

FULFILLED! *Magazine*

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

**Solomon's Temple to Christ's
death and resurrection**

968 /967 BC to 33 AD

This Issue

**Between the Jewish-Roman
War and the Crusades**

**The First Thousand Years of the
New Covenant**

Future Issue



The Transition Generation

ca. AD 30-70

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Between the Two Great Revolts

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The Millennium — When Was It?



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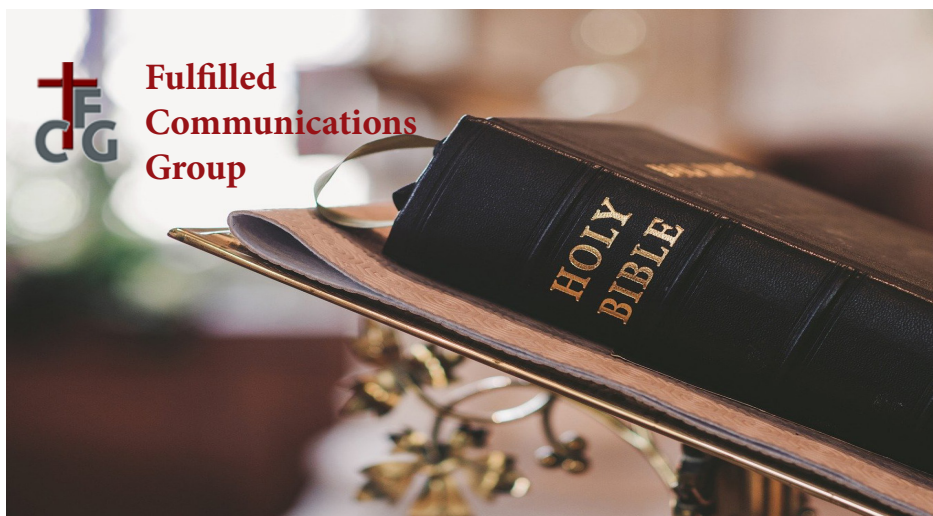
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Reader Beware!

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Editor's Note...

LIKE MANY OF YOU, I'm sure, I've come a long way in my views on eschatology (but still have a lot to learn). Some years back, I wrote a 12-page paper on the topic of "The Millennium" in my Basic Christian Doctrines class at Christ for the Nations Institute (Dallas, Texas). I still have it, and I took a look at it a few months ago. Although I received a perfect score, I definitely cringed multiple times while recalling what I wrote at the time. It was filled with the Dispensational Premillennialist beliefs that I only let go of in 2008 (followed a year later by embracing preterism).

In the book of Revelation, there are 404 verses, but 10 of them in particular (Revelation 20:1-10) have been used as the basis for significant belief systems that are held by millions of believers. These include Classic/Historic Premillennialism, Dispensational Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism. Whether justified or not, all kinds of passages from Isaiah, Ezekiel, and more are imported into Revelation 20 as parallels and allusions.

The preterist understanding that the Millennium is already fulfilled is, of course, a minority view. Not surprisingly, among those who view the 1000 years as fulfilled, there are disagreements on when they began, when they ended, and how the elements of that prophecy were fulfilled. These differences don't need to divide us, though. Especially since this topic is not an essential of the faith, we can enjoy rich fellowship with one another while continuing to have open conversations on this subject. The next few issues will feature an opportunity to continue this conversation and explore several different viewpoints.

In this issue, Patricia Watkins, a first-time contributor, shares her perspective on how the Millennium and Satan's little season were fulfilled. In terms of both the start and the end of the 1000 years, it's the earliest fulfilled view that I'm aware of. Patricia's article is the first of probably four — one of which will be my own — on this topic over the next several issues.

Just yesterday (as I write this), my family and I had the privilege of meeting Patricia in person for the first time. We met at a small church in Pacolet, South Carolina (just outside of Spartanburg) which is led by someone who, along with family members spanning three generations, embraced preterism about three years ago. My wife and I were the first preterists they had ever met in person when we met them a couple months ago.

Also in this issue, Pete Wrue shares a beautiful tribute to his wife, Rachael, who passed away in March. Pete's article includes details about Rachael's life, challenges, victories, and legacy; their story of meeting one another and coming together in marriage; Rachael's journey to faith in Christ and to preterism; the books they've



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written and published together; and more. We continue to pray that Pete will be filled with God's comfort, peace, and strength.

Aaron Amstutz returns with a two-fold discussion about a mysterious letter that the apostle Paul mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2 and a couple of disruptive characters that he rebuked in 2 Timothy 2. Aaron takes note of what Paul does and does not choose to correct in their deceptive messages. Among other lessons taken from these two instances and the nature of Paul's corrections, Aaron points out the implications of how the first-century church apparently understood the Day of the Lord, affirming the preterist view.

Allyn Morton provides a comprehensive study of the post-AD 70 Kingdom age, highlighting how the mission of the Church was to endure well beyond Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70. Allyn interacts with passages that have often been associated with a removal of God's people through the Rapture, viewing them instead as emphasizing the fullness of God's Kingdom.

Ed Stevens plans to add further installments in his series, "First Generation AFTER the End." In this issue, though, he revisits the topic of the Great Tribulation. Ed discusses the identity and sequence of the Great Tribulation in connection with other end-time prophecies and events.

Shortly after this issue arrives in mailboxes, it will also be posted online at FCG's website (<https://fulfilledcg.com/Magazine/previous-issues-2021-2025.htm>). Under each article is a comment section. Please feel free to share your thoughts with the article contributors and anyone who may read them.

Blessings in Christ,

Adam Maarschalk

Anita Cole - April 7, 2025

Gary and Anita Cole have crossed paths with many of *Fulfilled!*'s readers at conferences throughout the years. Gary also stays in touch by phone with a number preterists around the country. He wanted to let his preterist family know that Anita went home to be with Yeshua on April 7th. Please remember Gary in your prayers.

From Solomon's Temple Foundation Stone to Christ Becoming the "Chief Cornerstone"

ONE YEAR AGO, I entered a post describing the past, **literal** thousand-year millennium on a Christian forum where I am a member. The reactions ranged from polite disagreement to accusations of my being a liar and deceived by the devil. The millennium subject does tend to elicit strongly polarized feedback whenever it is introduced. But if we are consistent with applying the terms of audience relevance to this Scripture as we would to any other text, then we know one thing for certain: the correct interpretation of Revelation 20's millennium is something that an ordinary first-century believer reading John's Apocalypse could have well comprehended from their perspective in time and with the knowledge of Scriptures available to them. Since God fully intended for His first-century servants to understand John's visions, including the millennium theme, then we can too. (Scripture texts used in this study are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.)

The END of the Revelation 20 Millennium

There are two basic proof texts within Revelation that determine when the millennium had "expired" and was "fulfilled" and "finished" when compared with each other. Once we confirm that "expiration" date, the rest of Revelation 20's immediate context falls into a corresponding chronology around that date.

#1) Revelation 20:3 and 7 state in no uncertain terms that Satan was to be "**loosed a little season**" when the thousand years was "fulfilled" and had "expired."

Satan was to be "loosed a little season" when the thousand years was "fulfilled" and had "expired."

#2) Revelation 12:12 was John's then-current warning of woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, because Satan had **already** come down to them in great wrath, knowing he had only "**a short time**" left as of the time John was writing. This "**short time**" and "**little season**" for Satan was speaking of the same time period.

These two texts taken in conjunction with one another prove that Satan's "short time" or "little season" of being loosed at the END of the millennium had already happened before John ever wrote Revelation. Just how much earlier is further determined by other New Testament texts and the Revelation 20:4-5 verses to be addressed later.

The BEGINNING of the Revelation 20 Millennium

Christ also gave more information in Matthew 12:24-29 as to when Satan's deception of the nations had **first** been bound. To prove that His power of casting out devils was evidence of Christ having **already** bound Satan earlier, He gave the example of a thief having **first** bound the strong man before he spoiled his house. This means the millennium binding of Satan had **first** begun even **before** Christ's earthly ministry of

casting out devils. Just **how much** earlier is further determined by other Old Testament texts to be addressed later.

I am convinced by those other texts that Satan's deception of the nations had been bound for **a literal thousand years**, beginning with the foundation stone of Solomon's temple being laid down, and ending with a date which "expired" and was "finished" and "fulfilled" with the resurrection-day ascension of Christ (968 / 967 BC until AD 33). This literal thousand years was composed of the old covenant's God-sanctioned **physical** temple worship system in Jerusalem on the **physical** Mount Zion.

But as we are all aware, that old covenant **physical** temple worship system was only the precursor to much better **spiritual** things. (As Paul emphasized in 1 Corinthians 15:46, the physical is first, followed by what is characterized as spiritual.) That old covenant temple was destined to become outdated by the new covenant in Christ's blood. By Christ's finished crucifixion sacrifice and His resurrection-day ascension to the Father (John 20:17), God anointed Him as our ultimate, deathless "**Great High Priest**" who "**continueth ever**" in that glorified, bodily-resurrected form. This made Christ "**the Chief Cornerstone**" of a living, vibrantly-mobile **spiritual** temple, not made with hands.

This **spiritual** temple is composed of the believers as "**living stones**" (1 Pet 2:5) being built upon that true foundation stone of **spiritual** Mount Zion, as Isaiah 28:16 had predicted. Truly, "**the Stone that the builders rejected**" had become "**the head of the corner**" (at the AD 33 expiration of the literal millennium). This fulfilled the prior symbolism of both Solomon's temple foundation stone, as well as Zerubbabel's temple headstone with its "**seven eyes**" (Zech 3:9, 4:7-10), which pre-figured the seven-eyed slain Lamb appearing in Revelation 5:6.

