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FULFILLED!

Magazine

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

Was Nero the Beast of Revelation?



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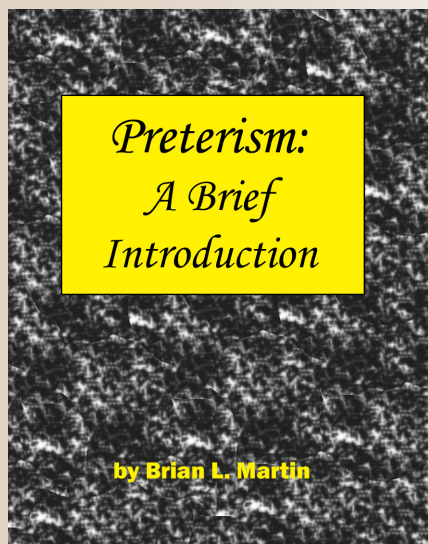


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(A non-booklet pdf is available from FCG at www.fulfilledcg.com)

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Editor's Note...

IN THIS ISSUE WE introduce two writers who, though not new to the preterist community, are new to the pages of Fulfilled! Magazine. Dr. Walter Koch has been spreading the preterist message among the Hispanic community for decades and functioned as a translator for at least one preterist conference in southern California many years ago. He is also involved with Trinity Broadcasting Network's (TBN) Spanish division, *Enlace*. Using those connections, Walter had FCG's video "You've Gotta Be Kidding, Right?" translated into Spanish. I'm told that it is available on *Enlace*, but because you need to set up an account and *yo no comprendo Espanol*, I haven't attempted to access it. I did view a DVD that Walter sent me, and the translation was professionally done! If I can ever find that DVD I'll try to get it uploaded to our website.

For those readers who peruse preterist websites, Adam Maarschalk will be a familiar name. He has numerous studies available on his website adammaarschalk.com. He is also a speaker at preterist conferences. I met Adam in September of 2018 when we were both invited to speak at TJ Smith's "Big Tex" preterist conference. My wife and I were both drawn to Adam's gracious and humble spirit. I told Adam that I'd like to have him write something for the magazine back then, and now three years later I'm finally getting around to it. I hope that you enjoy the fresh perspectives that Walter and Adam bring to this issue.

Readers are likely aware that we have all our back issues posted on our website. On the previous issue's pages, each cover image will open an overlay with that issue's Table of Contents and a link for a pdf of the issue. Beginning with the 2020 Fall issue we have also created individual pages for each article. These individual pages have the article text, a link to a printable pdf version, and, below the article, a box where you may leave a comment about the article. I always encourage readers to contact the authors directly with their comments and questions regarding articles, but the website comment area will allow visitors to read what others thought about the article. For readers who don't want to reach out to the authors directly, it is also a means of posting an encouraging word to them. Speaking of encouragement, I encourage you to let our contributors know that you appreciate the time and effort they donate to provide content. I realize that not every reader will agree with every author; nevertheless, it never hurts to have our theology tested from time to time by a different perspective. If a view that you disagree with has caused you to study and strengthen the understanding of your view, then it has served a purpose. Therefore, you don't have to agree with an author to let them know that you appreciate their time and effort.



Nero is a popular candidate for The Beast of Revelation within preterism, but some are reconsidering that view.

I continue to be amazed at the donations given to Samaritan's Purse via "The Preterist Community" team. I created the team a little over a year ago for the purpose of providing preterists an avenue to give to a Christian charitable organization as preterists (see the 2020 Spring issue, "Taking it to the Streets"). I originally set a goal of \$2,000. We exceeded that goal some months ago, so I raised the goal to \$4,000. We will likely surpass that goal in the next several months! Other donors to Samaritan's Purse will see that "The Preterist Community" is the leading team. What a wonderful way to demonstrate to Christianity at large that preterists do more than just argue about the New Testament time statements—we also endeavor to live out our theology by being salt and light in this world. Thank you to those who are shining their light in "The Preterist Community" team at Samaritan's Purse!

Thanks also to those of you who support FCG prayerfully, financially, and by your encouraging letters and emails.

Blessings,

Brian

Mailbag...

Thanks for all the time and effort you all put into the magazine. Great job!



Keep up the good work. You are much appreciated!



God bless you and thanks so much for providing great articles! I am finally writing which had to wait until my retirement. I am a 67-year-old Christ follower, husband, dad, and grandpa who can now try to figure out what to do when I grow up!



We just want you to know how much we appreciate all your labor for us little lambs who want to know the truth about our great Shepherd of His sheep.



Sending a donation for the magazine. Thank you and keep up the good work.



“
Thank you and
keep up the good
work.”

IN THE TWO PREVIOUS articles we sequenced and documented the historical fulfillment of the Great Tribulation, Abomination of Desolation, the Zealot rebellion, and the Man of Lawlessness. This article picks up where we left off, and deals with the Parousia, resurrection of the dead saints, *bodily change* of the living saints, and their *gathering* together to be with Christ in heaven forever afterwards.

