and awareness of God’s presence and peace as the Bible says it should.

So, what do I do; how do I gain peace, perception, and understanding in the midst of these ongoing, and sometimes very troubling and difficult, circumstances? How do I sense the presence and grace of God in such times? How do I not only acknowledge mentally, but also trust in my heart, that these situations are the working out of God’s love and purpose in my life?

I have been studying the Bible fairly deeply for over 50 years, and yet the greatest obstacle for me to overcome is the simple everyday trusting of its message and teachings as they are embodied in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. “After all,” I ask myself, “my studies have enabled me to know quite a bit about Him—should I not be able to trust Him?”

The teaching of the Bible I readily accept intellectually, every fact revealed concerning Christ Jesus I embrace without reserve—but *how far different that is from practically living the life of trusting faith*; of knowing by experience His felt, or perceived, presence; of easily recognizing His promised supply of grace to my life, resulting in the practical abilities and leadings promised in Scripture!

How do I reckon Him as always present and directing the affairs of my everyday life—the small insignificant circumstances and relationships, as well as those that are life changing? And how do I then find the promised grace and ability to conduct myself in obedience and submission to Him, no matter the situation or relationship that He brings into my life?

Dear readers, beloved of God, at long last I have the answers: I don’t know!!! But I can tell you what I do know: the disciples didn’t always have the answers either (at least not until after Pentecost), yet *for three years they were constantly*

in His physical, literal presence, experiencing the practical reality of Omnipotence at work residing in the God-man Jesus!

Perhaps it is a testimony to the smallness of my own “trust” in God through the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus; nonetheless, the lack of faith and trust the disciples displayed at times gives me encouragement—especially in light of their privilege of living their life in His physical presence for those three years that He walked and ministered on the earth.

I am so glad that they, just like you and me, were sinners saved by grace, and that even after seeing the Lord perform astounding miracles in their presence they still could not live their daily lives upon a more “supernatural” plane or level!

Our text in Mark 6:51-52 is the basis for my introductory remarks. This narrative follows the feeding of the five thousand, Peter’s walking on the water, and the stilling of the storm.

“And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.”

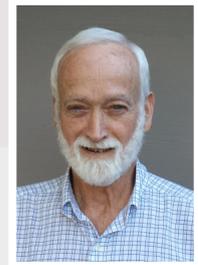
What were they to understand? What I would like to do is make some observations regarding the Gospels’ accounts of the feeding of the five thousand.

My first observation, considering the disciples’ view of the multitude and the “smallness” of the provision at hand—is what a sense of helplessness they must have felt! Yet just as the disciples discovered, what a blessing for us to know that what we cannot provide, Christ has provided for us. We cannot provide anything toward our soul’s salvation, but, just as in the feeding of the multitude, all we can do is offer up our need. And just as the disciples recognized their inability to supply the need at hand, when we recognize our spiritual need, it is then, and then only, that we see the glories of the Son of God in saving us and the super-abounding grace supplied to do so! What lengths the Holy Spirit of God goes to at times to convince us of this fact and reality, though we at times resist through pride and unbelief! I still need constant reminding and conviction of the Holy Spirit to realize and employ the biblical teaching that “*when I am weak, then am I strong.*”

Our situation may lead us to say “I cannot,” which is true. But God can and will in grace when I look to Him in absolute

Present day living in light of past fulfillment

Jim Moore



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dependence! Therefore, we must strive to always maintain the completed work of Christ as the backdrop of our lives. Jesus accomplished all that was necessary for our salvation, and we should keep the good news of the gospel ever before us! This will enable us to face the hungry multitudes and storms in our lives.

My second observation is that although the lad possessed the loaves and fish, they belonged to Jesus. Likewise, we possess nothing that God has not given us. In my experience of life I have found it difficult to realize and put into practice the premise that everything I have is provided for me and given to me by God through His all-wise Providence. Whatever gifts, abilities, or possessions I have are given to me by God—the very breath I take is His supreme right to withhold or keep giving.

I have found it extremely difficult, yet a true blessing, when I am able to “let go” of anything that God is pleased to take from me! How difficult it is to echo the words of Job after he had lost all of his flocks, servants, and children: “*Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong*” (Job 1:21-22; ESV).

