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# FULFILLED! *Magazine*

EXPLORING AND PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?  
Psalm 8:3-4

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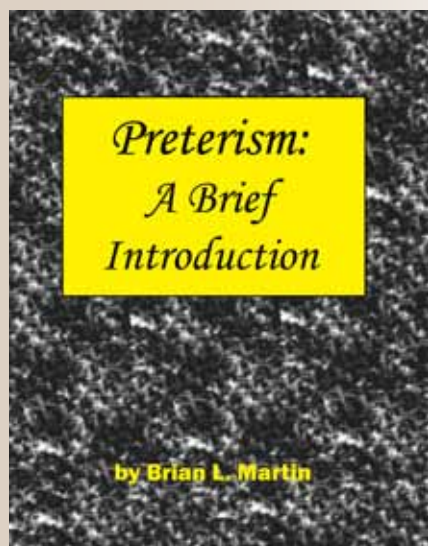
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(Please note that this booklet is currently not available from FCG.)

### 4. **Editor's Note** A giving update

### 5. **Mailbag** Catch some of the letters to the editor and comments on articles and features from the readers

### 6. **History of the End - Ed Stevens** The Terminal Generation

### 8. **Objection Overruled! - Don K. Preston** A response to Keith Mathison

### 12. **Life in the Kingdom - Rob Mitchell** Kingdom Now Ministries

### 14. **Parting Thoughts - TJ Smith** *Tapeinosis*

## *Reader Beware!*

The views expressed in these pages are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FCG or other contributors. FCG does not tell readers what to believe; rather, FCG provides readers with resources intended to aid in discovering biblical foundations informing what they believe. FCG strives to give readers something worthwhile to think about—we avoid telling them what to think. Please understand that we cannot vet every contributor's various doctrinal positions or read every advertised book. We rely on you, the reader, to be a Berean: prayerfully discuss and examine all positions presented according to Scripture to establish any truth or application as you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

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## Editor's Note...

**A**LTHOUGH THIS ISSUE WILL likely arrive in your mailbox during the late summer, because it will be close enough to fall, along with the fact that I doubt we will have sufficient funds to publish two additional issues this year, I'm skipping the summer issue and calling this the fall issue. I'm hesitant to write about finances; however, many times when we receive a donation the donor will write a short note stating that they had intended to donate much sooner but got distracted with life (I know how that is!). Therefore, I will write a few words to remind those of you who may have become distracted.

All of the magazine articles are freely contributed and all of the editing and layout work is done on a volunteer basis by those who have a vision to see the message of preterism spread. The only costs involved in producing an issue of the magazine are for the printing and mailing services (alas, the printer and the US Postal Service don't share our vision for spreading preterism). Currently, it costs about \$4,000 to produce a 16-page issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine, which includes having it mailed to roughly 2,500 recipients in the US and Canada. That means that each issue comes in at under \$2 per reader, per issue. Of those 2,500 readers we have an annual average of about 50 readers who contribute financially to FCG, many of them on a monthly basis. Because of them *Fulfilled!* Magazine remains in production.

I realize that the previous 10-15 years have seen their share of financial hardships, starting with the Great Recession and followed now by COVID-19. I also realize

that many of our readers live on very limited incomes. So when I mention finances it is not intended to inflict guilt, to ask for sacrificial giving, or to have anyone redirect support from other vital ministries. I am simply laying out the facts so that you may be informed of FCG's operations. If 1,000 readers (less than half of our mailing list) were to give \$20 per year—per year, not per month—FCG would have ample funds for four 16-page issues per year.

We have several PayPal buttons on our site ([www.fulfilledcg.com/Support.htm](http://www.fulfilledcg.com/Support.htm)) that allow you to either give a one-time donation in the amount of your choosing, or "Subscribe" to a monthly payment starting as low as \$5 per month. PayPal will process your credit card information, and a PayPal account is not required.

Moving on, I'd like to draw your attention to the callout to the left; this is FCG's new Mission Statement. In subsequent issues I plan to expound upon the various elements of our Mission Statement, hopefully providing readers with a better understanding of FCG's ministerial mission.

In this issue Ed Stevens launches into his new series of articles centered on the history of the first and second centuries AD. Don Preston also begins a series of articles responding to Keith Mathison's treatment of the New Testament time passages in *When Shall These Things Be?* Both series promise to be very informative!

In the previous issue I wrote about the "Preterist Community" giving portal I created on the Samaritan's Purse web site—my thanks to those

### Our mission:

Exploring and proclaiming the good news of fulfilled prophecy and life in Christ, equipping and encouraging everyone in our journey toward biblical truth, enabling each of us to better discern and develop our roles in the kingdom of God

who have contributed. I have an updated link which takes one directly to the “Preterist Community” page, located at the top of the inside cover. This should make navigating to the portal much easier.

The Samaritan’s Purse article elicited an email exchange with Rob Mitchell, who is also ministering to the needy in the name of the gospel and preterism. Rob describes *Kingdom Now Ministries* in his article on page 12.

As always, we are grateful for your words of encouragement, your prayers, and financial support!

Blessings,

*Brian*

## Mailbag...

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!! What a joy to read this last issue of *Fulfilled!* I was so delighted to see you “pick-up” the reins and steer your hopes and dreams for your “baby” into a new light. . . . The comment you made about what Philip Yancey wrote, “fellow pilgrims”, etc., I think is quite the issue for all in the body of Christ. How can anyone say, without shame, they have “it”. I’ve been under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit now for 45 +/- years and still see how little I know.