'Cutting Short' the Great Tribulation

The outbreak of the rebellion "cut short" the Great Tribulation *for the sake of the elect* (Matt 24:22), allowing some of them to live until the Parousia and be gathered to safety by the angels before the wrath of God was poured out on their persecutors (Matt 24:31; 1 Thess 4:17; 5:9; 2 Thess 2:1).

The rebellion forced both Jews and Romans to turn their attention away from killing Christians, and toward fighting their war with each other. This was the *relief* from tribulation that Paul promised (2 Thess 1:7; 1 Thess 1:10; cf. 2 Peter 2:9). But there was no relief for the Jews—their tribulation had only just begun, and it rapidly intensified into the *wrath outpouring* (2 Thess 1:6-10). Thus, it was the persecution of the elect that was *cut short*—NOT the wrath outpouring.

The Parousia

The beginning of the rebellion also set the stage for the *Parousia*. Since Christ was supposed to come "immediately after" the tribulation was *cut short* (Matt 24:29-30), and since the tribulation was cut short at the *beginning of the rebellion*, it means that Christ must have come "immediately after" the outbreak of the rebellion. And that is exactly what we find in the real history. The rebellion began on May 12th, AD 66. *Four days later* the angelic armies were seen in the sky above Judea. Josephus reports:

"Not many days after that feast [Passover, Apr 10, 66], on the twenty-first day of the month Artemisius [May 16, 66], a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared. . . . For, before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities" [Josephus Wars 6.296-297 (6.5.3)].

This appearance of the angelic armies in the sky occurred only four days after *Eleazar b. Ananias* began the rebellion and took

control of the temple. That was definitely "immediately after" the rebellion began. And the presence of the *angelic armies* in the sky above Judea signaled the arrival of Christ and the beginning of His Parousia to *rescue His saints* and *pour out wrath* on His enemies. This occurred just before sunset on Artemisius 21st (May 16th) in AD 66. Thus, Josephus gives us *the exact day and hour* when the Parousia began.

Resurrection, Bodily Change, and Rapture

Since the outbreak of the rebellion *cut short* the great tribulation on the elect, it enabled some of the elect to *remain alive until the Parousia*. And during the Parousia three marvelous events occurred:

- *Resurrection* of the dead saints (1 Cor 15:20-23, 52; 1 Thess 4:16)
- *Bodily change* of the living saints (1 Cor 15:51f; 2 Cor 5:2ff; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Rom 8:11, 23)
- *Catching up* of both groups of saints to be with Christ forever afterwards (Matt 24:31; John 14:3; 1 Thess 4:17; 2 Thess 2:1)

Thus, it was the persecution of the elect that was cut short—NOT the wrath outpouring.

Apostle Paul provides all of the information needed to *sequence* these three events. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Paul states that "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*" the dead would be *raised imperishable*, and the living saints would be *changed* into their immortal bodies. And in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 he states that the dead in Christ would *rise first*, then the living saints would be *caught up together with them* to meet Christ in the air where they would remain forever afterwards.

These two passages not only *sequence* those events, but also show that all three events occurred together in tight succession ("*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*"). Thus, the living were changed at the same instant the dead were raised, and then both groups were caught up together to be with Christ in the unseen realm above.

But **when** did these three events occur? Josephus again supplies the critical info for that, even providing *the exact day and hour* when they occurred:

. . . at that feast which we call **Pentecost [the day]**, as the priests were going **by night [the hour]** into the inner [court of the] temple . . . to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "*Let us remove hence*" (Wars 6:299-300 [Whiston ref. 6.5.3]).

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According to Josephus, two weeks after the angelic armies were seen in the sky, the priests in the temple on the Day of Pentecost heard a *great multitude in the unseen realm* departing from one place and going to another. That was when the dead saints were *raised* out of Hades.

Notice what those priests *experienced* in the temple on the day of Pentecost (May 30th, AD 66). It was all *hearing* and *feeling*—with *no visuals*. The priests *heard* what was said, but *did not see* those who were speaking. This means that the “great multitude” whom the priests heard were in the UNSEEN realm. This raises some very interesting questions:

- Who were these folks in the unseen realm?
- From what place in the unseen realm had they come?
- To what place in the unseen realm did they go?

The fact that those people were in the UNSEEN realm drastically limits the possibilities of their identity. What large group of people in the UNSEEN realm would be leaving one part of that realm for another part, and why? *It was the resurrected saints exiting Hades and going straight to heaven without coming back into the SEEN realm on earth!*

And since this was the resurrection of the dead saints out of Hades, then it was also the very “*moment in the twinkling of an eye*” when the living saints were “changed” into their immortal bodies (1 Cor 15:52; Phil 3:21), and then “*caught up together*” with the resurrected saints to meet Christ in the UNSEEN realm above (1 Thess 4:17), to remain with Him forever afterwards.

Silence After the Parousia

That explains why there was such a *silence* and *absence* of true Christians after AD 66. After the *Neronian persecution* began in August of AD 64, all mention of Christians and their activities *vanished from the historical record* until ca. AD 90, twenty years later. There were no more inspired documents written, and no evidence of any missionary activity.