When God in His wisdom is pleased to take some possession or even loved ones from us it hurts deeply, but He is there to console and comfort us with His promise: “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*” (Rom 8:28). This does not mean that all things are “good,” but that God causes them to work towards “good”; more importantly, they work to eventually demonstrate and manifest God’s glory!

When God “reassigns” a possession He has lent to us, our earthly perspective may view that as an affliction or trial, as we do in the case of Job. Yet Paul informs us that these very “afflictions” enable us to minister to others in ways we were previously unable to do:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our

comfort.” (2 Cor 2:1-7; ESV)

My next observation is the Lord’s response when the disciples brought to His attention the problem of feeding the multitude; our Lord said, “*you give them something to eat.*” How would you have reacted to the Lord’s response? Our Lord often puts questions to the disciples that they cannot answer and lays duties upon them which they can neither perform nor accomplish by themselves—*He still does that!*

When Jesus said “*you give them something to eat,*” we likely would have said just what the disciples said; “*We only have two fish and five loaves!*” Yet consider what ministerial experience the disciples had to draw upon when charged to feed the multitude. They had just returned from their evangelistic mission, during which they accomplished some amazing, perhaps astounding, things in preaching and healing in the Name of the Lord! They themselves were actively involved in accomplishing that which was miraculous! They did not merely “witness” someone else perform these miracles—they were accomplished by their own hands as the Spirit worked through them.

“*What,*” we can imagine our Lord admonishing them, “*don’t you remember what you just came back from doing; did you not experience my presence in power as you ministered in my Name? Did you not find that every need was graciously provided? Did you not see a power at work that was way beyond your abilities, and found every true need to be met?*” Yet how often have we as believers, when faced with a current crisis or affliction, forgotten God’s previous gracious supplies throughout the course of our lives?

In my opinion, a great deal of the Christian life is about what I call “raising Ebenezers.” There is a stanza in the hymn *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* which declares, “here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I’m come.” Ebenezer means “Stone of Help,” and was a memorial stone erected by Samuel to remind the Israelites that, “*thus far the LORD has helped us*” (1 Sam 7:12). In order to live the Christian life to the glory of God who gives that life, we need to raise more Ebenezers. We need to exhort ourselves to remember God’s faithfulness and dealings with us in the past! We need to do as Jeremiah did:

“But this I call to mind [remember], and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’” (Lam 3:21-24; ESV)

For our next observation, let us consider the Lord’s response when the disciples informed Him of the “resources” on hand—He said: “*bring them here to me.*” Christ takes what we have and

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Feeding the 5,000

by James W. Moore

... continued from p. 7

makes it sufficient to His end! Yet He expects us to use what He has given us. We may feel that we have not been blessed with an abundance of “talent,” but Jesus expects us to use what we do have for His glory. We may at times lament and mourn that we cannot do “much” for Jesus, yet Jesus expects us to do only what we can—“can” being a word of ability. What we cannot do, He will provide the grace to do. Recall what our Lord said of the woman who anointed Him with ointment:

“She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” (Mark 14:8-9)

God very seldom calls any of us to greatness or the accomplishment of miracles; *but He always calls us to do what we can.* God may be pleased to put us into some very dire circumstances—He may greatly limit our gifts and abilities; He may at His good pleasure take away even what we *were once able to do*, and in doing so, He asks us to *do only what we now can*; even if it is only a “cup of cold water” or providing “a couple of pennies” to the needy in His Blessed Name.

I am finding that as I age, God is both limiting what I used to be able to do and He is in the process of giving me new things that I can do. But I am also finding I need more of His grace to accomplish those things I can do! Age supposedly brings more wisdom, but it also reduces abilities and limits effort. I must now seek to identify my “new” gifts and “abilities,” and do them as best I “can” and trust Him to do for me and mine that which I cannot! How about you—are you seeking to be faithful in doing what you can? I believe that He intends for us to be content with that!

Finally, we must labor to keep our hearts well-versed in the Deity and Omnipotence of Christ! We should never be “astounded” to the extent that we are afraid of Him or wonder at what He does!