Thank you for all that you do for all of us. We are learning so much from the *Fulfilled!* Magazine, each issue down to earth Christianity!



A short note to let you know we still appreciate all of your work and efforts you two put forth. Also glad to hear that you were able to retire!



I love getting *Fulfilled!* Magazine and pray you can keep it coming. Thank you for keeping it balanced by presenting individual author's views. READER BEWARE! as stated, “we rely on you, the reader, to be a Berean.” Amen to that. Keep up the good work.



“  
we rely on you,  
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that.”

Prior to his death, Moses warned Israel that a **perverse and crooked generation** of Israelites would arise **in the last days**, whom God would destroy (Deut 31:28-30; 32:5, 15-20, 28-29). Most futurists today think we are living in those Last Days, and that we are that **terminal generation**.

**H**OWEVER, THAT DELUSION IS easily debunked when we see Jesus and the New Testament writers claiming that *their generation* (AD 26-66) was indeed that prophesied “perverse and crooked generation” (Matt 12:39; 12:45; 16:4; Luke 11:29; Acts 2:40; Phil 2:15), which was about to be destroyed in those “last days” of the first century (Acts 2:16-17; James 5:3; Heb 1:2; 2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3).

And because the New Testament saints understood that they were the *terminal generation*, they “kept on the alert at all times praying for strength to *escape* all these things [wrath, destruction] that were about to occur, and to *stand before* the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

Throughout the New Testament we see this same intensity of prayers, courage, vigilance, and diligence. Why were they so willing to sacrifice everything, including their lives, in order to take the gospel to every corner of the Roman world and Diaspora? What motivated them to do that? It was their **expectations** of *relief, rescue, and reward* at the Parousia.

Apostle Paul gave us a glimpse into his motivation when he told the Roman saints that “*the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us*” (Rom 8:18). Do you see why he was so willing to suffer all those things?

He had been caught up to the third heaven, where he saw and heard things that were *indescribable* (2 Cor 12:2-4). He knew that what awaited him at the end of his journey was “*far better*” (Phil 1:23; 1 Cor 2:9). He endured all of those temporary light afflictions in order to gain the eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17). So, it was his *great expectations* which compelled him to “*press on to the goal to win the prize*” (Phil 3:14).

And those same *intense expectations* of relief, rescue, and reward were shared by the other first-century saints. They were likewise driven by their *great expectations* to “*run the race*” and “*finish the course*” (1 Cor 9:24; Heb 12:1; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7). They “*fixed their hope completely on the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Christ*” (1 Pet 1:13). Sounds like they hoped to receive some incredible benefits at the Parousia! So, let’s take a closer look at their expectations and their hope.

### What Were Their Expectations?

What did those first-century saints *expect to experience* at the Parousia? I read back through the whole New Testament looking for these statements. Here is what I found. As you read each of these verses in context, ask yourself: “What were those first-century saints actually expecting to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia?”

- Some true Christians would **remain alive until the Parousia**—(Matt 16:28; 24:21-31, the “elect” would remain; Matt 24:34; 1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15-17; 5:23; 2 Tim 1:18; Jude 21; Rev 2:25; cf. John 21:22f).
- Those living and remaining saints were **anxiously waiting, eagerly expecting, and longing for His return** (1 Cor 16:22; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28; Jude 21; 1 Thess 1:10; Rom 8:19; 8:23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Rev 6:10), **groaning** within themselves (Rom 8:23), **longing to be clothed upon** with immortality, so that their mortality would be swallowed up and changed (2 Cor 5:2-4). They were **looking for** and **hastening the day** (2 Pet 3:12-14; Titus 2:13). They “*loved His appearing*” (2 Tim 4:8). They cried out, “*How long, Oh Lord?*” and “*Come Lord Jesus!*” (Rev 6:10; 22:20). They fasted while waiting for His return (Matt 9:15), and **fixed their hope completely upon it** (1 Pet 1:13). It was not something they would let pass by unnoticed. They did not miss it!
- They were expecting to **know** about His return, see Him **appear**, see Him **revealed**, **meet** with Him, **stand** in His presence, **glorify** Him on that day, and **marvel at Him** in the presence of all who had believed – (2 Thess 1:6-10; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:12; 4:13; 5:1; Jude 24; Matt 25:1,6,21,23; Eph 5:11-14; Phil 2:16; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; 4:17; 1 Thess 2:19; Col 3:4; 1 Cor 13:12; Rom 8:18, “about to be revealed”).
- **The Great Tribulation** (Neronian persecution) **would be cut short** by the outbreak of the Zealot rebellion so that some of the elect would remain alive until the Parousia (Matt 24:21-22, 29-31)
- **Relieved** of the persecution and tribulation (2 Thess 1:7)

What did the first-century saints expect to experience at the Parousia?