It appears that most of the true Christians were killed in the Neronian persecution (AD 64-66), while the survivors went into hiding until the Parousia, at which time they were *relieved* of their tribulation, and *taken to heaven* before the wrath was poured out on the Jews.

There is no record of Christians participating on either side during the Jewish-Roman war. Nor are there any true Christian writings after AD 70 which *document*

the fulfillment of the BIG THREE eschatological events (Parousia, Resurrection, Judgment), or which *set the record straight* when second-century churchmen started saying that the big three eschatological events were still future.

In short, true Christians were *nowhere to be found* after the outbreak of the Zealot rebellion in AD 66 (see Hans Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity*, 18, 111). Nor did they reappear in the historical record until the 90s. Patristic historians pinpoint when this *disappearance* of true Christians occurred:

If we actually map out the [real] history of the first century, following 70 AD . . . then there arises *an obscure dark period* . . . when we are not sure exactly what was going on *between 70 AD and 90 AD* (Wayne McCown, lecture at Northwestern Seminary, Rochester, NY, Sept. 16, 2004; emphasis added).

Thus, at the very time when the history of Josephus is replete with voluminous details about the Jewish War, information about the apostolic church vanishes “without a trace” (Hans Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity*, 18). Oliver J. Thatcher calls it a very “strange silence” (*The Apostolic Church*, 271-272).

And that silence is exactly what we would expect to find if all the living and remaining saints were caught up to heaven at the Parousia. But it is NOT what we would expect if any of those pre-70 saints remained alive on earth after AD 70. Surely they would have *mentioned the fulfillment* of the big three eschatological events, and would have *set the record straight* when second-century churchmen started

claiming that those events were still future. Instead, all we have is *deafening silence*. They were *silent* because they were *absent*. †

In short, true Christians were nowhere to be found after the outbreak of the Zealot rebellion in AD 66.

For more details, request the following free articles by email:

- Stevens’ *First Affirmative in the Preston rapture debate* (PDF)
- *Outbreak of Rebellion – The Real History* (PDF)
- *Let Us Go From Here* (PDF)

Objection Overruled!

Keith Mathison and the Biblical Time Statements - Part 5

Prophecies with multiple fulfillments?

HAVING LOOKED AT MATHISON'S claim of "telescoping" prophecies in our previous article, we now turn our attention to his claim of double, or multiple, fulfillments:

"If Old Testament prophecy provides us with any kind of standard for understanding New Testament prophecy, then the possibility of double fulfillment or prophetic telescoping cannot be automatically ruled out either." (*When Shall These Things Be?* 180)

Mathison falls back on the nature of Old Testament prophetic fulfillment to supposedly find support for allowing "near" to not mean near. Of course, one of the first problems with Mathison's argument is that it admits, right off the bat, that there was an imminent fulfillment of the prophecy. He is saying that the prophecies—those he claims had double fulfillment—had a fulfillment in the days of the audience to whom the prophecies were given, but they also looked far beyond that fulfillment to some future time unknown to them. This is supposed to prove that time statements are elastic and plastic—"silly putty" that can be stretched and manipulated into essentially meaning nothing. But this is a self-defeating argument.

If, as just indicated, there truly was a fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies that was imminent to the original audience, then that means that the language of imminence was objective, valid, and true. But to then say that the language that was indeed fulfilled imminently, was fulfilled again centuries, or perhaps millennia, later, turns language on its head. This has Mathison arguing that "at hand" truly meant at hand, but it also meant not at hand!

But the "multiple fulfillments" argument is full of implications that Mathison himself would never accept. Which prophecies had double or *multiple* fulfillments, and how does the Bible student discern them? Is there a solid hermeneutical rule that can be applied to Old Testament texts that tells us that prophecy X was to have double or multiple fulfillments, but prophecy Y wasn't?

Just how far does Mathison carry his claim of "double or multiple fulfillment"? (Mind you, Mathison is not talking about type and anti-type, but actual "multiple fulfillments.")

Would Mathison affirm that there were to be—perhaps are still to be—multiple fulfillments of the prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14)? If not, why not? What are his criteria for denying that possibility?

What about the Great Tribulation? Mathison is on record saying that the Great Tribulation occurred in the first century and was connected with the Jewish judgment:

"There is no end time tribulation. Jesus' prophecy about tribulation in Matthew 24 was fulfilled between AD 30 and AD 70." (Keith Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the House of God?* (Phillipsburg, NJ; P & R Publishing, 1995, 144).

But wait! If prophecy has multiple fulfillments, how can Mathison reject the dispensational claim that while the Jewish War was horrific, perhaps even in some way fulfilling the prophecy of the Tribulation, the "real" fulfillment lies in our future? I mean, if the hermeneutic of multiple fulfillments of prophecy is valid, we need to know how Mathison determines which prophecies were to be fulfilled multiple times, and which prophecies were not.

And what about the death of Christ on the Cross? Will there be multiple fulfillments of that substitutionary (horrific) death by our Lord and more resurrections of the Lord?

And what of the establishment of the kingdom? Will the kingdom be established over and over and over again?

