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FULFILLED!

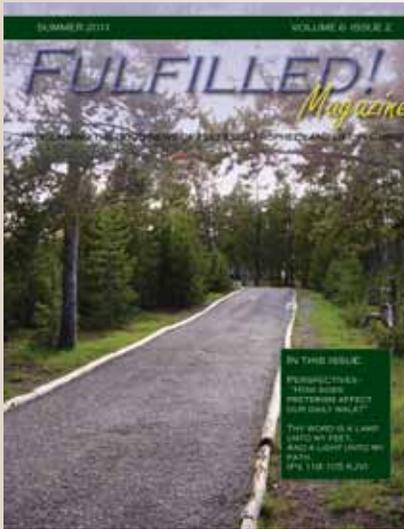
Magazine

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

IN THIS ISSUE:

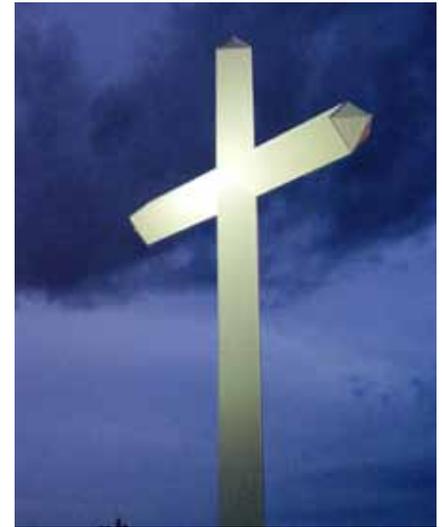
PERSPECTIVES -
"HOW DOES
PRETERISM AFFECT
OUR DAILY WALK?"

THY WORD IS A LAMP
UNTO MY FEET,
AND A LIGHT UNTO MY
PATH.
(Ps 119:105 KJV)



ON THE COVER: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Ps 119:105 KJV)

The pathway on the cover photo can be found in Yellowstone Park. Many preterists, having acknowledged the veracity of the preterist view, now wonder how preterism affects their daily walk. What does preterism mean for us today? This is an ongoing discussion in the preterist community, and we provide a couple of perspectives in this issue.



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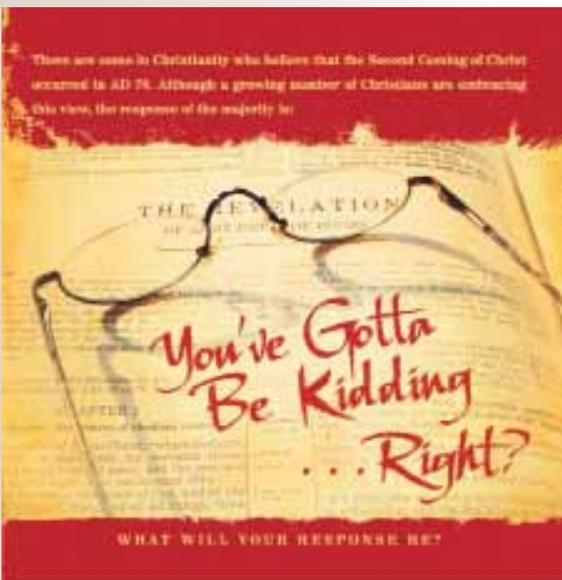
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4. Editor's Note
Many Christians may be disillusioned after the failure of Harold Camping's May 21st prediction for the rapture.

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12. Objection Overruled!
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Editor's Note...

This past April marked the “graduation” of John Anderson to his heavenly abode with the Father. John was the host of the radio program “Voice of Reason” on the Genesis Communications Network, and was an avid preterist advocate. Although John addressed many areas of theology, he was a long-time household name in the preterist community. In addition to interviewing numerous preterists on his radio program (including yours truly), he also hosted an annual conference in Sparta, North Carolina. John’s wife, Ann, hosted a tribute/memorial episode of “The Voice of Reason” which is available in the Genesis Radio Network archives (www.gcnlive.com/programs/voiceOfReason/). Michael Loomis of AD70.net also hosted a special program with Ann featuring call-ins from many preterists who had interacted with John over the years. This program is archived at www.AD70.net. John’s long-time friend and previous contributor to *Fulfilled!* Magazine, Lloyd Dale, graciously provided a few words regarding John and his ministry for this issue (see page 8).