The MIDDLE of the Revelation 20 Millennium

This seven-eyed headstone, laid down by Zerubbabel's own hands, had "**grace, grace**" ascribed to that foundation stone of the post-exilic temple. This marked the very **middle** of the millennium years when God mercifully revived His work "**in the midst of the years**" (as Habakkuk fervently prayed for in Habakkuk 3:2).

The prophet Ezra's weeping prayer in Ezra 9:8-9 acknowledged the fulfillment of Habakkuk's former plea. Ezra praised God for granting this merciful reviving of the nation in their bondage, by His using the favor of the Persian kings to decree the repair of the desolated temple of God and the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra's prayer in Jerusalem was made in the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign (Ezra 7:8). Since Artaxerxes began a co-regency with his father Xerxes in 474 BC, this seventh year would have been 467 BC — exactly "**in the midst**"

For thirty-five years, Patricia has designed and fabricated high-end custom window treatments and home furnishings for clients of the interior design trade. This same meticulous attention to details and balanced design has also been applied to her research focused on Preterist eschatology for the last thirteen years. The goal has been to select the correct elements from each of the varying Preterist positions, combining these into one cohesive model having no contradictions either internally or with the Scriptures. This has resulted in a "Three Resurrections" paradigm which ideally could provide the means for reconciling the diverse viewpoints within the ranks of Preterism.

Comments and questions are welcomed at patriciawatkins3r@gmail.com

Patricia Watkins



of the years" of the literal thousand-year millennium (from 968 / 967 BC until AD 33).

Zerubbabel served as a type of Christ in that he was chosen by God as a "signet" (Haggai 2:23). Both Mary and Joseph's genealogies converged in this single shared ancestor: the man chosen to lay down that foundation stone of the post-exilic temple in the middle of the millennium years. Foundation stones and their symbolism are heavily emphasized in Scripture, with care taken to record the exact day, month, and regnal year of their being laid down.

How Was Satan's Deception of the Nations Bound?

If this literal thousand-year period of a God-ordained, physical temple system truly was the Revelation 20 millennium, an obvious question arises: Just how was Satan's deception of the nations halted during this time? The answer is that Satan's main tactic of deceiving the nations had usually been achieved by **keeping the nations ignorant of the God of Israel's existence.**

Paul once referred to this as "*the times of this ignorance*" that God had formerly "*winked at*" (Acts 17:30) and "*in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways*" (Acts 14:16).

The nations' "*times of this ignorance*" of God's existence was sharply curtailed once the construction of God's temple began during Solomon's reign. As King David had said, "*...the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, offame and of glory throughout all countries...*" (1 Chr 22:5). The Queen of Sheba's traveling "*from the uttermost parts of the earth*" to verify what she had heard concerning Solomon's reign is ample testimony that knowledge about the God of Israel and His temple in Jerusalem had spread widely throughout the known world by that time.

Even when Solomon sinned by multiplying wives and concubines from foreign nations, each of these involved an ambassador escort of some sort who then returned to their own nation with the knowledge of Israel's God and His temple worship system in Jerusalem. The nations' ignorance of God's existence continued to be dispelled, in spite of the hedonism of an aging King Solomon.

Even when Israel and Judah apostatized and were taken into exile, this merely contributed to further spreading the knowledge of Israel's God among every nation to which they were dispersed. God used even their judgment of exile to accomplish His millennial purpose of binding Satan's deception of the nations (2 Chr 7:19-22).

Most importantly, the number and ministry of God's prophets notably increased during these years. For example,

the greatly-beloved Daniel (with strong influence in the imperial courts) was instrumental in bringing about Nebuchadnezzar's testimony written to every nation in the known world, lauding the power of the Most High who had humbled him like a beast and lifted him up again (Dan 4:1-37).

King Darius likewise sent out a kingdom-wide decree for all to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, who had delivered him from the lions (Dan 6:25-27), showing further evidence of the knowledge of Israel's God continuing to spread among the nations.

Queen Esther's intervention for her people, combined with her uncle Mordecai's rise to power in the Persian empire, led to many becoming Jewish proselytes in all the 127 provinces of the kingdom (Esth 8:17, 9:3-4).

Even a nameless Israelite maid in Naaman the Syrian's household contributed to this spread of knowledge about the God of Israel by saying, "*Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy*" (2 Kings 5:3). Naaman, as the captain of the host

for the king of Syria, became a fervent convert, with close personal access to the Syrian king and an opportunity to testify of God healing his leprosy.

Suffice it to say, if Psalm 119:130 tells us that "*the entrance of thy words giveth light...*," then every time the word of the Lord came to an Old Testament prophet saying, "*Thus saith the Lord...*," Satan's former deceptive power of keeping the nations in ignorant darkness continued to be curtailed during those millennium

Both Mary and Joseph's genealogies converged in this single shared ancestor: the man chosen to lay down that foundation stone of the post-exilic temple in the middle of the millennium years.

years.

What the Millennium Did NOT Include

It should be noted, however, that this removal of deceived ignorance was **not** a promise that the millennium would produce a universal **saving** knowledge of the God of heaven. Adam himself is an example of committing sin in spite of **not** being deceived in the garden. At the very least, the nations could no longer plead the excuse of remaining ignorant of the God of Israel's existence.

The stipulated conditions of the Revelation 20 millennium were **not** going to halt Satan's **attempts** to deceive; it was only that Satan would **not succeed** in deceiving the nations during that time (just as Satan did not succeed in deceiving Christ during the wilderness temptation).

Neither did the millennium's description include world-wide peace or a utopian existence for all, as some have mistakenly equated the millennium with the New Heavens and New Earth of Isaiah 65:17-25.

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The Millennium

Patricia Watkins

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Neither did the millennium chain confine Satan to a particular physical location so that he was immobilized and incapable of any activity at all. The abyss was a **condition** restricting Satan's deception — not a location per se.

Neither did the millennium terms require that the souls of Revelation 20:4 each reigned with Christ from the start to the finish of the thousand years. The millennium itself was a literal thousand years, but not the natural lifespan on earth of those souls who had died after *"living and reigning with Christ"* at various points during that millennium.

Neither did the millennium terms state that mankind could not **deceive themselves or others** during this period. After all, *"the heart is deceitful above all things..."*, even if Satan is not the one doing the deceiving.

Neither did the Revelation 20 language require Christ's reign to be limited **only** to those thousand years. That timed restriction was **only** on Satan's deception — **not on Christ**. The second person of the Trinity has **always** reigned, with that perpetual reign being manifested in different ways over time. For example, *"Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth"* (Ps 96:10). *"But unto the Son he says: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom"* (Heb 1:8 / Ps 45:6-7). *"Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and thy dominion is in all generations"* (Ps 145:13).

The Millennium's BEGINNING Predicted in the OT

The prophet King David wrote in two places concerning a time when God would initiate a particular, predetermined season (*kairos*) of blessing in old Jerusalem.

First, the aging King David wrote in Psalm 102:11-13 in anticipation of this approaching *"set time"* (which I believe pointed to the season — *kairos* — that began the millennium in old Jerusalem).

"You will arise and have mercy on Zion: for the time (kairos) to favor her, Yes, the set time (kairos) has come." (This predicted season of God's favor on old Jerusalem had then arrived, just as King David was getting ready to transfer the kingdom to Solomon.)

"For your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory." (This would be the result of the nations becoming aware of Israel's God when Satan's deception of them was bound.)

"For the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory." (This was the glory cloud that would descend on the temple at Solomon's dedication ceremony in 2 Chronicles 5:13-14.)

"This shall be written for the generation to come" [Solomon's coming generation], *"that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord."*

Second, the last prayer of King David also spoke prophetically of his son Solomon's reign. When reading Psalm 72 in the LXX, a reference to Satan as Revelation 12:10's *"accuser of the brethren"* appears in Psalm 72:4. **The king's son, Solomon, would "bring low the false accuser,"** which I believe was Satan's deception of the nations being bound when Solomon

began building Jerusalem's temple.

Indeed, Psalm 72:16 (LXX) speaks about that coming temple. *"There shall be an establishment on the earth on the tops of the mountains"* (the mountains surrounding Jerusalem). *"The fruit thereof shall be exalted above Libanus, and they of the city shall flourish as grass of the earth."* Prosperity abounded in Jerusalem at this time, as emphasized in 2 Chronicles 9:27, with Solomon making silver as common as the stones of the streets.

Revelation 20:4 - the ENDING of the Millennium at Christ's Resurrection-Day Ascension

Revelation 20's description of the millennium's ending referred to events taking place **either on or following the day of Christ's resurrection when He first ascended to the Father that morning. In particular, the group of bodily-resurrected Matthew 27:52-53 saints (all 144,000 of those Jewish "first-fruits" of the "first resurrection") is featured prominently in this context.**

In Revelation 20:4, the "thrones" with those sitting on them being given power to pass judgment was a throwback to the 12 apostles mentioned in Matthew 19:28. Christ had promised these thrones to the 12 apostles, telling them, *"...Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (when the Israelite tribes were still extant). That "throne of glory," as Peter testified at Pentecost in Acts 2:29-36, **had already been given to Christ at His resurrection-day ascension to the Father.**

The 12 apostles exercised that delegated, enthroned judgment over affairs in the early church at Jerusalem by teaching Christ's doctrines, choosing deacons, setting up care for widows, commissioning evangelists, sending out decrees about the circumcision question, receiving and distributing charitable donations, passing judgments such as the one on Ananias and Sapphira for their deceit, etc. This enthroned judgment of the 12 apostles in Jerusalem was the new covenant fulfillment of the old covenant practice of having *"thrones of judgment"* in Jerusalem where the more difficult cases of dispute among Israel's tribes used to be settled (Ps 122:3-5; cf., Deut 17:8-13).