What about the last days' sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)? Joel does not speak of two or more such events, and Peter was emphatic that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled on that auspicious Pentecost 2000 years ago. But perhaps there are multiple fulfillments? How can we determine that?

And just how many times are we to expect the coming of the Lord, in multiple fulfillments of His prophecies to come? Of course, this is where Mathison's hermeneutic quickly gets really sticky. Like many postmillennialists, Mathison has traditionally agreed that Christ came in AD 70, on the clouds, with the angels, the sound of the trumpet, etc., to gather the elect. So, we have a coming

Responding to Keith Mathison

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of the Lord in AD 70—but then, in the postmillennial paradigm, we have yet another coming of the Lord at the end of the current Christian age. (It is to be noted that Mathison now claims that all “coming of the Son of Man” passages referred to Christ’s ascension, and not to His Second Coming—Mathison, *Age to Age*, 2009, 269, 365. It takes little effort to debunk that theory.)

Now, it is common for postmillennialists and some amillennialists to claim that AD 70 was a type or foreshadowing of the “real” coming of the Lord. Kim Riddlebarger says:

In the context of predictive prophecy and prophetic perspective, the intent would be that the destruction of the temple and the tribulation brought by the Roman army is a type of greater wrath experienced immediately before the return of Christ, perhaps connected with the loosing of Satan (Revelation 20:7f) and this on a global, not a local scale. This means that Jerusalem and the temple are, perhaps, a type of the apostate church in the last days.” (Kim Riddlebarger, *Amillennialism*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 2003, 262, n. 34)

Kenneth Gentry, Jr., likewise posits AD 70 as typological:

Theologically, a redemptive-historical link does in fact connect AD 70 with the second advent. This could easily confuse the disciples. That is, the AD 70 episode is an anticipatory foreshadowing of the larger event, the second advent. (Kenneth Gentry, *Revelation Made Easy*, Powder Springs, Ga.; American Vision, 2009, 47)

I have not been able to find whether Mathison posits AD 70 as a type and shadow of the real end / Parousia, but given his “multiple fulfillment” construct, it would certainly appear that he would accept that claim.

The problem(s) with Mathison’s “multiple fulfillment” claim should be more than apparent. It is arbitrary. Furthermore, what is revealing is that neither Mathison, Gentry, nor anyone else that I have read actually attempts to prove that AD 70 was a type or shadow of a yet future coming of the Lord, and they do not offer textual proof that there are multiple comings of the Lord. All they do is assert, but assertion is not proof.

For a thorough critique and refutation of the “multiple fulfillment” hermeneutic, get a copy of my book *AD 70: A Type of the “Real” End?* It is available from my websites, Amazon, Kindle, and other retailers.

Summary and Conclusion

We have examined Mathison’s arguments as he has attempted to convince his readers that time statements indicating the imminency of the end of the age, the coming of the Lord, and the judgment are not to be taken seriously as objective time indicators.

- We have addressed Mathison’s claims that certain Old Testament prophecies with imminent time statements (Isa 13:22 and Hab 2-3) were not fulfilled until perhaps 200 years later. (2020 Fall issue)
- We have shared with the reader how Mathison’s own writings exhibit a confused and self-contradictory view of time statements. On the one hand he has always affirmed the objective nature of the imminence of the kingdom and of the events of AD 70. But now, in his efforts to counter the truth of Covenant Eschatology, he seemingly rejects his own writings on this topic. This seems like “*argumentum ad desperatum*” (my non-Latin “Latin” term that I coined years ago to describe “arguments from desperation”)! (2020 Winter issue)
- We have exposed how Mathison’s appeal to Haggai is misguided and violates history and Scripture. (2021 Spring issue)
- We have shown how his appeal to Daniel is actually a misrepresentation of the emphatic words of Daniel 10:4, 14, and have falsified his claims that the ancient prophets spoke as if events were near when in fact they were far off (telescoping). His claim of “telescoping” prophecies is untenable at all levels. (2021 Summer issue)
- We have refuted Mathison’s claim that prophecies are to be fulfilled multiple times. (This issue)

I believe we have effectively shown that Mathison’s Objection is overruled! †

Was the Beast Roman or Jewish?

A **KEY PART OF** what John wanted to communicate to his first-century readers concerned the beast, with more space given to this topic than to the harlot, the two witnesses, New Jerusalem, and other notable eschatological themes. John warned that some of his contemporaries would worship the beast and receive God's wrath and fiery torment (Rev 14:9-11), while others would overcome the beast and stand on the sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev 15:2-4). So there's no doubt that the beast was a great enemy to the church, but who was this enemy?

Not long after I embraced fulfilled eschatology in 2009, I also embraced the view that the beast was Nero and the Roman Empire. After all, Apollonius of Tyana (AD 15-98) referred to Nero as "a beast." After all, using Hebrew gematria a form of Nero's name, "Nrwn Qsr," is said to equal "666." After all, Nero persecuted Christians.

As time went on, though, I realized that I couldn't reconcile the Rome/Nero model of the beast with several passages in Daniel and Revelation. I decided it was time to restudy and reconsider this topic.