# Terminal Generation

Ed Stevens

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- **See** the Son of Man coming (Matt 16:28; 24:30; 26:64; Luke 21:27; Rev 1:7)
- When they would see Him appear, they would stand up straight and lift up their heads because their **redemption** (bodily change and rapture) was drawing near (Luke 21:28)
- They would **not shrink away from Him** in shame when He appears (1 John 2:28)
- They would **hear a great trumpet** (Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16)
- **The dead** saints would be **raised** out of Hades (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:14-16; John 11:25; Luke 14:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Cor 6:14)
- **Bodily change** of the living saints, which would put them into the unseen realm. (1 Cor 15:51-56; 2 Cor 5:2-4; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Rom 8:11; 8:23; Luke 21:28; Eph 1:14; 4:30; Luke 20:36)
- **Gathering of the elect by real angels**, not by human messengers (Matt 24:31; Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, 49; 24:22; Mark 13:27; 2 Thess 2:1)
- **Caught up** together and reunited with their departed loved ones to meet Christ *in the air* (unseen realm above) where they would remain forever afterwards (1 Thess 4:17)
- **Rescued** (escape) from the wrath outpouring (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9-10; Luke 21:36; Rom 5:9)
- **Saved, delivered, redeemed, and glorified** at His Coming—What was this additional kind of salvation and redemption for those saints who were *already forgiven of their sins*? It was the bodily change and catching up and glorification in heaven (1 Thess 5:9-10; 2 Tim 2:10-11; 2 Thess 1:10; Luke 21:28; Rom 8:17-23; 9:23; Eph 1:14; 4:30; Col 1:27; 3:4; 1 Pet 1:3-9; 5:1-6; Heb 9:28)
- **The twelve apostles would sit on twelve thrones** judging the twelve tribes in the unseen realm above (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30)
- Jesus would **receive them to Himself to be where He is** in heaven (John 14:3)
- Experience the **wedding feast** in heaven (Matt 25:6-10)
- **Presented to Christ** at His coming (2 Cor 4:14; Col 1:22; Eph 5:27)
- **Stand in His presence** at the Parousia (Luke 21:36; Jude 24; 2 Thess 1:10; Rev 22:4-5)
- **Marvel at Christ** in the presence of all believers who had been gathered (2 Thess 1:10; Col 3:4; cf. Rom 8:18; Matt 5:8; John 17:24; 1 Pet 1:7)
- **Joy in His presence** at His Coming (1 Thess 2:19; 1 Pet 4:13-14; Jude 24)
- **Rewarded** in the presence of Christ (Matt 16:27; Col 3:24; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 3:10-11; 11:18; 22:12)
- **Perfect**ed in *holiness, knowledge, and understanding* at the Parousia (1 Cor 13:8-12; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23; Rev 22:4-5; cf. 1 Cor 1:8; 2:9; Eph 5:27; Phil 3:12; Col 1:22; Matt 18:10; 1 Pet 5:10; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24)
- **Gain immortality and eternal life** (Rom 2:7; 6:22-23; Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25; Jude 21)
- **Live and reign with Christ** in heaven forever (Rev 22:4-5; 2 Tim 2:11-12; 1 Thess 4:17; Heb 9:16-20; Matt 8:11)
- **Saved before the wrath was poured out** on their enemies. They were not destined to go through the wrath. (2 Thess 1:6-9; Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15; Luke 21:22-23; Matt 3:7; Rom 2:5; 9:22; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 2:16; Rev 6:10)
- **Rest of the dead would be raised** out of Hades and **judged** and sent to their respective eternal destinies. Hades was emptied. This occurred in the unseen realm. (Rev 20:13-15; Acts 24:15; Luke 20:35; John 5:25-29; Heb 6:2; Acts 17:31; 24:25; 2 Tim 4:1; Rev 11:18; 1 Pet 4:5; Rom 2:16; Matt 25:31-46; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim 4:8)

Is it even remotely imaginable that every one of the pre-70 saints' expectations were fulfilled only in a non-experiential and non-cognitive (unperceived) way?

Is it even remotely imaginable that every one of the pre-70 saints' expectations were fulfilled only in a non-experiential and non-cognitive (unperceived) way? Can their expectations be reduced to nothing more than unrealized wishful thinking? Or is it even possible that every single one of them totally misunderstood Jesus and the apostles? I fear that assessment not only grossly devalues their intelligence, but also calls into question the inspiration and teaching abilities of Jesus and the inspired apostles.

...continued on page 11

## Keith Mathison and the Biblical Time Statements - Part 1

**I**N THE BOOK WRITTEN to blunt the explosive growth of Covenant Eschatology, i.e. full preterism, editor and contributing author Keith Mathison attempted to negate the force of the biblical use of the language of imminence. That book, *When Shall These Things Be?* (WSTTB?)<sup>1</sup>, has done literally nothing to stem the tide of the growing preterist movement, and one of the reasons why is that readers of the book, familiar with Mathison's other writings, realize that he has seriously contradicted himself—and Scripture. We will illustrate that as we go along.

Mathison seeks to lay a foundation of understanding Old Testament prophetic fulfillments to guide our understanding of New Testament prophetic fulfillment:

"Are there any eschatological time texts in the Old Testament, and, if so, how are they used? A brief look at the answers to these questions will help us to understand better the meaning of the New Testament eschatological writings." (p 157)

"Of particular significance for our study is the use of time texts by the prophets. If we can understand how they used these kinds of texts, and if we can understand how (and when) these prophecies were fulfilled, we will be much closer to understanding the use of such texts in the New Testament." (p 16)

Based upon this premise, Mathison lists several types of Old Testament prophetic fulfillment that he believes allow for "wiggle" room in the New Testament time texts. For example, he writes:

"Even more relevant for our discussion are those Old Testament passages that may be classified as short-term time texts. Both Isaiah 13:22 and Habakkuk 2:3-3, for example, speak of the imminence of the judgment to come upon Babylon. (p 165, 2nd paragraph).