Revelation 20:4 - the Identities of the "Souls" That John Saw

In addition to seeing these enthroned ones (the 12 apostles), John also saw in Revelation 20:4 the departed souls of those who had been beheaded or martyred for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God. Included among them were those prophets slain by the Israelite fathers. These prophets had *"showed before of the coming of the Just One"* (Acts 7:52), and it was a rare occurrence that those prophets escaped being slain by their own people. Christ had also accused Jerusalem of this same blood guilt in Matthew 23:34-37, just as God had accused His people of persecuting His messengers (2 Chr 36:14-16).

All these ancient martyred saints and prophets were the very same as the martyred "elect" who had been crying day and night for God to avenge them in Luke 18:7-8 (the parable of the unjust judge). Christ then predicted that vengeance would "speedily" be given to these martyred "elect." It would soon arrive in the coming AD 66-70 "days of vengeance" upon apostate Israel.

These Revelation 20:4 departed "souls" of the martyrs were also the very same as Revelation 6:9-11's "souls" under the altar — slain for the Word of God and their testimony. Their plea for vengeance was answered by God giving every one of them

a white robe representing the perfected righteousness of the bodily-resurrected state. I believe these souls under the altar were the many Matthew 27:52-53 saints — bodily raised from their graves on the same day that Christ arose in AD 33.

These white-robed resurrected saints were then told to “*rest yet for a little season*” (the same as the Revelation 20:3 “*little season*” during which Satan’s deception of the nations was renewed, beginning in AD 33). During that “little season,” the resurrected Matthew 27:52-53 saints from “*the first resurrection*” waited on earth “*till may be fulfilled also their fellow servants and their brethren, who are about to be killed — even as they*” (Rev 6:11 YLT). The Jewish religious leaders would immediately begin their persecution of the Jerusalem believers after Pentecost, and Nero would continue this persecution by his pogrom against the Christians from AD 64-68 when he would make “*war for forty-two months*” and “*overcome them*” (Rev 13:5-7 YLT).

The Sea Beast’s Identity and How it Demanded Homage Through the Centuries

John also saw in Revelation 20:4, along with those martyred souls, “*those which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands.*” (Notice - these were not necessarily dead by martyrdom. Some could have died a natural death.) This ancient Revelation 13 sea beast had a **666-year biography as of the time John was writing Revelation** (a composition date just prior to the AD 60 Laodicean earthquake).

This sea beast (with lion, bear, and leopard features of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and finally Roman empires) had initially come into existence with Nebuchadnezzar’s first deportation of Jerusalem’s nobility (like Daniel) in 607 BC. **As John was writing Revelation, 666 years had passed** with the four consecutive pagan empires maintaining control over the nation of Israel, with only a brief interlude of independence brought by the Maccabean victories.

In various ways, each of those pagan empires had demanded homage over the centuries, with some examples of these demands recorded in scripture:

- For the Babylonian empire, the requirement to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image
- For the Medo-Persian empire, Darius’ one-month decree against petitions to any but himself
- For the Greek empire, Antiochus Epiphanes’ schemes to corrupt the Israelites to act wickedly against the covenant
- Finally, for the Roman empire, the abominable, Rome-authorized Tyrian shekel “mark” giving homage to Rome and its gods

The Revelation 13 land beast’s high priesthood had collaborated with this final Roman phase of the sea beast by requiring this Tyrian shekel “mark” exclusively for temple transactions, from 19 BC to AD 66. The temple’s money-changers charged a fee for their currency exchange “services,” thereby collecting massive profits for the temple via this enforced “mark” requirement for anybody coming to worship at the temple or for those paying the yearly Temple Tax.

How Did the Souls of the Saints “Live and Reign with Christ the Thousand Years”?

First of all, this “*ezesan*” term is better translated as “**lived**”

instead of “**came to life.**” All of the departed souls which John saw in Revelation 20:4 were said to have “*lived and reigned with Christ the thousand years.*” This simultaneous “*living and reigning with Christ*” took place during these saints’ natural lifetimes at some point or another during the millennium years before they were slain or had died.

The natural question then arises: How could any saint have “*reigned with Christ*” **before** Christ incarnate was born of Mary, or **before** He was resurrected and enthroned in heaven at His ascension? The answer is that Paul used this same phrase of “*reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ*” in Romans 5:17, for those who had been given grace and righteousness. This was not only a condition imparted after Christ’s incarnation and ascended enthronement as our Great High Priest over the new covenant. **Anyone giving evidence of faith from creation forward has had righteousness imputed to them, just as Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness.**

As Ephesians 1:4 says, God “*hath chosen us IN HIM before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*” In other words, **God’s chosen ones given the gift of grace and righteousness at any point in history from creation forward have been able to “reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”** at whatever point in history their natural earthly lifespans have been. And that included saints who happened to have lived on earth during that segment of time when Satan’s deception of the nations was bound — from 968 / 967 BC until AD 33.

Revelation 20:5a - What About the Textual Variant?

Some have claimed that this sentence was a later spurious insertion, not included in any of the earlier manuscripts. For my position of a past literal millennium from 968 / 967 BC until AD 33, it is immaterial if this phrase is included or not.

For the sake of argument, let us say that Revelation 20:5a **does** belong in the text. This remnant (*loipoi*) of the dead which “*lived again*” at the end of the millennium was the limited group of Matthew 27:52-53 saints who rose bodily out of their graves around Jerusalem on the same day that “*Christ the FIRST-fruits*” had risen from the tomb — in AD 33 when the millennium was “finished.” John then simply labelled this event as being “*the FIRST resurrection.*”

There were 144,000 bodily-resurrected Jewish “**first-fruits**” as the Matthew 27:52-53 saints who joined “*Christ the First-fruits*” on that same day. They shared the same title because they shared the same bodily-resurrection event. That group of bodily-resurrected saints had “*lived and reigned with Christ*” during their natural lifetimes at various points during the literal thousand years, prior to their AD 33 “*first resurrection*” event.

On the other hand, suppose this Revelation 20:5a sentence **does not** belong in the text. This would still support my position. John’s label of “*the FIRST resurrection*” would **still** have applied to the martyrs and faithful souls of Revelation 20:4 — those who had shared in a resurrection on the same day when the resurrected Christ sat on the throne of His glory in the regeneration. This “first resurrection” event would have included individuals similar to Daniel’s three friends and the persecuted servants of God who were not necessarily martyred, but who had remained faithful during the centuries of the ancient sea beast’s pagan empires controlling the nation of Israel. God always preserved a faithful remnant of His people who did not apostatize.

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Introduction

This paper explores the historical, theological, and biblical foundations of the Kingdom Age, examining key teachings from Jesus's ministry and addressing differing perspectives, such as Edward Stevens' rapture theory. Through a blend of scriptural analysis, prophetic connections, and spiritual insights, this study highlights the enduring mission of the Church and the fulfillment of Jesus's prophecies.

Historical Context: AD 70 and Its Aftermath

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 stands as one of the most pivotal events in both Jewish and Christian history. This event marked the fulfillment of Jesus' warnings, with Christians fleeing to Pella to escape the destruction. The Church's dispersion allowed for the expansion of its mission. Despite limited historical records, figures like Eusebius affirm the continuity and resilience of the early Christian community.

- **Widespread Chaos:** The aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction was marked by displacement and instability.
- **Decentralization of the Church:** With Jerusalem no longer central, Christian communities spread to other cities like Antioch and Rome.
- **Early Christian Practices:** Small, scattered communities faced challenges in documenting their history during times of upheaval.

This practical understanding refutes claims that the historical silence signifies a removal of the church. Instead, it aligns with the adaptability of believers in fulfilling the Kingdom's mission.

Biblical Analysis of Rapture Verses

Key passages frequently associated with the Rapture, such as 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Matthew 24, can be better understood through a metaphorical lens that emphasizes the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:** The imagery of being "*caught up in the clouds*" symbolizes

the glorification and exaltation of believers in the presence of Christ, rather than a physical removal from Earth. The "*meeting in the air*" reflects the cultural practice of welcoming a king.

- **Matthew 24:40-41:** The contrast of being "taken" or "left" refers to judgment rather than Rapture. Those "taken" face judgment, while the faithful remain as participants in the Kingdom.

These passages highlight themes of transformation and participation in the Kingdom's fullness, aligning seamlessly with the teachings of Jesus.

The Kingdom of Heaven and Prophetic Fulfillment

Paul's teachings, often seen as the source for "Rapture" theology, align closely with Old Testament prophecies regarding the Kingdom of God.

- **Restoration and Renewal:**
 - *Isaiah 11:6-9:* A vision of peace and righteousness
 - *Romans 8:21-23:* Paul speaks of liberation from decay
- **Messianic Rule:**
 - *Isaiah 9:6-7:* A prophecy of a just and eternal government
 - *1 Corinthians 15:24-25:* Paul describes Christ's reign and triumph over all enemies
- **Resurrection and Life:**
 - *Isaiah 26:19* and *Daniel 12:2:* Prophecies of resurrection
 - *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:* Paul mirrors this hope in resurrection for believers
- **Gathering of God's People:**
 - *Isaiah 27:12-13:* A gathering of exiles
 - *Ephesians 1:9-10:* Paul speaks of God uniting all under Christ

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 stands as one of the most pivotal events in both Jewish and Christian history.