I'd like to highlight, in summary form, eight pieces of evidence which I believe show that the beast was Israel, and in particular the Zealot movement which captured the loyalty of so many Jews in the first century.

A Summary of Evidence that the Beast Was Israel

1. Revelation 11 states that the beast would kill the two witnesses (v. 7) in Jerusalem (v. 8), and in that same hour an earthquake would kill 7,000 people (v. 13). Josephus describes an earthquake which took place in early AD 68 (*Wars* 4.4.5). That same night an army of Idumeans, hired by the Zealots, went on a murderous rampage. The next morning 8,500 dead bodies were found (*Wars* 4.5.1). Ananus and Jesus, two former high priests, were not allowed to be buried (Rev 11:9; *Wars* 4.5.2). Who could have killed the two witnesses when that earthquake took place in Jerusalem? From November AD 66 to April AD 70, Jerusalem was fully controlled by the Zealots; the Romans were not there.¹

2. In Revelation 13:4 those who worshipped the beast proclaimed, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Judah Maccabee is said to have carried the

following expression on his standard in battle around 165 BC: "Who is like unto thee among the mighty, O Lord!?" This expression is strikingly similar to the wording of Revelation 13:4, which very well could have been said about the Zealots when they slaughtered the Roman garrisons at Masada and Jerusalem (*Wars* 2.17) and surprisingly defeated the armies of Cestius Gallus in November AD 66 (*Wars* 2.19). Historians have noted that the Zealots intended to once again make Israel fully independent just like the Maccabees did.²

3. Revelation 13 depicts a second beast, later called "the false prophet," working closely with the first beast and performing signs and wonders. Josephus repeatedly spoke of false prophets working closely with the Zealots (e.g. *Wars* 6.5.2), promoting their war agenda (e.g. *Wars* 2.13.4-6), and claiming to perform signs and wonders (e.g. *Antiquities* 20.8.6; *Wars* 7.11.1).

4. The fifth bowl judgment (Rev 16:10) was poured out "on the throne of the beast," resulting in darkness, sores, and pain throughout his kingdom. In Leviticus 26:18-28 God repeatedly warned Israel that they would one day be punished "seven times"³ for their sins, as God would execute the vengeance of His covenant (v. 25). It's no

coincidence that the covenant imagery of Mount Sinai (Exod 19) appears in the opening of the seventh seal, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh bowl.⁴ **Those seven-fold judgments were reserved for Israel alone.** So it follows that when the fifth bowl judgment was poured out "on the throne of the beast," it was Israel, not Rome, which was the kingdom of the beast and experienced that darkness and pain.

5. Revelation 16:13-14 describes the dragon, beast, and false prophet working together to gather a multitude to a great battle. Josephus described how the Zealots and false prophets worked together to compel the people of Israel to go to war against Rome, killing and torturing those who resisted their agenda (e.g. *Wars* 5.1.5, 5.8.1, and 6.5.2).

6. In Revelation 17:16, John was told that the 10 horns of the beast would make the harlot desolate, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Ten Jewish generals were appointed to oversee the war effort in December AD 66 (*Wars* 2.20.3-4).⁵ Josephus

After all, using Hebrew gematria a form of Nero's name is said to equal "666."

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blamed the Zealots for the destruction of Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple (e.g. Wars 4.6.3, 5.1.1, 5.1.5, and 5.6.1). He blamed them for the fire that consumed the temple (e.g. Wars 5.1.4, 5.4.4, 6.2.9, 6.4.5, 6.6.2). He even referred to them as a wild beast eating its own flesh (Wars 5.1.1; compare with Wars 4.9.8; Wars 4.4.3; 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Peter 2:1, 12; and Jude 10).

7. In Revelation 19:19-20, it's stated that at the coming of Christ the beast would be captured and cast into the lake of fire. This did not happen to either Nero or Rome in the first century, but it did happen to the Zealot leaders of Israel, thus fulfilling Revelation 13:10 ("He who leads into captivity must go into captivity . . ."). For example, two Zealot leaders, responsible for taking many people captive, met the following fate: John Levi of Gischala was taken captive by the Romans and "condemned to perpetual imprisonment" (Wars 6.9.4) and Simon Bar Giora was captured, paraded, tormented, and executed (Wars 7.2.2 and 7.5.1-7).

8. In Matthew 21:43-45 Jesus stunned the religious leaders of Israel by declaring that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to another nation. His statement sourced prophetic passages in Daniel 2 and 7 about the transition from the fourth kingdom to the everlasting kingdom of God. Let's compare these passages, taking note of the parallels (A, B, C, D, and E):

"Therefore I say to you, [A] **the kingdom of God will be taken from you and [B] given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on [C] this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it [D] will grind him to powder. Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that [E] He was speaking of them**" (Matt 21:43-45 NKJV).

"You watched while [C] **a stone was cut out without hands, which [D] struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were [D] crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And [C] the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. . . . And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up [A] a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . .**" (Dan 2:34-35, 44 NKJV).