“And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.” (Mark 6:51-52; ESV)

The Amplified New Testament translates this Scripture as follows: “For they failed to consider or understand the teaching and meaning of the miracle of the loaves; in fact, their hearts had grown callous—had become dull, and had lost the power of understanding.” This always happens when *we fail to consider what He has done for us in the past.* We need to be more faithful in erecting our “Ebenezers!” Had He ever failed to respond to the disciples’ urgent needs? Had He ever abandoned them when they were in urgent need of help? No. Yet they forgot what He had done previously, and only considered what they wanted done at the moment. Have our hearts become hardened like those of the disciples? Faith is better than fear. It is safer to be in a storm-tossed ship with Christ than to be on solid ground without Him. †





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Foreword by David Chilton

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(from the Preface)

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Objection Overruled!

Is Modern-Day Israel a Fulfillment of Prophecy?

by Don Preston

“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus” (Isa 35:1)

“Given Israel’s miraculous rebirth as a nation in 1948, and her subsequent agricultural innovations which have literally caused the wilderness to blossom, how can preterism claim that modern-day Israel is not a fulfillment of prophecy?”

CONSIDERATION OF THE OBJECTION

The objection before us is, with all due respect, a classic example of presuppositional theology and hermeneutic, conjoined with the act of completely ignoring the New Testament application of the prophecy. It appears that the objector has lifted just a few lines from the entire prophecy, looked at a travel brochure of Israel, and declared that prophecy is being fulfilled! But, let’s take a closer look at the entire context and the New Testament application:

*“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
The excellency of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are fearful-hearted,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you.”
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it shall be for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.
No lion shall be there,
Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk there,*

*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:1-11)*

It would be possible to write an entire book on this wonderful chapter! Due to space restrictions I will confine my comments to just a few salient points from this great prophecy.

1. The Objector appeals to the “miraculous” restoration of Israel in 1948. In fact, there was nothing “miraculous” about Israel’s restoration; rather, it was a well orchestrated, political act brought about by a misguided theological and political movement. But, briefly, consider this:

The Old Testament prophecies of restoration are clear that restoration would only take place when Israel had repented of her violation of Torah and turned in humble submission to the Lord, (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30:1-10). That repentance did not occur in 1948!

Not only would Israel have to repent, she would have to obey the Law of Moses in her repentance. This is explicit in Deuteronomy 30. But, even dispensationalists agree that the Law of Moses is no longer valid and that it will never be restored! Thus, the very condition demanded by Scripture for the “restoration of Israel” was not existent in 1948. This is a fatal reality.

The Old Testament predictions of the restoration of Israel emphatically state that the unbelievers and the “rebels” in Israel *would not enter the land*. They would not comprise the restored Israel (see Ezek 20:32-35)! And yet, virtually all sources admit that the great majority of “Jews” who brought about that claimed restoration were in fact “atheists, agnostics and unbelievers.”¹

The generation to see the restoration of Israel, per the leading dispensationalists, would be the generation to see the coming of the Lord (see Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times*). The generation that saw 1948 is virtually gone. Time is up! *The truth is that nothing that happened in 1948 was prophetically significant or miraculous* (see my book, *Israel 1948: Countdown to No Where*, for a full discussion).

2. Notice that in Matthew 11, the disciples of John were sent to inquire if Jesus was the Christ. Jesus told those disciples to return to John with the following message:

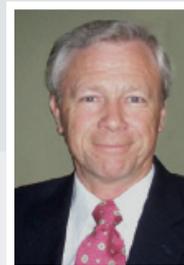
“Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” (Matt 11:4f)

This is a direct echo—almost a direct citation—of Isaiah 35. In other words, Jesus was saying that what Isaiah foretold was being fulfilled in Him *and His ministry!* Jesus was not

Is there a future coming of Elijah?

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Don K. Preston



Don is president of
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saying that at some future time Isaiah would finally be fulfilled. He does not say that what was taking place was a “foretaste” of what will eventually take place. What Isaiah foretold was taking place!

This raises the question: If Jesus was declaring that Isaiah was being fulfilled in His ministry, where do we find any evidence that the literal land was undergoing a physical transformation? Answer: We don’t! There is no justification for such a claim. And yet, there is no doubt that Jesus was drawing on Isaiah and proclaiming those prophecies were being fulfilled.