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These prophetic themes demonstrate that Paul’s writings were consistent with God’s redemptive plan, emphasizing the Kingdom’s establishment rather than removal through a Rapture.

Days of Preparation: Foundation of the Kingdom

Jesus’s early ministry served as the “Days of Preparation,” equipping His followers for the Kingdom of God. This foundational period was essential for teaching the values of the Kingdom, strengthening the faith of His disciples, and preparing for the transformative events that would establish the Church.

Training Disciples

During this time, Jesus devoted Himself to teaching, demonstrating, and empowering His followers. He provided them with practical lessons on faith, humility, and servant leadership. Through parables, sermons, and personal interactions, Jesus instilled the principles of the Kingdom into His disciples. Miracles, such as feeding the 5,000 and healing the sick, served not only to meet physical needs but also to reveal the power and nature of God’s reign. By sending the disciples out to preach and heal (Matthew 10), He actively prepared them to carry forward His mission.

Establishing Principles

Jesus emphasized foundational Kingdom principles such as repentance, love, and justice. He called people to turn away from sin and align their lives with God’s will, proclaiming, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt 4:17 The Kingdom Bible¹). His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount laid out a radical vision for living as Kingdom citizens, including the command to love one’s enemies and practice mercy. These principles created a framework for a community grounded in righteousness and compassion, preparing believers to embody Kingdom values in their daily lives.

Building Community

Jesus gathered and united a diverse group of

individuals—fishermen, tax collectors, and others—to form the foundation of the early Church. He emphasized the importance of relationships and servanthood, stating, “*Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant*” (Matt 20:26). By modeling a life of humility and selflessness, Jesus established a community that reflected the inclusive and transformative nature of the Kingdom. This group would become the nucleus of the Church, tasked with spreading the gospel and fostering unity among believers.

Fulfillment of Prophecy

Jesus’s ministry was deeply rooted in fulfilling Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. His actions, such as riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9), healing the blind and lame (Isa 35:5-6), and preaching good news to the poor (Isa 61:1), demonstrated that He was the promised Savior. These fulfillments affirmed the divine origin of His mission and provided assurance to His followers that they were witnessing the arrival of the Kingdom foretold by the prophets.

Preparing for Ultimate Sacrifice

Jesus used this preparatory period to lay the groundwork for His redemptive work on the cross. He repeatedly foretold His death and resurrection to His disciples, helping them understand the necessity of His sacrifice (Matt 16:21). Through the institution of the Lord’s Supper, He symbolically pointed to His body and blood as the basis of the new covenant (Luke 22:19-20). This ultimate act of love would become the cornerstone of the Kingdom, offering salvation and reconciliation to all who believe.

To further prepare His followers, Jesus frequently taught about the nature of the Kingdom using parables, likening it to things they could grasp in everyday life. Whether describing the Kingdom as a mustard seed (Matt 13:31-32), leaven in dough (Matt 13:33), or treasure hidden in a field (Matt 13:44), these vivid illustrations highlighted the transformative, expansive, and valuable essence of God’s reign. These teachings were meant to instill hope and understanding,

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n of Jerusalem in AD
one of the most pivotal
Jewish and Christian

providing a vision of what the Kingdom would become.

In addition, Jesus delivered sobering messages about the urgency of repentance and the cost of discipleship. He declared that the removal of a body part was preferable to the entire body being cast into the fire (Matt 5:29-30, 18:8-9). These statements underscored the seriousness of sin and the necessity of personal transformation. Such drastic metaphors also conveyed the magnitude of what

was at stake—eternal participation in the Kingdom of God.

Paul echoed this urgency when he exhorted believers to “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil 2:12). This call

to self-examination and active faith resonates with the preparatory nature of Jesus’s ministry. Both emphasized that the Kingdom required a response—commitment, repentance, and alignment with God’s will.

This preparation period was pivotal for transitioning into the Kingdom Age, where the promises of God would be fulfilled. Jesus’s teachings not only clarified the values of the Kingdom but also prepared His followers to live within its transformative reality. Through their response to His message and their acceptance of His ultimate sacrifice, believers were ready to embrace their roles as Kingdom participants. They became vessels of growth, community, and change, carrying the light of the Kingdom into the world and demonstrating its eternal influence.

Metaphorical Interpretation of Rapture Passages

The so-called “Rapture” passages, when viewed metaphorically, emphasize the Kingdom’s transformative power rather than physical removal. This interpretation highlights the spiritual and symbolic richness of the texts, offering a perspective that aligns with the overarching narrative of Scripture.

Clouds: Represent God’s Divine Presence

Throughout the Bible, clouds symbolize God’s glory and divine presence. In the Old Testament, clouds accompanied God during pivotal moments, such as leading the Israelites in the wilderness (Exod 13:21-22) and descending upon Mount Sinai (Exod 19:16). In the New Testament, a cloud enveloped Jesus during the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). Viewing “clouds” in Rapture passages as metaphors underscores the idea of believers being enveloped in God’s glory as they participate in the fullness of the Kingdom.

Trumpet Call: Marks the Announcement of the Kingdom’s Fullness

Trumpets hold significant symbolic meaning in Scripture, often signaling divine intervention or momentous events. In Exodus 19:16-19, a trumpet blast accompanied God’s descent upon Mount Sinai, heralding His covenant with Israel. Similarly, the “*trumpet call of God*” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 represents the proclamation of the Kingdom’s arrival in its fullness. Rather than marking physical removal, the trumpet metaphorically announces the transformative culmination of God’s redemptive plan.

Meeting in the Air: Depicts Spiritual Exaltation and Unity with Christ

The imagery of meeting the Lord “*in the air*” can be understood as a cultural metaphor for welcoming a sovereign or dignitary. In ancient practices, citizens would meet a visiting king outside their city gates to escort him in triumph. Similarly, this metaphor depicts believers spiritually honoring Christ and entering into profound unity with Him as the Kingdom reaches its completeness. It emphasizes exaltation and celebration rather than a literal departure from Earth.

Alignment with Kingdom Teaching

This metaphorical interpretation aligns seamlessly with the principles and teachings of the Kingdom of God. Here’s how:

- **Inclusion and Transformation:** Believers are spiritually transformed, embracing their role within God’s reign. This emphasizes the transformative power of the Kingdom in shaping lives and communities.
- **Continuity of Mission:** The Church remains active in fulfilling the Great Commission. This view rejects escapism and reaffirms the Church’s vital role in expanding the Kingdom and living out its values.
- **Celebration of Fulfillment:** These passages inspire hope and joy as believers celebrate the realization of God’s promises and His eternal reign.

This interpretation aligns with the prophetic hope of restoration and the realization of the Kingdom. It shifts focus from removal to transformation, encouraging believers to actively participate in God’s redemptive work and embrace their role in the Kingdom Age.

The Post-AD 70 Kingdom

Allyn Morton

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The concept of the “Rapture” is not explicitly taught by Moses in the Old Testament. The Church being “caught up” to meet the Lord comes primarily from the New Testament, particularly passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Conclusion

The post-AD 70 Kingdom age exemplifies the fulfillment of Jesus's teachings and the prophets' visions. By embracing the metaphorical interpretation of "Rapture" passages, we can see the harmony between Paul's writings and the prophetic tradition. This understanding reinforces the Church's mission as an active participant in the transformative work of the Kingdom, living in the "already" while anticipating the "not yet."

Additionally, it is crucial to remain steadfast within the boundaries of Scripture, preserving the even flow of its teachings. The Bible presents a coherent and unified narrative, emphasizing themes of redemption, restoration, and the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. Sudden interpretations or doctrinal insertions that conflict with this flow risk detracting from the richness of the Kingdom's message and the integrity of God's revealed truth. By carefully aligning our understanding with the overarching story of Scripture, we ensure that our beliefs are both faithful to its divine inspiration and consistent with its transformative power.

the "Rapture," as many Christians understand it, is not explicitly taught by Moses or the prophets in the Old Testament. The idea of being "caught up" to meet the Lord comes primarily from the New Testament, particularly Paul's writings, such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

In Acts 26:22, Paul explicitly states, *"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."*

Paul's teaching was firmly rooted in the Scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets and the law of Moses. He consistently emphasized that the message of Christ fulfilled the promises and prophecies found in the Old Testament. By doing so, he demonstrated that the gospel was not a departure from Jewish tradition but its culmination, bringing together the threads of prophecy into their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

The concept of the "Rapture," as many modern Christians understand it, is not explicitly taught by Moses or the prophets in the Old Testament. The idea of the Church being "caught up" to meet the Lord comes primarily from the New Testament, particularly Paul's writings, such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. This passage describes believers being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord, a cornerstone text for the Rapture doctrine.

However, some interpret certain Old Testament passages as foreshadowing or symbolizing aspects of the Rapture. For example:

Enoch's translation (Genesis 5:24): Enoch is described as walking with God, and then God "took him." This

has been seen by some as a type or shadow of a sudden removal from Earth.

Elijah's ascension (2 Kings 2:11): Elijah being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire is often cited as another possible prefiguration.

Isaiah 26:19-21: This passage speaks of the dead rising and a call for God's people to enter their chambers until His wrath passes. Some see this as an early vision of resurrection and protection.

The prophets often spoke about the Day of the Lord and God's judgment, which many link to eschatological themes, but these messages were more focused on Israel's restoration, the coming Messiah, and God's kingdom, rather than the distinct concept of a Rapture.

The Kingdom of God (heaven) is the crucial culmination of the end of the age and the installation of the new heaven and new earth in its eternal position encompassing all things. Even the realm of the unseen was a recipient of the fulfilled Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. For me, it is impossible to think that a brand-new idea, presented by Paul no less, who claimed to teach only that which was given from Moses and the prophets, could even be a truthful message for the Church.