Mathison then implies that, given the dates for the writing of these prophecies and the fall of Babylon, the prophecies were fulfilled as much as 200 years after they were given.

**Response:** It is fascinating that Mathison would appeal to Isaiah 13 as proof that time statements mean nothing. When he does so, he stands at odds with some of his own brethren

and even at odds with the dispensationalists whom he often condemns for their rejecting of time statements!

Notice what the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (a dispensational commentary), says of Isaiah 13:

In Isaiah's day that judgment was coming because of the tremendous political turmoil of the next several decades that would culminate with the fall of Babylon at the hands of the Assyrians in 689 BC. . . . the statements about the heavenly bodies no longer functioning may figuratively describe the total turnaround of the political structure of the Near East. The same would be true of the heavens trembling and the earth shaking, v. 13, figures of speech suggesting all-encompassing destruction." (P. 1060) – "The word 'them' against whom the Medes were stirred up (v. 17) were the Assyrians referred to in v. 14-16, not the Babylonians. It seems better to understand this section as dealing with events pertaining to the Assyrian's sack of Babylon in December 689 BC."<sup>2</sup>

Then, Kenneth Gentry, fellow Postmillennialist with Mathison and contributor to WSTTB?, says this of Isaiah 13: "Babylon did fall soon thereafter. It came in 689 BC. This was

around eleven years after Isaiah wrote in about 700 BC." Gentry notes that commentators (Ice) confuse "separate falls of Babylon, the one here in 689 BC and a later one in 539 BC."

Gentry then cites Walvoord and Zuck, who point out that in Isaiah 13:17, when it says that the Medes and Persians would be "stirred up against 'them' that the antecedent is to the Assyrians, whom the Medes destroyed."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Mathison's claim that "at hand" in Isaiah 13 refers to a period of perhaps 200 years is falsified by history and by both those in his own camp and dispensationalism.

Then, when Mathison claims that Habbakuk was not fulfilled for a long time, he is either ignorant of the dating of Habbakuk, (he is not) or is misleading his readers. In his tome, *From Age To Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology*, Mathison wrote of Habbakuk: "He likely prophesied between 609 and 605 (BC) during the reign of the Judean king Jehoikim in the last days of Assyria's long period of imperial dominance." He chronicles the decline of Assyria at the

Mathison lists several types of OT prophetic fulfillment that he believes allow for "wiggle" room in the NT time texts.



## Responding to Keith Mathison

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hands of the Babylonians, but the book of Habakkuk foretold the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon, and the then coming destruction of Babylon. Notice now, Habakkuk 2:3:

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.*

Several things are to be noted here:

- The time appointed for the fulfillment had been determined—it was “appointed.”
- Fulfillment was certain—“It will surely come.”
- There are two temporal aspects of the prophecy, i.e., the predicted destruction of Judah at the hands of Babylon (this was imminent), and the judgment of Babylon herself.

**Fact:** Within 3-5 years (ca. 606 BC), the Babylonians invaded Judah for the first of three waves of invasion, with the final destruction of Jerusalem occurring in BC 586. Thus, there was no long protracted period before fulfillment. It is interesting, perhaps revealing, that Mathison would have us remove our focus from the imminent fulfillment of the impending invasion by Babylon, and think instead that the real concern of the text was the later invasion of Babylon.

**Fact:** As Habakkuk chapter 3 so poignantly and powerfully shows, it was this judgment—the impending and imminent destruction of Jerusalem—at the forefront of Habakkuk’s concern and vision. That does not mean that he was totally unconcerned with what would happen to Babylon, but the Lord basically told him not to worry about that—“He” would take care of that in His own time. Habakkuk was to focus on what was to happen to his people, and that was going to happen—and did happen—within a short time. And thus, again, there was no long protracted period before fulfillment.

In what seems like a paradoxical bit of verbiage, note that the Lord said: “*Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.*” How do we take this seeming contradiction—“If it tarries wait for it, because it will not tarry”? Well, first of all, YHVH assured the prophet that fulfillment would NOT tarry. So, what does the comment “though it tarries, wait for it” mean? I suggest that it has to do with the mental state of Habakkuk. Perhaps he had a

particular time frame in mind for fulfillment—still within the confines of “it will surely come,” but in his own dread and impatience he pondered, “when is it coming?” As K. L. Barker noted, (citing Heflin):

Impatience is the normal human response to God’s promise to answer his people. God warned the prophet to wait on the prophecy. The answer of God would surely come, but the prophet should write down the message because from the prophet’s point of view the prophecy might seem slow. The prophet was to “preserve it until its fulfillment could be demonstrated historically.” God. (Heflin, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai*, 90.) Achtemeier notes that “from the beginning of his work, God has seen its goal and completion” (*Nahum–Malachi*, 43).<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, *The Translator’s Handbook on Habbakuk* offers this:

*For* indicates the relationship between this verse and the previous one. The message is to be written down because the time of its fulfillment has not yet come. makes this explicit by saying “*Put it in writing, because. . .*” In some languages this first clause may be expressed as “You must write this message down, because . . .” The reason is stated in RSV as *still the vision awaits its time* (better, “appointed time,” as in RV, NIV), TEV expresses this much more clearly as “*it is not yet time for it to come true.*” Despite this the Lord

reassures Habakkuk that the vision *hastens to the end—it will not lie*. The Hebrew word translated *hastens* can mean “to puff or pant.” Thus translates “it will come in breathless haste” gives the meaning less vividly but more simply as “*But the time is coming quickly, and what I show you will come true.*” Note that here the negative statement *will not lie* is expressed in positive form as “*will come true.*” It may be helpful to some translators to follow this example.