3. There is something more here. Jesus and the New Testament writers were very clear in stating that they were living in the very days foretold by the Old Covenant prophets, and that they were seeing what those Old Testament prophets anticipated. Look at Jesus’ words in Matthew 13:17:

“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

The Lord had just castigated the people of His day for refusing to recognize what was taking place before their eyes. They refused to hear; they refused to see. But, Jesus gave a blessing to His disciples because they were hearing and seeing. More importantly for our study is that Jesus said that His disciples were seeing what the prophets had desired to see, what they had foretold. In other words, Jesus’ disciples were living in the time foretold by the Old Testament prophets. That meant they were living in the last days, the days of fulfillment (cf. Acts 3:21-24).

What this means is that since Jesus and the New Testament writers said that they were living in the days foretold by the Old Testament prophets, and since Jesus specifically applied Isaiah 35 to what was taking place in His ministry, we are duty bound to acknowledge that Isaiah was in fact being fulfilled in the first century.

4. And we have further confirmation of this:

*“A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it shall be for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.” (Isaiah 35:8)*

To help us understand this motif we have to look at another text or two, and then the ministry of John the Immerser. In Isaiah 11 we find the prediction of the *Highway of the Lord* upon which chapter 35 builds and elaborates. Chapter 11 foretold the coming of “*the rod out of the stem of Jesse*”—the Messiah. The prophet said that “*in that day the root of Jesse would stand for an ensign of the people*” and the Gentiles

would seek the Lord through him (v. 10). In *that day*, “*he shall set up an ensign for the nations and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth*” (v. 12).

In *that day*, “. . . there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, like it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt” (v. 16).

Notice now that Paul specifically quotes from Isaiah 11 and the prediction of the calling of the Gentiles in the days of Messiah—the time of the Highway of the Lord:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: . . . And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.” (Rom 15:8-9, 12)

So, we have the Highway of the Lord set up for the return and restoration of Israel (this is a Second Exodus prophecy, which is highly significant for understanding the ministry of Jesus, but we cannot develop that here) in the days of the Messiah, the ensign. In Messiah’s days, Israel and the nations would seek the Lord. And Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, claimed that Isaiah 11 was being fulfilled in his day, and in his ministry, as he called the Gentiles to Jesus, the Messiah of Isaiah 11.

Notice that Isaiah says repeatedly “*in that day*” the ensign would be raised for the salvation of the Gentiles. He said it was “*in that day*” when the Highway would be constructed. This ties the Highway of the Lord together with the salvation of the Gentiles.

So, if the Gentiles were being saved in fulfillment of Isaiah 11—as Paul affirmed—this means that *the Highway of the Lord was present*. And that means that Isaiah 35 was being fulfilled when Paul wrote! But, does anyone think that a literal highway, a literal asphalt or concrete highway, was being built in Paul’s day? Hardly. And this is confirmed by a look at another passage that predicted the Highway of the Lord.

*“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!”
Says your God.
“Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,
That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the Lord’s hand
Double for all her sins.”
The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord;
Make straight in the desert
A highway for our God.
Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill brought low;*

continued on p. 12

Modern Israel

by Don K. Preston

... continued from p. 11

*The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough places smooth.* (Isaiah 40:1-4)

The indisputable fact is that according to both John himself and Jesus, John the Immerser was the Voice in the wilderness. When the ambassadors from Jerusalem came to him asking who he was, John was emphatic in declaring that “*I am The Voice of one crying in the wilderness*” (John 1:23; see also Mark 1:1-3).

Dispensationalist Grant Jeffrey claimed: “There is not one example in the Bible of a prophecy that was fulfilled in an allegorical, non-historical manner.”² If Jeffrey is right, then we must be able to find the New Testament evidence that John was one of the greatest “landscapers” in history, leveling mountains, filling valleys, building the “super highway of the Lord.” John was patently no such “landscaper.” [Side Bar: In stark contrast to the amazing claim of Jeffrey, Kenneth Gentry cites Crenshaw and Dunn, who demonstrate that, “out of 97 OT prophecies only 34 were directly or literally fulfilled, which is only 35.05 percent.”³]

Jeffrey’s literalistic approach to prophecy is falsified by the role of John—especially as it relates to the objection before us. In both Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 40 the *Highway of the Lord* is constructed at the time when the desert would bloom. But, since it is impossible to take the “road building” language literally, this virtually falsifies the claims of the objector. In other words:

Premise 1: The Highway of the Lord would be built when the desert would bloom (Isaiah 35 / 40).