This deeply rooted theological principle, that the Kingdom of God, as the fulfillment of God's plan, encompasses all realms—seen and unseen—in its eternal consummation through Christ, stands as the culmination of prophetic promises and the central theme of Scripture. Indeed, Paul's insistence on teaching nothing but what Moses and the prophets foretold emphasizes continuity rather than the introduction of brand-new concepts alien to the biblical narrative.

The idea of the Kingdom being fulfilled in Christ resonates powerfully with prophecies such as Isaiah 9:7, which speaks of the Messiah's government and peace having no end, and Daniel 7:13-14, where the Son of Man is given dominion and glory, establishing an everlasting Kingdom. Paul's writings consistently affirm these themes, demonstrating how Jesus embodies and fulfills these Old Testament promises.

My skepticism toward ideas presented as entirely new seems well-founded. The gospel, according to Paul, is a revelation of the mysteries long-hidden but foretold by Scripture (Rom 16:25-26). It bridges what was anticipated and what is now realized. For the Church, this understanding roots its identity firmly in the fulfillment of God's ancient covenant and eternal Kingdom. ✚

This article first appeared at <https://preteristarchives.org/the-post-ad-70-kingdom-age>.

1. <https://thekingdombible.org/>

BEFORE CONTINUING OUR STUDIES of the *First Generation AFTER the End*, we need to revisit the Great Tribulation. There is difference of opinion within Preterism regarding the historical **identity** of the *Great Tribulation* (GT) and how it is **sequenced** in relation to the other end-time events.

For instance, some preterists define the **GT** as referring **only to the wrath** that was poured out on the Jews in the Destruction of Jerusalem, while others define it as including both **persecution** of the saints and **wrath-outpouring** on the Jews.

We might wonder whether these different definitions of the **GT** really matter, but if we mis-identify and mis-sequence the **GT**, then we will also mis-sequence some of the other end-time events that are related to it.

For instance, here is one scenario:

- If the **GT** is defined as the **persecution on the church**,
- And the Parousia began “immediately after” the **GT** was “cut short,”
- And the **wrath** was poured out during the Parousia,
- This is the proper sequence: GT persecution ⇒ Parousia ⇒ Wrath out-pouring

But notice what happens if the **GT** is re-defined:

- If the **GT** is defined as **wrath-outpouring only**,
- And the **GT** was “cut short” at the destruction of Jerusalem,
- Then the wrath was poured out before the Parousia began.
- This sequence is flawed: GT wrath poured out ⇒ Parousia ⇒ Wrath already poured out

Since one of the main purposes of the Parousia was to **pour out the wrath** on the Jews, then sequencing the Parousia “immediately after” the destruction of Jerusalem would imply that *Christ came to pour out the wrath AFTER the wrath had already been poured out!* That simply will not work.

Wrath DURING the Parousia – NOT Before It

It would not have been much of a relief, rescue, or salvation for those saints if they had to suffer through both the Neronian persecution and the wrath-outpouring without getting the promised relief and rescue until AFTER the wrath was poured out. That would have been “too little and too late” to be of any significant benefit.

Instead, Apostle Paul taught that the saints were **destined for tribulation** (1 Thess 3:3), but **NOT for the wrath** (1 Thess 5:9). And he promised that at the Parousia they would be *rescued* from the coming wrath **BEFORE it was poured out** on their persecutors (1Thess. 1:10). Paul makes that sequence even more explicit in 2 Thess 1:6-8 where he said that the *relief, rescue, and retribution* [wrath] would come DURING the Parousia — NOT before it.

Two Phases of the Great Tribulation

In my article (*Sequencing the Tribulation*) in the Spring 2021 issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine, we examined three key texts in Matthew 24 which mention “tribulation” (verses 9, 21-22, 29) and concluded that there were **two phases** to the Great Tribulation:

- (1) The Neronian persecution of Christians (AD 64-66)
- (2) The wrath-outpouring upon the Jews (AD 66-70)

Thus, *immediately after* the Neronian persecution was “cut short” by the outbreak of the Zealot rebellion (May 66), Christ came with His angels to *rescue* the saints before He poured out His wrath on their persecutors (AD 66-70). This shows that the Neronian persecution was the first phase of the GT and properly *sequences* it in relation to the Parousia and other end-time events.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that **Kurt Simmons** agrees that there were at least two phases to the GT, and that the first phase included the Neronian persecution [*Consummation of the Ages* (2003), pp. 166-169; and *Revelation Explained* (2010), p. 23].

Identity of the GT is Disputed

In his *Second Negative* (points 26-31) in our debate about the first-century Rapture, Don K. Preston asserted: “Stevens offers us WHAT MAY WELL BE A FIRST IN HISTORY! ... He claims that the **Neronian persecution** ... was the **Great Tribulation** (*Second Affirmative*, pts. 20-21). **THIS IS A HISTORICALLY UNPRECEDENTED CLAIM.** ... There is NO EVIDENCE to support [it].” [ALL CAPS are his. Boldface added.]

That is like Thomas Ice asserting that there is *not a shred of evidence* to support Gary DeMar’s preterist view. But then, DeMar and Gumerlock wrote a book which provided boatloads of evidence, and Thomas Ice had to eat some crow!

Below, we will see that **Jesus** was the “FIRST IN HISTORY” to connect the Neronian persecution to the GT, and there were others afterward who made the same connection. Let’s look at some of that “EVIDENCE.”

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Two References to the Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:21 is not the only text which mentions the Great Tribulation. The other reference is **Revelation 7:14**. And since both texts are in a context of *intense persecution*, and neither is described as being exclusively wrath-outpouring, it necessarily implies that the GT included both persecution on the Church and wrath out-pouring on the Jews.

Revelation 7:14 uses the phrase “THE great tribulation” (with the definite article) referring to the martyrdom of “a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.” This included Gentile Christians from all over the Roman world — NOT just Jewish Christians in Judea. And that perfectly fits the **Neronic persecution**.

That is why many commentaries see both Revelation 7:14 and Matthew 24:21 as referring to the same GT. For example, **J. S. Russell** not only sees both texts as alluding to the same GT, but also describes it as being a time of unparalleled persecution “like that which took place under Nero” [*The Parousia*, p. 372] –

The religion of Jesus of Nazareth was a proscribed and persecuted faith over the whole Roman Empire before the outbreak of the Jewish war ... Accordingly, the redeemed in the vision, the ‘white-robed multitude,’ are said to **come out of great tribulation** [Rev. 7:14]: an expression which gives us a clue to the determination of the *time* and the *persons* here referred to. Our Lord, when predicting the season of unparalleled affliction that was to **precede** the catastrophe of Jerusalem and Judea, says, ‘**Then shall be great tribulation** [*thlipsis megale*], such as was not since the beginning of the world,’ etc. (Matt 24:21). Now in the statement in [Rev 7:14], ‘These are they that came out of great tribulation,’ there is an **unquestionable allusion to our Lord’s words**. The proper rendering, as Alford points out, is – ‘These are they that came out of **THE great tribulation** [*ek tes thlipseos tes megales*], the definite article being most emphatic, and THE tribulation plainly in allusion to the prediction in **Matt 24:21** [J. S. Russell, *The Parousia* (1878), pp. 405-406; bold emphasis and brackets added].

Both References Came from Jesus!

The vision of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 7:14 was part of the *sixth seal* (Rev 6:12–7:17) which was revealed by the Lamb (**Jesus Himself**). Thus, it seems impossible to believe that Jesus could be talking about a totally different

GT here in Revelation 7:14 than the one He mentioned in His Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:21).

So, this time of unparalleled persecution which produced such a great multitude of martyrs (Rev 7:14) had to be the same GT which Jesus originally predicted in His Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:21-22), which He said would be “cut short for the sake of the elect” so that some of those saints would remain alive until the Parousia. If that persecution had continued unabated, “*none of the elect would have survived*” (Matt 24:22, paraphrase). So, this description of the GT perfectly fits the **Neronic persecution** which was “cut short” by the outbreak of the Zealot rebellion (May 12th, AD 66).

Thus, if there is any doubt about what Jesus meant when He referred to the GT in Matthew 24:21, it is totally clarified when compared to Revelation 7:14. The less clear (Matt 24:21) is elucidated by the more clear (Rev 7:14). And since Revelation 7:14 clearly depicts the Neronic persecution, it necessarily implies that Matthew 24:21 also alludes to it. And that means Jesus was the “FIRST IN HISTORY” to connect the Neronic persecution to the GT!

Both John and Paul Would Agree

Moreover, since **Apostle John** was present on the Mount of Olives thirty-two years earlier when Jesus spoke the Olivet Discourse, he would certainly remember (under inspiration) Jesus’ statements about the GT (Matt 24:21). Thus, if the Holy Spirit speaking through John was referring to a totally different GT, we would have expected John to clarify that distinction. But since there is no such clarification, it necessarily implies (and demands) that they are the same GT.

And this aligns perfectly with **Apostle Paul** who explained that the saints were “destined to suffer tribulation” (1 Thess 3:3) but were NOT destined to go through the wrath (1 Thess 5:9). Instead, they would be *relieved* of their persecution (i.e., “cut short”) and *rescued from the wrath* BEFORE it was poured out (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; 2 Thess 1:6-8). ✚

For more evidence that the Neronic persecution was included in the Great Tribulation, see my March 2013 historical podcasts,¹ my 2014 Final Decade book (pages 150-175),² and my *First Affirmative* in the debate with Don Preston.

1. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/11633>
2. <https://www.preterist.org/products/2371/>

How a Mysterious Letter and a Couple of Disruptive Teachers Support the Case for Preterism

IN MANY OBJECTIONS TO preterism, there is an argument that the preterist, while doing justice to the near-term time statements of the New Testament, makes unfounded conclusions regarding the mode of the Day of the Lord and the coming of the Kingdom. The argument is that the cataclysmic language, while potentially figurative, needs to be taken more literally and that the first generation of the church would certainly have expected something more world-wide and momentous to all of humanity. There aren't many passages in the New Testament that the preterist can turn to that conclusively support a more subtle Day of the Lord (from a terrestrial standpoint). In this brief essay, I point to two passages that are often used against preterists, but wherein I find plenty of evidence to support the preterist understanding of the mode of the Day of the Lord; being physically limited to Jerusalem but spiritually universal is the same type of expectation that the early Church held.

The Thessalonian Rumor

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (ESV)

1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9

To wrongly identify the death of Adam is to wrongly construct eschatology.

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

These verses talk about a rumor that is spreading ("either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us") that has led some in the church to be shaken up. The rumor is specifically "that the day of the Lord has come." For such a rumor to take root, there had to be some elements of truth (that confirmed some understandings), and, as Paul subsequently points out, there are some elements of error. In the subsequent corrective section, let's consider what Paul chooses to correct and what Paul chooses to not correct.

What Paul Does Not Correct

Paul *does not* state that it would be impossible for him to write a letter regarding the coming of the day of the Lord. This is crucial to notice. If Paul and the early Christians expected

all believers to be raptured from the face of the earth, then it would be impossible for Paul to write a letter and equally impossible for the church to receive such a letter. That is clearly not their understanding — neither for the Thessalonians nor Paul. The Thessalonians believed that they may have needed to be informed about the coming of the day of the Lord and that Paul could be in a position to write such a letter. Paul's corrective does not challenge that assumption. That is, by the way that Paul corrects their misunderstanding, he affirms two things: 1) that *he could have written* such a letter (but didn't), and 2) it would have been possible that the second coming could have occurred without their knowing it (but it hadn't yet occurred because of some other signs that remained to be fulfilled). In Paul's correction, he recites more event-based signs that *hadn't* taken place yet: 3) "rebellion comes" 4) "man of

The Case for Preterism

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lawlessness is revealed” (with signs associated with him taking “*his seat in the temple of God*”), and 5) Jesus will “*kill with the breath of his mouth*” this lawless one by “*the appearance of his coming*.” But again, it is crucial to note that Paul doesn’t even hint that their understanding of the mode of the day of the Lord needs correction.

Let’s first unpack these two elements in what Paul implicitly affirms. He affirms that the coming of the Lord would be soon (“*for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work*”) and that they were not foolish for expecting the return of the Lord in their generation. Paul, in his correction, only points out the unfulfilled timing of the event-based signs and does not correct their assumption that they *could have heard from him in a letter* about the coming of the Day of the Lord.

When Paul explains why the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ had not yet occurred, he *confirms* the accuracy of their other expectations that are implicit in the passage — the expectation that a word or letter from Paul *could* announce that Jesus Christ had returned *and* that they would still be on earth to receive it. Note again that, for Paul to write such a letter, he too would still need to be on earth *after* the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, by acknowledging the *types* of event-based signs that needed to be fulfilled in the coming of the Day of the Lord, Paul is also affirming that it would be possible for them to *need to be informed* that it had occurred. That is, if the church had assumed that the Day of the Lord would be a world-wide calamity that literally everyone would see, then a rumor or mysterious letter would be dismissed out-of-hand (by the Thessalonians). But the rumor was *not* dismissed out-of-hand, and Paul doesn’t correct their understanding of the *mode* of the Day of the Lord [again, only correcting the event-based sign timing].

What Paul Chooses to Correct

Let’s also take a look at the three elements that Paul uses to correct their understanding of what still must take place. 1) The rebellion comes. Note the definite article — “*the rebellion*” (or “*the apostasy*”). This is not

generalized disobedience but a specific instance, likely the rebellion of the Jews against the Romans (the “Great Jewish Revolt” in AD 66). 2 & 3) The “*man of lawlessness is revealed*.” Whether we assign this to Nero, Vespasian (Titus Flavius Vespasianus), or the last Jewish High Priest, Phannias ben Samuel, the identity (or identities) is debatable — it could be that one is the “man of sin” (vv. 3-4, Vespasian) and one is the “man of lawlessness” (Nero), and one is the “lawless one” (v. 8, Phannias ben Samuel). However, the point is that the revealing of this person (or persons) had not taken place yet. That is, Paul’s corrective is primarily one of the timing of events.

The Hymenaeus and Philetus Error

There is a very similar occurrence in the second letter to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:16-18

16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

Here we are introduced to some early teachers who were teaching a version of pre-70AD-preterism.

These two, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were teaching “*that the resurrection has already taken place*.” We learn, tellingly, that their teaching is spreading like gangrene. This teaching, to catch on in a significant way, must have had a strong note of plausibility to the early church. Again, let’s take a look at what Paul chooses to correct and what he chooses not to correct.

What Paul Does Not Correct

Even as Paul condemns the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus, he does so in a way that doesn’t call out the *impossibility* of their false claim. After some pastoral comments to Timothy about opposing such false teachers at the end of chapter 2, he returns to address this particular untruth at the beginning of chapter 3.

...continued on page 18

... the phrase “*in the day you eat*” in the context of Genesis 2-3 means that Adam would certainly die some kind of death within the same twenty-four-hour day that he ate the forbidden fruit.

1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Then Paul takes the rest of chapter 3 to expound more on the characteristics of false teachers and to contrast them with his way of life. He returns to the topic of the coming judgment at the beginning of chapter 4.

The Case for Preterism

Aaron Amstutz

... continued from page 17

1 . . . in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word...

Note in these sections that Paul *does not* argue against the possibility of the resurrection occurring without massive upheaval on earth. He does argue that it will happen soon (2 Tim 4:1, 3, 8) but that it hasn't happened *yet*. To teach "that the resurrection has already taken place" would not be even plausible under

an assumption that all believers would be raptured on the Day of the Lord — that is, it would be dismissed out-of-hand. The fact that the teaching was spreading meant that there was a plausibility to the teaching to the early church audience, even without the signs that occurred in 70AD.

What Paul Chooses to Correct

Paul points out that event-signs associated with the last days hadn't yet been fully revealed (2 Tim 3:1ff). Paul condemns the teaching for *destroying the faith of some* and for not being true — not as being antithetical to the gospel or the core teachings of the church. In the verses that follow, he states that such false teachings are dishonorable and need to be purged from the church (vv. 19, 21, 23). The teacher of such disruptive errors "25 *must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*"

Why was such a teaching (that was correct in many assumptions, but wrong in timing) so destructive? Why did it destroy the faith of some? The answer isn't given explicitly in the letter to Timothy. It could be that the trumpet hadn't sounded (1 Cor 15:52, 1 Thess 4:16), and so the physical signs of the Day of the Lord were minimized by the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus. Paul gives us hints through the remainder of the letter to Timothy, it seems that perhaps the reason is that "quarreling about words" (v. 14), "foolish and stupid arguments" (v. 23), and "godless chatter" were starting to infect the church and cause divisions. Such divisive arguments would produce ungodliness.

The problem for Hymenaeus and Philetus was two-fold: 1) They were pre-70AD preterists — that is, preterists without any of the signs of fulfillment that would occur in the terrestrial world, and 2) their claim of a fulfilled resurrection contradicted the testimony of the still-living apostles — thus inevitably leading to a division in the church between apostolic authority and their self-aggrandized authority based on "foolish and stupid arguments." I think the second problem (contradicting the still-living apostles) is what "destroyed the faith of some." That is, if the apostles were wrong about something as crucial as the resurrection, then how could they be trusted with other elements of the message of Christianity? We ought to remember that doctrinal unity is very much tied to the functional unity of the church, and where the focus becomes some "foolish and stupid argument," the church would splinter under diversity of teachings [an admonition that the modern-day preterist still needs to hear; i.e., we should not be causes of division in our local churches, even as we seek to pursue clarity and truth in teachings on eschatology.]

Conclusion

To summarize, the way that Paul corrects both the rumor in 2 Thessalonians and the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus shows what he does and does not object to. The spreading of the rumor recorded in 2 Thessalonians and the false teachings referred to in 2 Timothy also tell us about the mental model of the Day of the Lord for the early church. These things, taken together, help to support the claim that the first generation of Christians *did not* hold to a world-wide rapture associated with the day of the Lord, nor to a world-wide (terrestrial) cataclysm associated with the resurrection of the dead. Instead, they held to a more limited physical manifestation of the Day of the Lord and the resurrection of the dead. Paul does not challenge the assumptions on the mode, but does reinforce the events that would be time-markers for the day of the Lord. ✚

Revelation 20:6 - the “Blessed and Holy” Matthew 27:52-53 Saints

But it was only “*blessed and holy*” individuals of Revelation 20:6 participating in that “*first resurrection*.” **Only saints** were raised in Matthew 27:52-53’s group of 144,000 first-fruits. No unjust ones were included until the **next** bodily-resurrection event in AD 70 at Christ’s Second Coming, which included both “*wheat*” and “*tares*,” “*sheep*” and “*goats*,” and “*just and unjust*.” Every one of those sealed, bodily-resurrected Matthew 27:52-53 saints were impervious to sickness, injury, physical death, demonic oppression, or any of the disastrous conditions in old Jerusalem as the city died its “*second death*” by turning into a “*lake of fire*” during its destruction. This was a virtual duplicate of Jerusalem’s first death under the Babylonian invasion in 586 BC. Death and Hell (Hades - the grave) were cast into the city to plague its inhabitants **on both occasions** (Isa 28:14-18 cf., Rev 20:14).