The second half of the verse deals with impatience, the natural human reaction to delay: *If it seems slow, wait for it*. The word translated “wait” has overtones of hope, which are strengthened by the context here. “*It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it.*”<sup>5</sup>

Many other similar citations could be given, but these suffice to show that the “delay” in the text *was in the mind of the prophet*, not in any objective,

...continued on page 10

Thus, Mathison’s claim that “at hand” in Isaiah 13 refers to a period of perhaps 200 years if falsified by history and by both those in his own camp and dispensationalism.

## Objection Overruled!

Don K. Preston

... continued from page 9

historical delay. After all, the day was “appointed.” It was not some elastic, “silly putty” appointing. The time was set in the council of God, and it would not delay.

So, the Lord’s word was sure. The time was appointed. The time would not be delayed. Fulfillment would not tarry.

In subsequent articles we will examine other claims by Mathison in which he attempts to convince his readers that “at hand,” “shortly,” “quickly” etc. do not convey true temporal imminence. However, before examining his other claims, let me share with the readers what Mathison has had to say about time statements of imminence, when he is not trying to answer the full preterist view.

In 1999, Mathison wrote a book in which he defended the postmillennial paradigm against dispensationalism. Many have and do find his interpretation of several key eschatological texts to be more than strange, and certainly not something found in the creeds or early church history. Nonetheless, here are Mathison’s comments on 1 Thessalonians 5:1f which he applies—as he also does 2 Thessalonians 1-2—to AD 70. He gives five reasons for that application (pay careful attention to the hermeneutic that Mathison employs, which is in stark contrast to his arguments on Isaiah and Habakkuk above, not to mention other passages that we will examine in subsequent issues):

1. Language of impending judgment links it to 1 Thess 5. It is to be noted that on page 231f, commenting on 2 Thessalonians 2, Mathison also applies 2 Thessalonians 2 to the first century: “when the time indicators within the chapter itself are also taken into consideration there seems to be no compelling reasons to understand the ‘coming’ and ‘gathering’ of 2 Thessalonians 2 to refer to anything other than the same first-century ‘coming’ and ‘gathering’ described in Matthew 24.”
2. The text speaks of God’s coming judgment upon those who are afflicting them at the time of the writing.
3. Those afflicting them are the Jews.
4. There is a distinct parallel between 2 Thessalonians 1,

Daniel 7:9-12, and Joel 2-3, in which fiery judgment is intimately connected with events that are known to have occurred in the first century, namely the rule of the fourth kingdom. Joel in fact refers to this judgment as the Day of the Lord.

5. There is a distinct parallel between 2 Thessalonians 1 and Matthew 16:27-28 which describes a coming in judgment in the lifetime of the first-century generation. (Keith Mathison, *Postmillennialism: Eschatology of Hope*, (P & R Publishing, 1999, 227ff).

Again, observe Mathison’s hermeneutic, which is absolutely valid and correct. Yet, the very hermeneutic that he employs here is abandoned and distorted when he attempts to refute preterism in *WSTTB*?

So, the Lord’s word was sure.  
The time was appointed. The  
time would not be delayed.  
Fulfillment would not tarry.

As we proceed to examine other claims by Mathison regarding Old Testament time statements being used in non-objective senses, I will show that Mathison has NEVER—prior to *WSTTB*?—claimed that the time statements of imminence are not to be taken seriously and objectively. As I will document, he has been adamant that any

attempt to negate, mitigate, obscure, or deny the objective temporal imminence in the biblical time statements is in fact to pervert the truth of Scriptures.

What we have seen so far, however, is more than revealing. We have seen that Mathison has ignored the historical context—and the imminent fulfillment—of the very texts that he adduces to negate the language of imminence! We have likewise seen that in his other works, in which he was not arguing against the truth of preterism, he acknowledges and honors the language of imminence. In fact, he does more than honor the “at hand” statements. He honors the audience relevance, the historical context, and the use of the personal pronouns! Unfortunately, when seeking to refute Covenant Eschatology, he ignores the hermeneutic he employed in his own books! This utter inconsistency is more than enough for us to declare: “Objection Overruled!” But, we have much, much more, so stay tuned! ✚

1. Keith Mathison, editor, *When Shall These Things Be? A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, P & R Publishing, 2004).
2. Walvoord and Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary* Vol. I, Wheaton, Ill; Victor Books, 1985, 1059f).
3. Kenneth Gentry, *The Great Tribulation Past or Future*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1992, 185f.
4. Barker, K. L. (1999). *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Vol. 20, p. 323). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
5. Clark, D. J., & Hatton, H. A. *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Habakkuk*, New York: United Bible Societies, from Logos, 91, 1989.
6. Keith Mathison, *Postmillennialism: Eschatology of Hope*, (P & R Publishing, 1999, 227ff).

Those saints were NOT expecting the Parousia, Resurrection, and Judgment to come and go without their awareness of it and participation in it. They didn't miss it. The above list of expectations proves that they knew about it, saw it, and experienced it to the max.