Premise 2: John was the Voice to build a Highway for the coming of the Lord.

Conclusion: Therefore, the desert was to bloom in the days of John as the one who would build the Highway of the Lord.

(It should be noted that in New Testament passages, Paul echoed the Old Testament prophecies of “the Way” i.e. “The Highway of the Lord” as fulfilled in Christ; Acts 9:2 / 19:9, 23. He never spoke of it as something yet future, but as present).

The ministry of John the Immerser, in fulfillment of Isaiah 40 (and thus, of Isaiah 35) should be more than sufficient to demonstrate that the objection before us is false.

5. Of many additional points that could be made, notice that the day when the desert would bloom would also be when, “*The Lord your God shall come*” (Isaiah 35:2, 4).

In v. 2 we are specifically told that when the desert bloomed “*They shall see the glory of the Lord.*” In verse 4 we are told that the Lord would *come with vengeance* at that time. Thus,

the time when the desert would bloom is the time when the Lord would come in vengeance! We can turn once again to the parallel text of Isaiah 40 for understanding:

The Voice would herald the Great Day of the Lord when He came in judgment and the kingdom (Isaiah 40:10-11).

John the Immerser was the Voice.

John, as the Voice, said the Day of the Lord’s coming in the kingdom and judgment was near:

“*The Kingdom of heaven has drawn near*” (Matt 3:2).

He warned his audience to flee from “*the wrath that is about to come*” (v. 7).

He said that Christ’s winnowing fork (instrument of judgment) was already in his hand.

He said “*the axe is already at the root*” (v. 10-12).⁴

What is profoundly important is that Jesus Himself cited Isaiah and the prediction of the coming of the Lord in judgment and the kingdom:

“*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*” (Matt 16:27-28; cf. Isaiah 62:10-12).

In addition, later in that same generation, Jesus promised, “*Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me*” (Rev 22:12; note that quickly does not mean “rapidly” as opposed to imminently, or soon!) What he had promised in Matthew 16 was now on the cusp of fulfillment!

Jesus’ words are clear, emphatic, and explicit. He was coming in judgment and the kingdom—which is Isaiah 35—in the lifetime of His audience. Since it is undeniably true that there are no 2,000-year-old people walking around today, then either Jesus’ prediction failed or He came in the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecies, including Isaiah 35.

What this short article has revealed is this:

- 1948 was not a miraculous restoration of Israel. Nothing about 1948 fulfilled prophecy and, in fact, everything about 1948 violates prophecy!
- Jesus and the New Testament writers cited Isaiah as being fulfilled during Jesus’ ministry and the establishment of the Church.
- Jesus and His apostles declared repeatedly and emphatically that they were living in the days foretold by the Old Testament prophets, the days of the establishment of the kingdom.
- The Old Testament predictions of the Highway of the Lord, in the days when the desert would bloom, are very clearly linked to the ministry of John the Immerser and thus, not to a literalistic fulfillment.
- Jesus cited the specific prophecies of Isaiah 35 / 40 (and 62) of the coming of the Lord in judgment and the kingdom, and said those prophecies would be fulfilled in the first-century generation.

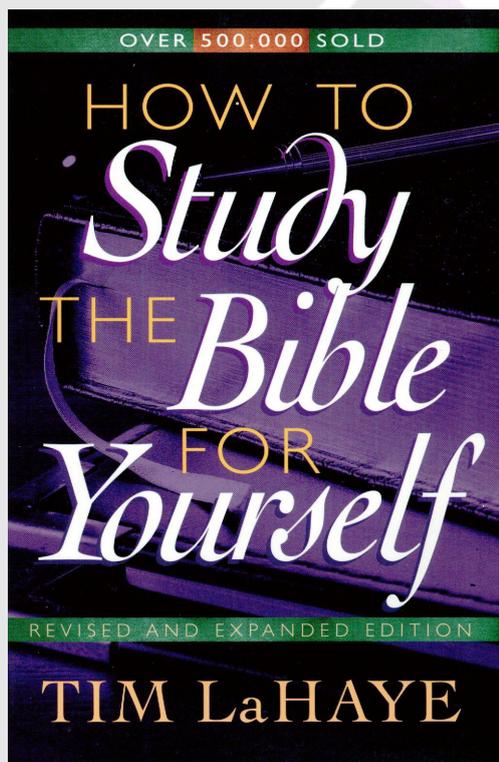
In light of all of this evidence, and much more that could be brought forth, the Objection is Overruled!✠