That “*second death*” of old Jerusalem had no power over those bodily-resurrected Matthew 27:52-53 saints, some of whom remained in Jerusalem during those AD 66-70 “*days of vengeance*” on the nation. Those of the Matthew 27:52-53 saints group remaining in Jerusalem were called “*the camp of the saints*” which became surrounded by “*Gog*” coming against old Jerusalem (the “*beloved city*” in Rev 20:9).

Revelation 20:7 - Satan’s “Little Season” of Being Loosed

If we consider that **forty years** of wilderness wanderings was called “*a long season*” in Joshua 24:7, then “*a little season*” of Satan’s being loosed should not exceed that. This “*little season*” began in AD 33 when Satan was cast out of heaven, lasting until AD 66 when Satan and all his hosts were imprisoned within Jerusalem / Mystery Babylon. That city became a prison (*phylake*) for “*every unclean spirit*” and “*a habitation of devils*” (Rev 18:2). Christ had predicted this in Matthew 12:43-45, when the unclean spirits He had formerly cast out would return in seven-fold numbers to oppress His own wicked generation in their “*last state*.”

Christ forewarned His disciples five days before His crucifixion, “*Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out*” (John 12:31). After losing the war in heaven with Michael and his angels, Satan as the former “*accuser of the brethren*” and his devils would be cast out of heaven down to earth for that “*short time*” (Rev 12:1-12), to renew his deception of the nations in “*great wrath*” after Christ’s resurrection-day ascension.

Once again, Christ warned the disciples at the Last Supper, saying, “*The prince of this world is coming...*” (John 14:30). Christ knew the millennium’s ending was close at hand and wanted His disciples prepared for Satan’s enraged, ramped-up level of renewed deception, once His resurrection day had come. This day began the “*little season*” of Satan “*walking about as a roaring lion*.”

Revelation 20:8 - the Deceived Gog and Magog’s Identity

Revelation 20:8 tells us that Satan’s main target for deception was “*the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog*,” where the gathering for battle would be staged. These “*four corners of the earth*” referred to the land of Israel in particular, just as Ezekiel 7:2-3 had once described it: “*...Thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; An end, the end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now is*

the end come upon thee...”

The LXX also refers to **Israel as “Gog”** in Numbers 24:7-8: “*...and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased. God led him out of Egypt...*” In other words, “*Gog and Magog*” were the nations in the land of Israel during the AD 66-70 “*days of vengeance*.”

Revelation 20:9 - the Zealot Leader Simon bar Giora and His Army’s Destruction

It is my belief from studying Gog’s “*chief prince*” that this was the Zealot leader Simon bar Giora, coming from his place out of the “*north parts*” of Galilee — the home turf of the Zealots (Acts 5:37). Compared to the other Zealot leaders, Simon managed to gather the largest number of combatants under his command (40,000), an army “*as the sand of the sea*” gleaned from among the nations around Israel. Simon “*went up on the breadth of the land*” of Israel, pillaging as he went, finally coming to surround Jerusalem in AD 69, demanding admittance.

Once inside Jerusalem, Simon battled his way to supremacy over the other Zealot leaders. This fulfilled Ezekiel 38:21’s description of Gog’s battle, when “*every man’s sword shall be against his brother*” — **civil warfare** in Jerusalem between the Zealot factions. Simon’s army in Jerusalem was finally overcome by Titus’ Roman army in AD 70. Ezekiel 38:22 predicted that God would rain “*fire and brimstone*” upon Gog’s army — the same fire God sent from heaven in Revelation 20:9 that devoured Gog’s army.

Revelation 20:10 - the Fate of Satan and His Entire Demonic Host

Satan, his devils, and every unclean spirit also met their utter destruction in Jerusalem’s “*lake of fire and brimstone*.” God predicted this long ago in Ezekiel 28:18-19, saying that this “*anointed cherub*” would be turned to ashes on the earth when God devoured him with fire so that “*never shalt thou exist anymore*.”

This was the extinction of the entire Satanic realm in AD 70. Christ had predicted that the devil and his angels would jointly share the same tormented fate in the same location (Matt 25:41), along with the beast (the Revelation 17 Judean scarlet beast) and the Revelation 13 false prophet. These all met their end by the fire from heaven which was “*cast upon the earth*” (Rev 8:5) in those “*days of vengeance*” against the land of Israel.

In His earthly ministry, Christ had earlier expressed His intense longing in Luke 12:49 (NKJV): “*I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!*” Old Jerusalem finally became that “*furnace of fire*” (Matt 13:41-42; cf. Isa 31:9) where the wicked were burned up and all of Satan’s hosts were turned to ashes — trodden underfoot by those in Malachi 4:1-3.

Summed up, Revelation 20:10 would be the AD 70 fulfillment of God’s ancient Genesis 3:15 promise to crush the head of the serpent and of Paul’s prediction in Romans 16:20 that God would do this “*shortly*.” ✚

The Millennium

Patricia Watkins

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ON FRIDAY, MARCH 28TH, 2025, the world lost a beautiful soul, and I lost my beautiful wife, my soulmate, and best friend. Rachael and I first met on February 5, 2012, at a mutual friend's house to "watch" the Super Bowl. Their real motive, however, was to set us up. And I'm glad they did, because later that year (by the grace of God) we started dating, and my life has never been the same. Since then, I have had the privilege and honor of knowing, loving, and caring for my sweetie pie



(for about 13 years). In that time, I have never known such an amazing girl. She was beautiful, smart, kind, loving, generous, fun, and passionate. In this tribute, I would like to give insight into some of Rachael's challenges, her life as a Christian, and our journey together through the world of eschatology (end times).

Rachael was born on May 5, 1981. From the very beginning of her life, she encountered many health

challenges. In fact, I was told that she didn't leave the hospital until five months after she was born due to complications with her intestine. Later, at a very young age, she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease (you're born with) that causes respiratory and digestive problems. When I met Rachael many years later, still more illnesses started to arise. In our 2023 interview with Michael Miano, she shared some of her more recent health challenges, stating, "I basically suffer with a lot of chronic pain, and I'm severely disabled at this point . . . I have nerve issues with my pelvic region. I have trouble sitting, standing, walking. I have hand and feet pain. I've lost almost all use of my hands, so I can't type or even write." These were just some of her everyday challenges, yet she pressed on, and at the time of that interview, it didn't stop her from continuing to work on our latest book, *End Times Explained*. Rachael was always a fighter and the strongest person I have ever known. She found ways to overcome her disabilities and keep her quality of life. She never let her ailments get in the way of her passions, and her passion was her faith and eschatology.

Rachael was led to the Lord through her stepfather's co-worker/family friend. He had been witnessing to her stepdad at work and later started coming to her parents' house to share the gospel. Rachael was open to it. In our 2023 interview with Zach Davis, she said, "I always believed in an afterlife, but I didn't actually become a Christian . . . until someone really shared the gospel clearly with me." So, in 2007, at the age of 26, she accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior, got baptized, and started to go to church. In our 2023 Miano interview, she said of her salvation experience: "At the time, I was really excited about this and was like, this is it. This is what I have been waiting for my whole life. And I remember when I got saved, and was like, 'Take me now, God. I'm ready to die now.' . . . Obviously no, that's not how it works. God still has work for you after you get saved. So, I know that now." And God had work for Rachael to do. She would go on to write four books and various articles, teach Bible studies, do interviews, and much more!

Pete Wrue

Pete and Rachael have been avid students of eschatology for over 10 years and have written two books on the topic:

The Return of Christ: Why are we still waiting
End Times Explained: Understanding the Different Views.

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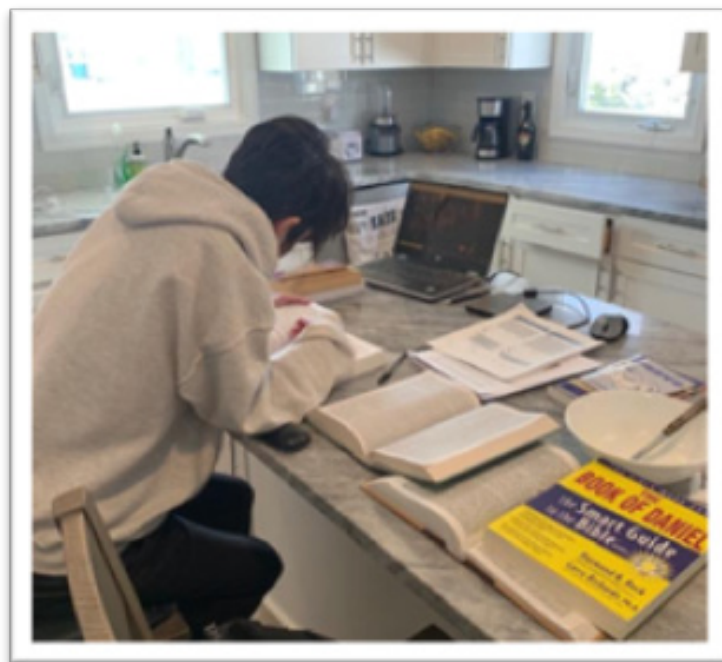


In 2011, Rachael started attending a Calvary Chapel Church, where she first started learning about the Rapture and dispensationalism. This sparked her interest in the end times and would kick off her journey of intense study. It wasn't long before she started questioning what she was being taught, and in a 2022 Burros of Berea podcast, she stated, "I believed it because they were telling me it, but things about it weren't making sense. I wasn't seeing it in the Scripture, and I was like, where are they getting this? How are they coming up with this?" In her search for the truth, Rachael started to question the dispensational timeline.