. . . it's stated that at the coming of Christ the beast would be captured and cast into the lake of fire. This did not happen to either Nero or Rome in the first century . . .

"The fourth beast shall be [E] **a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces, . . . Then [A] the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be [B] given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom . . .**" (Dan 7:23, 27 NKJV).

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the legs and feet were the fourth kingdom (Dan 2:33, 40). The head was Babylon (v. 38) and the feet were the final stage. When the stone struck the feet, they shattered, the statue was crushed (vv. 34-35, 44-45), and the kingdom of God was set up (vv. 35, 44).

In Matthew 21, who did Jesus identify as the "feet of iron and clay" that would soon be crushed by the stone? Didn't Jesus portray Israel, not Rome, as the entity which would be destroyed when the kingdom was taken from them and given to the saints? Rome was neither crushed nor in its final stage when the saints received the kingdom, but Israel was crushed.

The fourth beast of Daniel 7 was a fourth kingdom (vv. 7, 17, 23) and the beast in the book of Revelation. Daniel watched as the "beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame" (v. 11). This was not Rome's fate, but Israel was destroyed, and Jerusalem was burned (Matt 22:7; Rev 18:9, 18).

For more details about the beast from this perspective, my ongoing

series on the beast can be found at the following link: adammaarschalk.com/beast-of-revelation/. †

¹ For more details, see adammaarschalk.com/2017/02/04/the-two-witnesses-killed-by-the-beast-revelation-113-13/.

² For more details, see adammaarschalk.com/2017/07/14/who-can-make-war-with-the-beast-revelation-134.

³ For more on the significance of "seven" in Revelation, see adammaarschalk.com/2016/08/01/the-significance-of-the-number-7-in-the-book-of-revelation.

⁴ For more details, see adammaarschalk.com/2014/03/25/echoes-of-mount-sinai-in-the-book-of-revelation.

⁵ For more details, see adammaarschalk.com/2016/07/11/josephus-lists-the-10-horns-who-received-authority-for-one-hour-revelation-1712/.

Life in the Kingdom

[The following is adapted from chapter 5 of *The King said: Learn from Me.*]

IN JESUS' FIRST SERMON, He proclaimed, "repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17b KJV). "At hand" meant that the Kingdom was present and within reach. Learning from Jesus means we should learn to present the same message that He preached—the Kingdom.

I myself had taught on many subjects of the Bible, but I had not made the Kingdom the focus of my messages.

When I first presented the Kingdom message, I was very passionate in my approach. Unfortunately, the Kingdom was such a magnificent idea to grasp; many people felt overwhelmed by it. I decided to adjust my approach and introduce the subject gradually. Please notice that I did not say that I stopped teaching on the Kingdom. I simply modified my approach.

I had to make the Kingdom message a priority for our ministry because it was the message that Jesus preached. I wanted to be obedient to the Lord's will. As followers of Jesus Christ, we should only teach the Kingdom message. We should not preach the ideologies of a denomination nor teach our traditions. If we want to lead people to the Kingdom, then we should teach the Kingdom.

Although presenting the message of the Kingdom was Jesus' foremost concern, it is not the focus of some ministries today. Some teach a message of salvation, a message of prosperity, or a message of holiness, but they neglect to share the most important part of Jesus' message: the Kingdom of God.

It is time for us to rescue the teachings of Jesus! Every minister that stands before people has an obligation to give them the message of the Kingdom.

When Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for humanity, He finished the work

that God assigned to Him. The Spirit of the eternal Christ carries on the work of Jesus through the Church—His new body which consists of all Believers. The "Church" is an Embassy of the Kingdom of God, not a man-made religious organization. It is through the Church that Christ continues to take the message of the Kingdom of God to the entire world.

Teaching on the personage and qualities of Jesus is wonderful. It is beautiful to want to honor the Lord Jesus in this way. However, if we neglect to share the message that He commanded us to teach, then we will not be following His instructions.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus charged His twelve disciples to make the message of the Kingdom a priority:

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt 10:1-7 KJV)

After His resurrection, Jesus' instructions to the disciples were the same. During the forty days before His ascension to Heaven, Jesus met with His disciples to prepare them to carry on His work. What did He share with them? His central theme was the Kingdom of God:

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3b NIV)

The Kingdom was Jesus' primary focus. We should be like Jesus. Instead of inviting people to join a denomination, we should invite them to come and learn of the Kingdom: the place where they can find rest for their souls and where "all things are added unto every Believer" (Matt 6:33).

Jesus did not come to preach denomination or religion. He came to teach the message of the Kingdom of God. We must prioritize the message of the Kingdom over denominational agendas

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and individual opinions. When we focus our message on denomination, we cheat ourselves and others out of experiencing the Kingdom message that the Son of God came to impart to humanity. But when we rescue the message of the Kingdom from traditionalism, we will be acting in obedience to the commission that Jesus gave to the disciples and to everyone who would follow Him.