1. “The majority of the ones who have returned are not even Orthodox Jews. In fact, the majority are atheists and skeptics.” –LaHaye, Tim, and Ice, Thomas, *Charting The End Times*, Eugene, OR, Harvest House, 2001, 86

2. Grant Jeffrey, *The Triumphant Return*, (Toronto; Frontier Research Publications, 2001), 100

3. Kenneth Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, (Draper, VA; Apologetics Group, 2009), 147

4. See my book, *Elijah Has Already Come: A Solution to Romans 11:25-27* for an in-depth discussion of this.



In his chapter on “Hermeneutics,” LaHaye’s first rule is:

1. Take the Bible literally

Much harm has been done by trying to “spiritualize” the Bible instead of taking it literally. When a person writes you a letter you do not normally “spiritualize” its meaning, but you take it literally to heart. The same is true of the Bible. There are, however, some few passages in the Scriptures that should be taken nonliterally of “spiritually.” The question is, “How is the student to know which passages should be taken literally and which one spiritually?” The best answer I know is the Golden Rule of Interpretation, designed by the late Bible scholar Dr. David L. Cooper:

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its primary literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context clearly indicate otherwise.

You will rarely go wrong in Bible study if you first try to interpret a passage literally. For example, when the Bible says, “Fire and brimstone fell out of heaven” it literally means that fire and brimstone came down on the earth. When, however, the Bible says that the moon turned to blood, or the Nile River turned to blood, as it did in the days of Moses, it does not mean that it literally turned to blood, but that it turned to a bloodlike color. However, even in the case of the Nile River, this resulted in the death of fish. A good rule to follow is try to interpret each passage literally. If this is obviously not the case, then as a last resort try to find the spiritual or symbolical truth it is communicating.

Since LaHaye used the example of a letter, which we do not normally “spiritualize,” let’s apply his rule to some texts from a few biblical letters, or epistles:

It is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed, The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. (Paul’s letter to the Romans, 13:11-12)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Paul’s letter to the Romans, 16:20)

Now these things . . . were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthians, 10:11)

For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. (the letter to the Hebrews, 10:37)

You too, be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (James’ letter to the twelve tribes, 5:7)

The end of all things is at hand . . . (Peter’s 1st letter, 4:7)

Even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. (John’s 1st letter, 2:18)

. . . to show His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place. (Jesus’ “letter” to the Church, Rev 1:1)

The time is near. (Jesus’ “letter” to the Church, Rev 1:3)

According to LaHaye, when the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense we should seek no other sense. When we consider that the original audience of these letters was the first-century Christians, what sense would they have made of these statements? Surely that the day of the Lord’s coming and the end of the ages was at hand; that He was coming in a very little while and would not delay; that the end of all things was at hand; that it was the last hour as evidenced by the antichrists who had arisen among them, and that the time for the fulfillment of Revelation’s prophecies was near. Is this not the literal, common sense interpretation of these statements? LaHaye states that only if a literal interpretation “is obviously not the case” are we to look for a spiritual or symbolical interpretation. There is no indication by any of these biblical authors that their time statements were not literal.

As LaHaye writes, “You will rarely go wrong in Bible study if you first try to interpret a passage literally.” When it comes to time statements like the above, preterists offer a hearty “amen” to LaHaye’s statement. Unfortunately, he has failed to follow his own first rule of hermeneutics.

TIM LaHAYE

What Happened In A.D. 70?

by Ed Stevens

SOME EXTREMELY IMPORTANT EVENTS occurred ca. A.D. 70, about which we rarely hear anything, much less grasp their significance. In the year A.D. 66, *the Jews revolted against Rome*. This revolt was provoked by many issues on both the Roman and Jewish sides of the conflict. Rome sent armies to suppress the revolt, and by the summer of A.D. 70 they had captured the city of Jerusalem and crushed the revolt. The city was plundered and burned, and the temple was dismantled stone by stone.