They were promised "relief" from the persecution, "rescue" before the wrath was poured out, and "reward" in the presence of Jesus. And since those events did occur in the way they expected, it means that those saints were no longer on earth after the Parousia. That is why they didn't talk about it afterwards. *They were silent because they were absent! They were gone—taken to heaven just as they had expected!* †

## Suggested resources for further study:

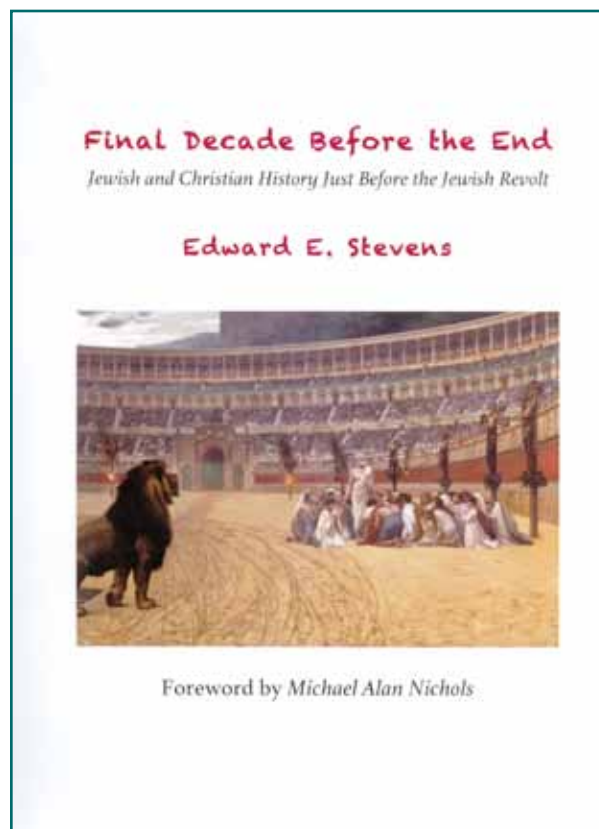
*Then and Now Preterist Podcast* ([www.preterist.org/podcast](http://www.preterist.org/podcast))  
*Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture* (book) by Ed Stevens  
*Final Decade Before the End* (book) by Ed Stevens  
 The books are available here ([www.preterist.org/store](http://www.preterist.org/store))

## The articles below are available by email request:

*Matthew 24 Fulfillments* (PDF article)  
*Historical Problem for All Preterists* (PDF article)  
*Why No One Noticed These Things* (PDF article)  
*No Permanent Rapture in the Church* (PDF article)

Ever since the booklet, *What Happened in AD 70?* was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly **what** happened, **when** it happened, and **the effect** it had upon the Church.

... One of the major purposes I had when I began this historical study was to discover when each of the New Testament books was written, along with a good understanding of the historical circumstances which prompted and facilitated their production and distribution. Even though that was a worthy goal, I never imagined what else I would discover on the journey. While interacting with all the internal and external evidence for the date and authorship of these writings, a plethora of other insights about the history of the apostles and the saints was uncovered. Soteriological, eschatological, and ecclesiastical issues popped up everywhere, begging for examination. One historical fact led to another, brick upon brick, until a coherent history of the first century church began to emerge. The project quickly mushroomed into a full-blown historical reconstruction of first century Christianity with its development of the New Testament Scriptures, and its experience of all the endtime fulfillments that Jesus and the Apostles had promised them.





**T**ULSA, OKLAHOMA IS A beautiful city, with rolling hills and lots of green, well-kept yards; a large business district downtown with revamped restaurants and vibrant new park areas; well known scholastic institutions, such as Oral Roberts and Tulsa University; professional sports, good schools, and a lively social scene. All of these make our city a pleasant place to live—yet we have a dark blot in our history.

One hundred years ago, our city burned. The Greenwood district, which was populated primarily by black families, was mercilessly destroyed. Anywhere from 300 to 1,000 lives were lost, 1,500 homes destroyed, and 10,000 left homeless. A bomb was dropped from a plane. The devastation has been described as the worst race riot in American history. Though the memory fades, we cannot hide from our past. Racial tensions still exist to this day, yet we persist in our effort to forget those dark days.

Though the Greenwood district has since been transformed into a historical district, there are still many areas of our city with grievous poverty and crowded section-eight housing projects, creating low-income hot spots for gangs and drugs to prosper. *Kingdom Now Ministries* has set up shop in one of these areas. The corner of 61<sup>st</sup> and South Peoria is the site of a triple execution-style murder just three years ago. The neighborhood has five state-housing projects within a two square mile area. Gun fire is commonly heard on weekends.

It has been nearly six years since my youngest son, Reuben, came to me and said, “Dad, I want to give out groceries on the corner of 61<sup>st</sup> and South Peoria.” When I asked him why, he said “cuz there’s no hunger in the kingdom.” I said “I’m with you, son.” We had been having

family Bible studies on the kingdom of God for the last several months and my four sons were beginning to see a revelation of how to “enter” (John 3:5) the Kingdom of God. First, we “see” the Kingdom (John 3:3), then we are washed and enter. To see requires faith, to enter requires action.

Having been part of the preterist community for about ten years, I have been blessed by many gifted teachers and expositors of fulfilled eschatology. When the present, active reality of the Kingdom is revealed, an immediate conflict arises: to postpone that kingdom life to a “future” age, or live it NOW! Raised Baptist, it took some time for me to change my view of the future.

But thanks be to God, I am now free of old, biased restraints. The future has a bright HOPE and PURPOSE in the establishment and advancement of the Kingdom of God. His Glory will fill the earth (Isaiah 6:3).