So, when we started seriously dating in late 2012, Rachael led the way in our eschatological journey by questioning the pretrib Rapture teaching. She dug in and studied the Bible for herself and saw only one Second Coming in Scripture, not two comings (a pretribulational Rapture and then a Second Coming). Later, she stumbled upon a YouTube video that taught a posttribulational Rapture view. This answered a lot of her questions, and Rachael was convinced that the post-trib Rapture made more sense, and after much resistance, I followed suit. In 2014, to document this part of her journey, Rachael wrote her first book called, *Will the Church Go Through the Coming Tribulation?* It was never published, but it was well written, and it's a great resource. So, by the time we got married (October 26, 2013-the happiest day of my life!), neither one of us believed in the pretrib Rapture anymore.

In 2014/2015, after studying the Rapture, Rachael dug deeper and started looking at the Millennium. In our 2023 interview with Open Bible Fellowship, she shared how it started: "I was challenged one day when I was reading Revelation chapter 20, which describes this thousand-year period, and it didn't make sense to me . . . The things that happened at the end of this thousand years are the same things I read about in the rest of the Bible that are supposed to happen when Christ returns. So, I'm like, how does Christ return and then all this stuff happens

1,000 years later? It's supposed to happen when He returns." Rachael had a problem with the premillennial teaching, which states that the second coming and the Great White Throne judgment are two separate events separated by a thousand years. She saw them as one event. Rachael realized that, just like with the Rapture, there were different views on the Millennium as well. So, we ordered more books, and after reading *The Momentous Event* by W.J. Grier (which she read in one day), she was convinced of Amillennialism, and again, I followed suit. And in 2018, to document this part of her journey, she wrote her second book called *Amillennialism*. This was also never published, but it is a great book and resource. Also, it was our first book together; she wrote the whole



book while I edited and did the illustrations.

Now an Amillennialist, Rachael started joining Facebook groups (Steve Gregg, Amillennialism, etc.), and it was in the Amillennialism FB group that she heard about preterism (partial). In our 2023 Zach Davis interview, she said, "I was taught a futurist view of Matthew 24, and a

...continued on page 22

lot of people were saying, 'No, Matthew 24 is done already. The Great Tribulation was the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.' I had no idea what they were talking about. But it kept coming up a lot, and I couldn't ignore it after a while...I said, 'I'm going to have to study this...I want to look at all the views.'" Rachael had never

Remembering Rachael

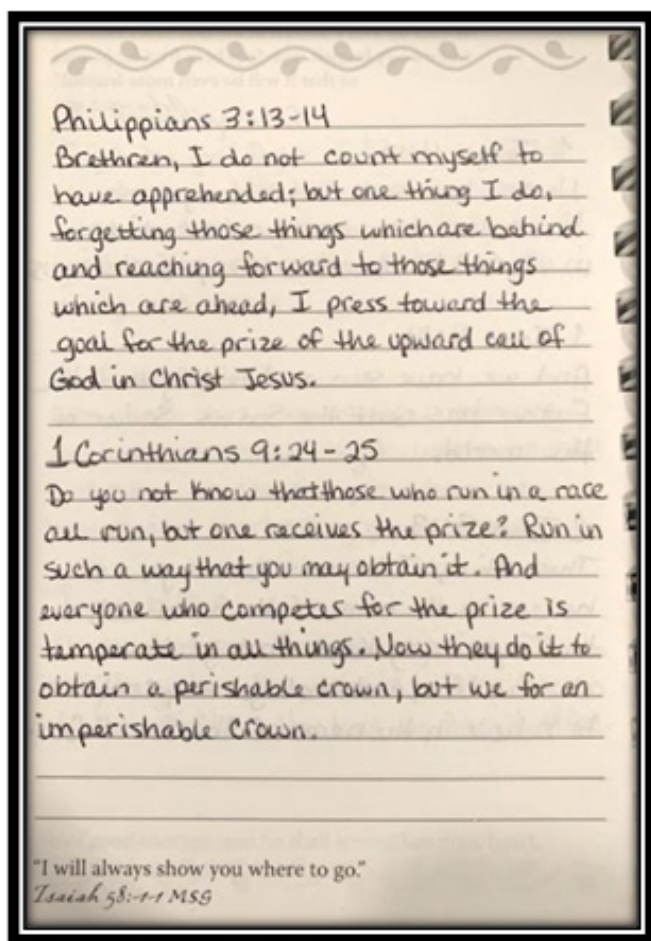
Pete Wrue

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heard or learned about AD 70 in church, so she studied more and started to look into it. She would then wrestle with Matthew 24 and be confronted with time statements and audience relevance. Rachael also saw that partial preterism was very inconsistent. In a 2023 interview, she stated, "When I learned partial preterism, I couldn't accept that either. I said, 'You can't split it up; you're saying there are two different comings, and I only see one in the New Testament.'"

In 2018, she came across a few resources that really helped her see the truth: the 2013 debate between Steve Gregg (Amill) and Don Preston (Full Preterist), Brian Martin's video "You've Gotta Be Kidding, Right?" and book *Behind the*

Veil of Moses, and *Matthew 24 Fulfilled* by John Bray. So, by the end of 2018, Rachael was a full preterist, and about two years later, I joined her.



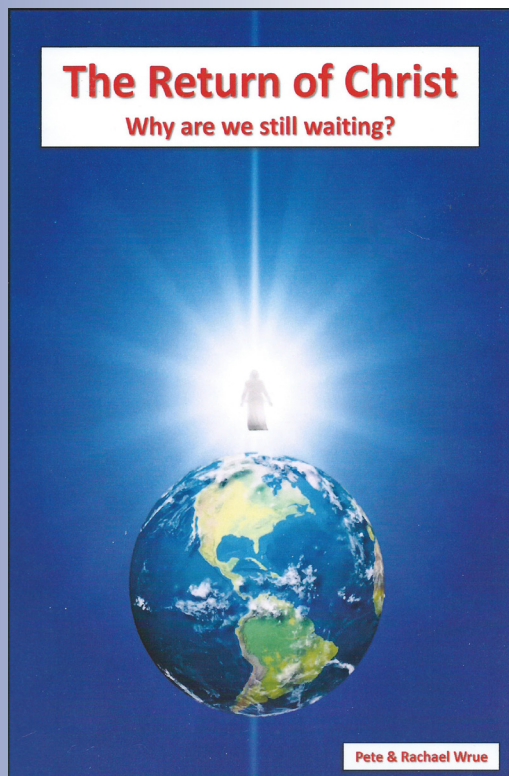
This was the last entry in Rachael's notebook.

On October 26, 2021 (our 8th wedding anniversary), we decided to write a full preterist book, *The Return of Christ: Why Are We Still Waiting?* It was released in 2022 with great reviews, and it opened many doors for us. Then in 2023, we released our second book, *End Times Explained: Understanding the Different Views* (Foreword by Kirk Cameron), to educate the Church and to bridge the gap between futurism and preterism. In both books, because Rachael was such a great writer, she did most of the writing, but, by this time, she couldn't use her hands. So, she would speak, and I would type. I share this to show how amazing and strong she was and how she didn't let anything stop her from getting the truth out to the world.

In our 2023 interview with Zach Davis, Zach asked, "What's your mission here in eschatology?... Is it more of a love for full preterism or a disdain for dispensationalism?" Rachael answered, "It's a love for truth and trying to get people out of deception." For the 13 years I knew her, Rachael always studied her Bible to find the truth, and she knew it better than anyone, pastors included. She was always questioning, learning, and growing. She did the work and was a great example of how we need to do our part for the Kingdom, even when there are challenges and it's difficult. In her short 43 years, she made such a huge impact and left such a big legacy that we will never know how many people she touched and continues to touch.

When Rachael passed, our good friend Bob Cruickshank Jr. posted, "Heaven gained a beautiful angel, and earth lost a beautiful soul." How true. While I am still brokenhearted that I don't see my angel every day, I am comforted that she is with the Lord and not suffering anymore.

I love you, Rachael! Well *done*, good and faithful servant. ✚

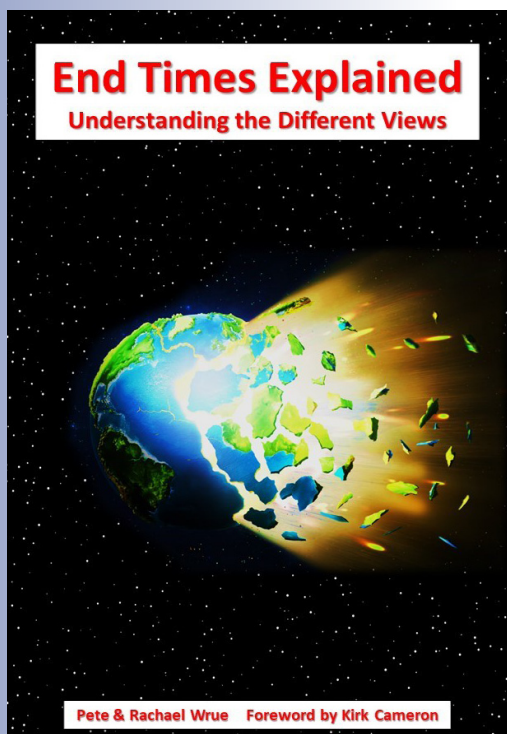


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Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

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

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

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

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



Preterism
Preterism

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