The Lord revealed this to me one afternoon while I was preparing a sermon. In my backyard I have several fruit trees where birds love to gather. As I was studying, the birds were making so much noise I could not concentrate. I went outside to throw a few rocks at the tree to get the birds to fly away, but before I could throw the rocks, the Lord instructed me to stop. He told me that the birds were outdoors and in their domain. Because the birds were in their proper place, they were under His care:

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (Matt 6:26 NIV)

It occurred to me that the birdcage is symbolic of what ministries do when they persuade people to join a congregation based on a denominational or religious message instead of the Kingdom message.

When a ministry tries to proselytize or “cage” people within a religious group or denomination, God no longer has an *obligation* to add *all things* to their lives; that religion or denomination takes on that responsibility.

God, out of His grace and love, supports all His children’s needs, but He is only responsible for “adding all things” to those who first seek His Kingdom:

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt 6:33 KJV)

As preterists, we understand that the Kingdom is not off in the future, but here now. We do not offer an invitation to a future physical Kingdom, but to a present spiritual Kingdom in which Christ rules and reigns now through us, the citizens of His Kingdom.

Whether you are a pastor, leader, or everyday believer who wants to share your faith, I hope this chapter has inspired you to teach and share the good news of God’s Kingdom. If you are unfamiliar with Kingdom teachings, ask the Lord to guide your studies and give you a revelation of the Kingdom so that your words and life will be a reflection of its authenticity and power.

The Apostle Peter offered the following advice on sharing one’s faith:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15 NIV)

Believers should always be prepared to discuss the Kingdom with humility and love. Ask the Lord to give you the boldness, wisdom, words, and gentleness to share His message. Your testimony of encountering the Kingdom will encourage others to seek its truth, power, and privileges.

The message of the Kingdom of God that many have embraced and now teach is incomplete without the correct eschatology.

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Parting Thoughts

REMEMBER THOSE CHICK CARTOON witnessing tracts from the 1970s and 80s? Those small booklets with that tiny print? (Good thing I'm already saved, because now I can't even read them!) True story: those Chick tracts had an impact on David Curtis' faith. This was decades ago, but he was so inspired by them that he threw a keg party and handed out dozens to his friends. I'm sure he was all stoked, excitedly watching his friends and hoping to see them at any moment begin to cry and hit their knees in repentance. Sadly, he watched them throw those tracts in the trash can and drop them on the ground. It wasn't working! What was going on? Apparently, David had a divine appointment with Chick tracts. Chick Publications has sold over 900 million of those little booklets.

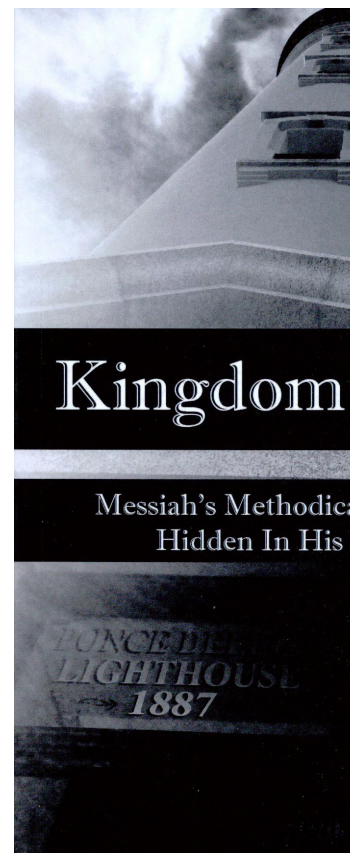
Yesterday I found two of those tracts on our kitchen counter. Obviously, someone thought Maria looked "lost" and handed them to her. Maybe tracts worked back then, but do they still? I have no idea. I do remember passing them out to people when I was young, but I never got a follow-up report. Maybe I should have put my phone number on the inside, but then they might have called. (What?! Actual discipleship? No way, Jose!)

That got me thinking about a continual theme in preterism: "How Then Shall We Live?" It has been the theme of several conferences, and books asking the question: "So, this side of AD 70, how do we carry on daily life and be a witness?"

It is a great question, as this is the attack and condemnation of the futurist camp: "Y'all" (In Texas) or "You all" (in the South) "Yooz guys" (aliens) are stealing my hope of glory! You have no hope for the future! You heretics have nothing to look forward to!" We've been trying to determine what this truth means in the modern-day and future of our faith. At the Texas Conference, we had a break-out session with each speaker moderating a group and discussed our personal experiences for sharing not only preterism, but the saving victory of Yeshua. Then we printed the results and read them the next morning. It was a fun, productive exercise.

Now, my two "topics": Pastor Michael Miano of Blue Point Bible Church, and Danny McBrayer of Fort Worth, Texas. Pastor Miano is having his annual Conference October 8-10. The topic will be "Not One Stone Left: Restored & Complete," which will focus on how the New Covenant transitional event improved, resolved, and perfected everything in the kingdom. I have followed Michael's ministry and this guy is on target. He is constantly working to share and impart his understanding to others. He keeps 2-3 websites going at all times and wrote a foreword to one of my books—He is a true soldier. This year I will be joining Michael as a guest speaker along with: "Everyone's Grandpa" brother Glenn Hill; "Young Gun" Pastor Daniel Rogers; and that "Master of Muscular Mayhem!" Ward Fenley (I loved wrestling as a kid . . .). For more information, log on to www.bluepointbiblechurch.org.