For some time now, my spirit has been moved to consider just what the preterist doctrine means in the reality of our daily lives. Is

our job primarily to convert futurists to our position? Is teaching and preaching the fulfilled gospel to those already in the Kingdom all there is? Or are we called to demonstrate the Kingdom, making visible the newness of this revelation. The fulfilled gospel allows us to join with the Father in filling the earth with His Glory, through the practical ministries described in Matthew 25:31-46; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, praying for the sick. All of these practical ministries bring Glory to the Father. Taking our communities back from darkness is our calling.

Preterists have laid a firm foundation of eschatological truth, and now we must build on that foundation. It is time for those of us who grasp this truth to give it feet.

It has been nearly six years since my youngest son, Reuben, came to me and said, “Dad, I want to give out groceries on the corner of 61<sup>st</sup> and South Peoria.” When I asked him why, he said “cuz there’s no hunger in the kingdom.”

## Kingdom Now Ministries

Rob Mitchell

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Let us not be believers of words only, but of work also. Our inheritance is enhanced through works. So many parables talk about varying degrees of reward. We are not saved by works, but once saved we should go to work. Each person has a gift, talent, or ability from God. We can't all be authors or preachers. Some must serve others, to build up the Body of Christ for works of service (Ephesians 4:12).

Since *Kingdom Now Ministries* has been on the corner, there has been a 16% drop in crime in that area. We are not taking credit for that, just observing the fruit. That is what we are after, real change, community improvement, and safer neighborhoods. We feed over one hundred people every week, praying, counseling, and encouraging them. We have a vision of getting a permanent location and establishing a clothes closet and food pantry. Right now, we are working out of the back end of a box truck, loading it full to the brim with food and giving it all away within two hours.

Although this is a Mitchell family ministry, we do very little of the physical work. All of the loading and distribution is done by those from the street. The idea is to get them involved in something bigger than themselves. One of the antidotes to addiction and lethargy is self-worth. Giving these precious lost souls a purpose is priceless. The change is a visible reality, seen in their faces, once down-trodden, now bright and chipper. This is not an outside group or a government program; this is them helping each other. There is so much more that needs to be done—addiction therapy, work placement, and home management are but a few.

Our definition of the Kingdom is “a little bit of heaven on earth.” The Lord's Prayer states, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We seek to

do the Father's will in serving the heavy-hearted, hurting children of God, through loving and caring for those in need. All over America, as the truth of the fulfilled gospel prospers, may works that demonstrate this reality become ever more common. Please join with us. We maintain a Facebook page, Kingdom Now Ministries, Tulsa, where you can follow the ministry first-hand. We now have a website: [www.kingdomnowministries.com](http://www.kingdomnowministries.com) where you can donate. I would also like to make myself available for assistance to anyone who has a similar burden and would like to start something in their area. Please contact me through the Facebook page.

I believe the preterist community is ready for this next step. Brian's article from the last issue was entitled

“Taking it to the Street.” That was a great confirmation of this move of the Spirit. Many I talk to are feeling the same way. God has truly blessed *Kingdom Now Ministries*—we started out with twelve bags of groceries from the back end of a Volvo. We now

serve 5,000 families a year! Please prayerfully consider supporting us, or starting your own work. God bless!

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,  
The earth is full of His Glory.”  
*Isaiah 6:3*

Rob Mitchell



One of the antidotes to addiction and lethargy is self-worth. Giving these precious lost souls a purpose is priceless. The change is a visible reality, seen in their faces, once down-trodden, now bright and chipper. This is not an outside group or a government program; this is them helping each other.

**“HOWDY KIDS! WELCOME TO** another action packed installment of Parting Thoughts!” In the last issue, I inserted the word “universalism” as a doctrine that should be rejected by believers. This did not go unnoticed, as gauged by the emails I received. There weren’t many replies, but those who shared their opinions, very politely I will add, reflected a growing viewpoint. I will refer to Ultimate Reconciliation Believers, as “URBs” (I’ve always wanted to be trendy and create an acronym). I have studied UR on my journey to where I am today, and I know that URBs opine that we just haven’t studied enough to “see” it, while we non-URBs maintain that they have studied themselves right past it and need to hit the turn signal and perform a U-turn. Defending against UR is more involved than stating: “Many are called but few are chosen—now put your hand down and shut up!” That’s not going to win a theological debate. I’m not sure it’s a winnable debate anyway, nor that it should divide us as “family.” I have a few family members who keep voting for the “wrong” political party, and that’s not a conversation in which any of us want to engage. They had their POTUS, I have mine, but we are still trying to maintain relationships.

It is my conviction that the Universal Reconciliation view is not one I can align with. Thanks to those who replied to me sharing their views. I made a friend or two as well.

Now for my article!

If you are somewhat new to studying Scripture, one of the helpful habits to cultivate is looking at how Greek words are used in verses other than the particular verse you’re studying. This is typically referred to as “Word Usage.” We theologians (check the definition) love to use the word definition that supports our own (biased) position. We are all guilty of this, but, to be honest, we have to start somewhere and be willing to move ourselves off-center as needed. One of the problems with the new “Israel Only” crowd is that they don’t do this: they fail to follow Paul’s lead by understanding that the definition of a Jew, Israel, and Jerusalem changed 2,000 years ago. Or maybe I should say the “definitions” were finally fulfilled. The Black Hebrew movement is suffering the same blindness.