This issue marks our expansion to a twenty-page format. The articles were becoming more difficult to fit into the sixteen-page format, and we wanted to add additional content, so we will give this a go and see how it works out. We hope to provide at least one article of interest to all of our readers, from the reader just beginning to explore preterism, to the reader who is a seasoned “veteran.” Most of the photos in this issue were taken from the site of one of the largest crosses in the world, located in Groom, Texas. The cross is surrounded by life-sized bronze statues featuring various scenes

from the passion of Christ. The site is just off Highway 40 about 40 miles east of Amarillo, Texas, and is worth a visit if you’re passing by.

I am concluding this article after May 21st and, despite the predictions of Harold Camping, the rapture has not taken place. All continues in the world as it had in the days leading up to the 21st, with the exception of another black mark against Christianity and prophecy prognosticators. If there is a silver lining to this latest failed prediction it would be that many Christians, having been disappointed by false futurist hopes, may at last be open to the possibility of exploring preterism. The downside, of course, is that there will doubtless be numerous believers whose faith has been so shattered that they walk away from it completely. We can only hope and pray that their disillusion is for a season only, until they realize that, although Christian leaders will fail them, God will not fail them, for He remains ever faithful. (Update: Camping announced on May 23rd that the “for sure” date is October 21st. Our DVD “*You’ve Gotta Be Kidding . . . Right?*” would be an excellent resource to explain to those who are either disillusioned or enamored by these predictions why neither date is prophetically significant.)

I had hoped to send this issue to the printer a couple of weeks ago, but fell behind. I am now in the midst of long hours at work and therefore must complete this issue today, one of my few days off this month. Therefore, I will cut this update short and close with our gratitude for your encouraging letters and emails, and for your prayers and financial support.

Blessings,

Brian

We hope to provide at least one article of interest to all of our readers, from the reader just beginning to explore preterism, to the reader who is a seasoned “veteran.”

Mailbag...

I find your DVD very handy in sharing the view. I'm still looking forward to my first "convert" however. I continue to expand my scripture references in support of preterism. As I share preterism the DVD gives a "high def" or shock and awe aspect to the presentation. I'll be ordering more DVD's soon.

Curtis, Kansas

I love Fulfilled Magazine & read each issue cover to cover!

Jay, Ohio

I learned about this magazine from my daughter-in-law. She gets the magazine and has ordered a number of DVDs from you. We are all full preterists here at the church.

Bruce, Mississippi

Thanks for Fulfilled! Magazine. I hear so many preachers that only have a message that, "Christ is coming any day now." They should be told that Jesus is with us now.

Omar, Oklahoma

I have now just received my third addition of your magazine. I am so thrilled to see and read of those who have went against the majority with this truth. I have seen the "coming" rather

presence of Christ for years, however you have gone far beyond my revelation. Bold messages are fresh messages. I so look forward to your magazines. I am taking this one on a mission trip to Moldova for reading on the plane. God bless you for doing away with: 'to be continued' idea. It is so securing to see how God led people from start to finish. That is how we can be led also.

Keith, Montana

I just had to write to tell you how much of an encouragement the Fulfilled Magazine has been to my husband and I! The work you are doing with it is making an impact. We pray that the Lord would continue to make His truth known FAR & WIDE through your work & efforts!!!

We have shared the magazine with some fellow preterists in our area and gave them the info to get their own copies. They should be contacting you soon. Anyway, just want you to know what a blessing the mag is. Keep up the wonderful work! May the Lord's blessings rest on you & yours.

Tanya, Oregon

God's blessings to you, and thanks again for all you do to spread the good news!

Sharon, Texas



I hear so many preachers that only have a message that, "Christ is coming any day now." They should be told that Jesus is with us now.