Jesus predicted all of these things forty years earlier, and every one of His detailed predictions came true. The Jewish nation and sacrificial system was so completely dismantled that the Jewish people have never been able to re-establish the temple and sacrificial system in any permanent way since. Many rabbis refer to A.D. 70 as *the end of biblical Judaism*. However, as significant as this event was for Judaism, it was even more significant for Christians.

The followers of Jesus were considered by most as just another sect of Judaism (Acts 9:2, 24:14). The other Judaism sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc.) had severely persecuted Christians in an attempt to prevent them from becoming firmly established. But all of that changed after A.D. 70. After the temple was destroyed, Christians were no longer considered merely another sect of the Jews. Whereas all of the other sects had participated in the revolt against Rome, the Christian Jews did not. Remembering Jesus' prediction of these things and His warning not to participate in them, the Jewish Christians fled Judea at the onset of the conflict. By not participating in the revolt they distinguished themselves from Judaism. Christians were becoming a spiritual, rather than a physical or nationalistic, kingdom (a point we would do well to remember in view of today's Zionist appeals for our support).

Since the Law could not be properly observed after the temple's destruction, the controversy over circumcision and law-keeping immediately subsided. The Jewish nation was so completely destroyed that it would never again be strong enough to seriously threaten the existence of Christ's followers.

SIGNIFICANT FOR BOTH JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

The destruction of Jerusalem indeed demonstrated that the Kingdom had been taken away from the Jewish nation and given to Christ's followers (Matt 21:33-43), and provided final testimony to that generation as to who Jesus was. It showed clearly that God was not interested in a physical empire for the Jews, but rather in the spiritual reign of Jesus over all peoples. Jesus had told His crucifiers that they would see

with their own eyes something which would vindicate His claims to be the Messiah (Matt 26:63-64). That vindication came in A.D. 70 when the Jewish nation was destroyed. The Jews of that generation must have been extremely wicked for God to destroy them in this way. Their destruction was an eye-opener for the rest of the Roman world as well, and established Christ's followers as the *True Israel* of God.

The book of Revelation describes the horrors that came upon the Jews during their war with Rome (A.D. 66-70). The battle of Armageddon was fought in A.D. 70 when God used the Roman armies to stop the Jewish persecution of Christians. The book of Revelation, as well as all the other books of the New Testament, was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, with the gift of inspiration (speaking and writing by inspiration) ceasing after A.D. 70. Everything that was essential for us to know about the Kingdom had been fully revealed by that time, completing the canon of New Testament Scripture. The Kingdom had been fully established under Christ's control, and Christ's enemies (who had rejected Him and persecuted His followers) had been destroyed. All the Old Testament prophecies about the Kingdom and Jesus' return had been fulfilled (Luke 21:22, 31).

Not only did Jesus predict this destruction would come upon His generation, but He predicted His "coming" and the "end of the age" (Matt 24:3) would also occur at that time. All these things were to happen during that first-century "generation" (Matt 24:34). There are numerous passages which teach this (many of which are listed in the following section).

These Scriptures make it clear that Jesus would return during the lifetime of some of His disciples. What we traditionally call "The Second Coming" of Christ occurred, as Jesus predicted, *in that generation* when Jerusalem was destroyed! Hebrews 9:26-28 affirms that Jesus would make a second appearance to save those who were eagerly waiting, and to judge those who had rejected Him and persecuted His followers. Furthermore, Hebrews 10:37 boldly claims that this coming of Christ would occur "*in a very little while*" and would not be delayed. These time statements about the imminency of Christ's return cannot be taken any other way without casting doubt upon the integrity of the New Testament.

WERE JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS WRONG?

The preterist view totally refutes the major line of argumentation used by liberals and skeptics against the

Studies in Redemptive History

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integrity of Jesus and the New Testament. For example, Albert Schweitzer, a noted liberal theologian, in his book, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, spent many words to document the fact that Christ predicted His return in the lifetime of His contemporaries (“in this generation” before “some of those standing there” would die). Schweitzer concluded that Jesus failed to return when He promised.