The other "topic" I mentioned was Danny McBrayer. Danny and I go back to the late 1980s when we attended church together. While I was a futurist back then, Danny was at least 'Amil,' so he was further along. I eventually wound up full preterist, but Danny continued to study and pray over the years and within the past year has become "full" pret and is loving it. I would tell him how once he "bought into the program," Scripture would come alive again as he viewed it through a different lens. Danny is fired up and recently contacted me about wanting to go "full metal jacket" with the message. We pow-wowed about it over a couple of days, and he is turning his plan into action. Much like the booths that Ed Stevens and others have hosted at Theological Conferences to share preterism, Danny is on the



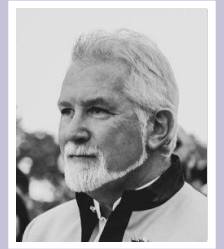
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same track but with a twist: he will be setting up a booth at Music Festivals, Arts & Crafts Shows, Custom Car Shows, Gun & Knife Shows, handing out free water (although beer would probably work better!) along with information and books. Yes, I already contacted Don Preston and he has plenty of those “Can God Tell Time?”, and “Did Jesus Really Say That?” booklets that Danny is going to procure. Since Danny is in the Fort Worth, Texas area, I sent out an email to other D/FW preterists and already have five volunteers willing to roll up their sleeves and help out.

This is great news! I have felt for years that going to those with little or no theology is better than trying to pry bad doctrine from the hands of angry John Darby devotees. There is a harvest of millennials out there hungry to hear the good news that they aren't the “terminal generation” and there is hope for a future. A future which the church has been incapable of expressing these past 18 months, (more like 18 centuries) unless you think the mark of the beast, chip implants, earth-scorching destruction, alien invasions, the Annunaki and the antichrist taking over is good news. You probably enjoy paper cuts too.

Back to those little tracts. It would be great if Danny had a tri-fold brochure with highlights, verses, resources, links, and other “to the point” information. Hopefully they won't end up in the closest trash can at the Fort Worth Livestock Show and Rodeo!

This is where you come in! I would like to Crowd Source this tri-fold brochure for sharing preterism. Remember the old adage “K.I.S.S.” (keep it simple, stupid)? If you had to keep whittling down and editing the

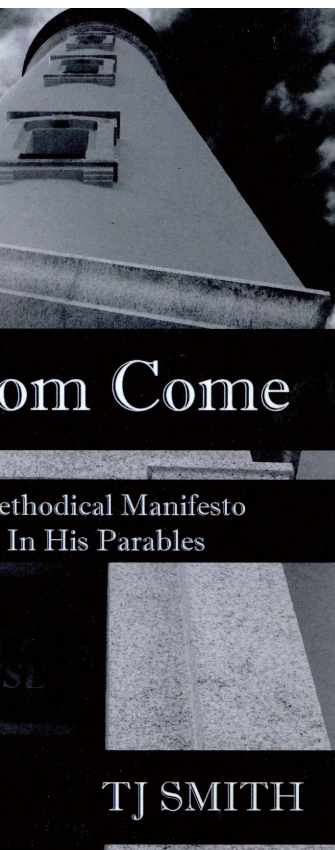
concepts, verses, and main points of Fulfilled Covenant theology, what info would be left? And how would that look on a simple, full color brochure? Would it have a QR Code people could scan on their phones to lead to a website for more resources and information? Maybe an email “hotline” where they could correspond with someone to answer questions?

What information would be on it? Would it take the offensive tactic of dismantling the futurist view that the end of the world is not coming? Would it stay “past-historical,” focusing on Scripture and Josephus? What essential info would you include if you only had 15 seconds of someone's time? Plan out a concept, edit it down to a concise presentation, and send a power-packed statement that could be included. Remember, non-believers will be reading this too, so Josephus and timelines may mean nothing to them. If you are a cartoonist, maybe we could create our own Chick tract? (For starters, let's shoot for an 8.5 x 11” sheet of paper that can be folded into a brochure.)

I love Danny's grassroots “taking it to the streets” approach. It's exciting to see others reach out on a personal level with a message to those who may have never heard the Gospel. Thanks to the Yancey's, The Simpson's, and Gary Cole for volunteering to man the booth (or is it “person the booth”?). And thanks to Danny McBrayer for being bold enough to go mix it up in the trenches! If you would like to hang out with other friendly, loving preterists in the D/FW area and join in the fun, contact Danny at McBrayerspiano@gmail.com.

Once the brochure is created, we can provide a digital version for preterist webmasters to upload on their sites. Then site visitors could download it and join the fight. Either way, it is exciting being a party to the creation of a “boots on the ground” style tract that can be quickly put into people's hands (speaking of parties, I wonder if David Curtis has any more of those Chick tracts?). Hope to see you in October at Blue Point Bible Church. Until next time, TJ. †

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

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

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

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

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



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