The word I chose this issue is one of the most interesting examples I have come across. The word is “*tapeinosis*” (Strong’s 5014). Using the KJV, let’s look at the verses containing this word, to gain a broader, more complete understanding of its meaning:

“For he hath regarded the **low estate** of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)

“In his **humiliation** his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.” (Acts 8:33)

“Who shall change our **vile** body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil 3:21)

“But the rich, in that he is made **low**: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.” (James 1:10)

Let’s use James 1:10 as an example of the “cross-pollinating” of the definitions of *tapeinosis*: the KJV uses “low,” MLV uses “humbleness” (which has morphed into “humility”), and the ALT uses “humble state.” Most versions use one of these words. But all of them avoided “vile,” as found in Philippians 3:21 as a definition.

When we examine Philippians 3:21, which the KJV translated as “vile,” we see that the MLV continued to use “humbleness,” ABP uses “humiliation,” and the BSB uses “lowly.” The Jubilee Bible, agreeing with the KJV, uses “vile,”

while the Lamsa translated it “poor,” and on and on.

Only a few translations used “vile,” the majority of versions used “softer” definitions. Was this the bias of the translator coming through, trying to strengthen what they perceived Paul to be communicating? Did this bias add to the doctrine that the flesh was evil? How should we process this? Do we avoid KJV and Lamsa versions? That might be a problem. Personally, I use KJV about as often as I volunteer for root canals, but I have seen KJV get it right where the ESV did not (even a blind squirrel finds a nut every once in a while).

From Mary referring to herself as “*tapeinosis*,” to Paul’s question of who will change our “*tapeinosis*” body, to the Ethiopians’ question to Philip about Isaiah’s “*tapeinosis*,” it seems translators chose the definitions to fit the context, along with their own bias and theological presuppositions—good or bad.

Do we go with the “law of first mention” and apply all further word usages to the first one? I wouldn’t think that wise, as we would use Isaiah, whom the Ethiopian was quoting in Acts. Do we allow each definition to stand as is, trusting that the translators used enough external Greek textual evidence to gain a full understanding in context with each different

We theologians love to use the word definition that supports our own (biased) position.



## "tapeinosis"

T. J. Smith

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verse? Acceptable. But then, which translator? Do we take all the definitive possibilities and "plug them into" each verse to see if a different definition yields a clearer understanding of the passage?

These are tough questions. Just as the Greek word "*pneuma*" has about eight different meanings, from *breath* to *spirit*, *demon* to *vital principle*, many Greek words can have an isolated meaning in specific settings. There are more difficult words that come to mind which only Paul used, and are found only once in the New Testament. How can you possibly get a clear understanding of a word used only one time?

In my study of 1 John 4, I believe "*test every spirit*" would be better understood "*test every prophecy*," as the context is clearly false prophets. As students of Scripture, it is incumbent on us to take the time to substitute definitions of a given word and see if one leaves us with a unified doctrinal construct.

Translators attempt to find the English words that best translate the Greek words they encounter, but aren't always successful. Sometimes they add words not found in the manuscripts, while at other times they choose to not translate words that are in the manuscripts. Through the ages translators have been limited by not only the quantity and quality of Greek manuscripts available (along with the writings of Socrates, Plato, Philo, etc.), but also by their own vocabulary. If they weren't well educated, they didn't have a "deep well" to draw from.

We must not assume that translators always got the correct understanding; but, on the other hand, neither should we always assume they "*hamartia*" (missed the mark). Somewhere between those extremes, our "vile" minds of "low estate," will be "made low" with "humiliation."

Moving on, there are those early church preterists (no, not like in the 2nd century, more like the 1960's) who have been studying fulfilled covenant theology longer than most of us have been alive. Men like Jerry Bernard, David Chilton, Sam

Dawson, John Anderson, Ed Stevens, Don Preston, Charles Hallford. And Ron McRay. I became acquainted with Ron through the Texas Preterist gathering we had in Fort Worth during the Spring of 2018. Though Ron previously lived in Texas, he had already moved, but not before I had contacted him about attending—seems that I found the only glitch in Tony Denton's preterist network! Ron had moved out of the Lone Star state, but that initial contact began a friendship between us. I'm sure many of you have known Ron far longer than I have. He always ends his emails with "Love, Ron" (that is so "Glenn Hill," ha).

I have read at least six of Ron's books. Some are very enlightening, some are entertaining. I don't always agree with everything Ron believes, but Ron has probably forgotten more theology than I have learned in my lifetime. He definitely has his own style! Not that he doesn't want to be sharpened or challenged, but I find it refreshing and inspiring that at his

age, the man still has a LOT to say! He's like the BB King of preterism. He just finished an 803 page book! Really? I can stack my 6 little books up and not have that many pages. Thank you Ron for inspiring me to keep plugging away. Ron should be an inspiration to us all to keep living and writing, and believing, and worshiping, and serving until we are called home. Consider purchasing some of Ron's books. He has plenty to choose from

on a variety of Christian topics. You may find one that adds a piece to the puzzle to your studies; you may find one that makes you mad. I once heard that a good song should make you mad, sad, or glad. Books can have the same effect. But at least they make you think, and hopefully crack open your Bible to study. Support a fellow believer who has invested decades studying God's word and trying to make it easier to digest. Until next time,

TJ Smith



We must not assume that translators always got the correct understanding; but, on the other hand, neither should we always assume they "*hamartia*" (missed the mark).

## Ron McRay

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## In This Issue:

The Terminal  
Generation

Response to Keith  
Mathison

Kingdom Now  
Ministries

Parting Thoughts

Fulfilled Communications Group  
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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  
Preterism

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