Atheist Bertrand Russell, in his book *Why I Am Not A Christian*, used this supposed failure of Christ’s return to discredit Christ and repudiate Christianity. Many such critics (liberals, skeptics, atheists, Jews, and Islamists) point to the same list of New Testament texts to prove that Jesus was a false prophet and that the New Testament writers were mistaken, and therefore uninspired. Below is the list of Scriptures which have been used to attack the credibility of Christ and the New Testament. All eight writers of the New Testament are represented here. To feel the weight of their criticism, simply look up each of these verses in your Bible and study them in their first-century historical context:

A. The Second Coming Was Near in the First Century

- Mathew 10:23 (would not finish before He returned)
- Matthew 16:27-28 [and parallels] (some living would see it)
- Mathew 24:33-34 [and parallels] (before generation ended)
- Matthew 26:64 [and parallels] (Jewish rulers to see it)
- Romans 13:11-12 (already the hour; the day at hand)
- Romans 16:20 (will soon crush Satan)
- 1 Corinthians 7:26-31 (time shortened; world passing away)
- 1 Corinthians 10:11 (the ends of the ages had come)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:7 (mystery of lawlessness already at work)
- Hebrews 1:2 (it was already the last days)
- Hebrews 9:26 (the consummation of the ages had arrived)
- Hebrews 10:25 (the day was drawing near)
- Hebrews 10:37 (He was coming in “a very little while”)
- James 5:7-9 (Coming of the Lord was at hand; cf. Phil. 4:5)
- 1 Peter 1:20 (it was already the last times)
- 1 Peter 4:7 (the end of all things was at hand)
- 1 Peter 4:17 (time for judgment to begin; cf. Rev. 3:10)
- 1 John 2:8, 17-18 (it was the last hour)
- Jude 18, 19 (the mockers of the last time)
- Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6, 10 (must shortly take place; near)
- Revelation 22:7, 12, 20 (Christ is coming soon; cf. Rev 2:16; 3:11)

B. Parables about the End of the Age & Second Coming:

- Matthew 13:24-43 (Parable of the Tares)
- Matthew 13:47-50 (Parable of the Dragnet)
- Matthew 21:33ff [Mark 12:1ff; Lk. 20:9ff] (Parable of the Vineyard)
- Matthew 22:1ff [Luke 14:16ff] (Parable of the Wedding Feast)
- Luke 19:11-17 (Parable of the Nobleman)
- Matthew 25 (Parable the Ten Virgins and the Talents)
- Luke 13:6-9 (Parable the Barren Fig Tree)

C. Other Statements about the Destruction and the Coming:

- Matthew 3:7-12 [cf. Luke 3:7-17; 12:49]
- Matthew 10:17-34 [cf. Luke 10:3-21; 12:11-56]
- Matthew 23:29-24:44 [cf. Mark. 13; Luke 17:20-37; 21]
- Luke 11:42-52; 12:49; 13:33-35; 19:41-44; 23:27-31

Jesus told His disciples, “Some of those who are standing here shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt 16:27-28). Paul told the Romans that it was “already the hour for them to awaken,” because “The night is almost gone and the day is at hand” (Rom 13:11-12). Paul also reminded the Corinthians that they were living at a time when “the end of the ages had come” (1 Cor 10:11). Paul stated that Christ’s ministry on earth was during the time when the ages were being consummated (Heb 9:26). James wrote (in A.D. 62 just before he was martyred), “The coming of the Lord is at hand” and “the Judge is standing right at the door” (James 5:8-9). Shortly afterward Peter wrote, “The end of all things is at hand” and “it is time for judgment to begin” (1 Peter 4:7, 17). John (who wrote the book of Revelation) states in his first epistle, “The world is passing away” and “it is the last hour” (1 John. 2:17-18). In the book of Revelation he states in two different places that all the things revealed in that book were to “shortly take place” and that the time of its fulfillment was “at hand” (Rev 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10). Jesus likewise affirmed repeatedly in the book of Revelation that His return was to be very “soon” (Rev 22:7, 12, 20).

Without doubt the New Testament writers taught that the return of Christ *would occur in their lifetime!* There was not a shadow of doubt in their mind. They do not say “maybe” or “possibly.” They affirm definitely that the *coming* and *end* were near, and that “some of those standing there” would live to see it (Matt 16:28). Even skeptics acknowledge this clear teaching in Scripture.

If you would like to know more about all of this, simply order the book, *What Happened in A.D. 70?* It is available at the IPA website: www.preterist.org. †

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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!



Preterism
Preterism

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