Perspectives

How the Core Preterist View of Biblical End-Times (Eschatology) Affects (or Should Affect) One's Daily Christian Walk

by Tony E. Denton

As I pondered upon the theme of this installment of “Perspectives,” the concept of *confidence* kept coming to the fore—confidence in two spheres of our existence, spheres I’ve dubbed *Personal Confidence* and *Interpersonal Confidence*. Regarding both of these spheres, I’m reminded of a saying I’ve heard and read quite often my 47 years: “If a child of God doesn’t convey a conviction of his own salvation, he shouldn’t expect to convert anyone to salvation.” This principle is readily observed in action among salesmen; in fact, just ask any sales executive which of his representatives are the most successful in recruiting other representatives: the ones who exude assurance and enthusiasm about the business or the ones who don’t?

I realize that it’s easier for a preterist than for a nonpreterist to comprehend and appreciate what I’m about to say, but surely there are at least a few out there in Christendom who understand something of the preterist view and therefore from where I’m coming when I say that it has been my experience that most who aren’t of the fulfilled prophecy (preterist)

persuasion, such as premillennialists and amillennialists, don’t emanate the joy and confidence necessary to change their worlds; there’s just too much pessimism involved in nonpreterist paradigms of eschatology. As a former amillennialist and from my experience around others of the nonpreterist persuasion, I can tell you that the daily lives of most folks are sadly laden with concerns of uncertainty about the past (what happened and what didn’t), the present (their relationship with God), and the future (both the imminent and the distant). This not only negatively affects their personal lives, creating harmful mental and physical stress, but also—and perhaps more importantly—those around them. Why the latter? Because they mar what should be an appealing positive “testimony” for Christ, thereby having part in the loss of souls, perhaps even those of their own families. Do we actually believe the New Covenant age that God spent so much time and effort bringing to fruition was meant to have effectively the same outlook on life that the Old Covenant age already possessed? What would be the point in that?

Perspectives

What if the Best is yet to Come?

by Michael A. Lawrence

A few days after being reborn into the Lord, I recall thinking, “What a different place the world would be if all its inhabitants became Christians.” As I pondered that possibility and its ramifications, the idea quickly became more than I could get my mind around.

While discussing eschatology with my brothers or sisters in Christ, I sometimes get this response: “What difference does our belief about the end as predicted in the Bible make? It’s no big deal to me—why should it be?”

Have you ever wondered what the Church on planet Earth would be like if her vast majority believed in and fully embraced a past-fulfilled eschatology? What if the overwhelming majority of the Church leaders in our world believed and taught that Christ had returned *as promised* via those Roman armies ca. AD 70 to effect an end to that old

covenant world? The Scriptures are replete with examples of God appearing in like manner, using individuals, nations, and natural phenomena to do His bidding.

What if Christianity as a whole grasped this “other” end-time reality, and consistently taught that Christ’s parousia appearance included a taking away (or rapture, if we must) of those first century believers? What if the majority of our Christian brethren and their children were taught that Satan was totally defeated in the process of that enormously effective event as well?

I am convinced in spirit and mind that God is continually reforming His Church and has arranged, as a term of the new covenant, that the Church will lead, either in truth or in error, and the rest of the world will follow suit.

What if the inferiority complex that has gripped and oppressed the Church to varying degrees (due to the multitude of faulty end-time world views being taught) was, in time, fully lifted? One does not know that he has been asleep until he awakes!

Preterism and our Daily Walk

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As preterists, we don't live in the wilderness of sin, suffering, and struggling, but in the renewed garden of a re-established relationship with our Creator—paradise restored, the new heaven and new earth. We don't live in an age of *more prophecies* and *more promises*, but in an age of *fulfillment* and *completeness*. After all, what would be “better” about a New Covenant age (as *Hebrews* teaches) that's so dark it needs light from the Old Covenant until the dawning new day *finally* arrives in still yet *another* age (cf. 2 Pet 1:19)? And if this age, which had so much promise, has actually merely turned out to be little different than the last one, what should we expect from the supposed next one? For there's no way to make the language any plainer than it was in the New Covenant Scriptures! Nonpreterists should find it rather strange that God's

new Israel is asked to gird up herself in preparation for yet *another* “end” (cf. 1 Pet 1:13), begging the question, “When will it all finally end (or consummate)?”

Recall what Paul wrote to those suffering first-generation Christians: “It's high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Rom 13:11-12a). Consider this: Paul was inspired to write those words after only a *few* of “the last days” had transpired. So, after the passing of nearly 2,000 years, what adjectives and adverbs could we possibly employ to make things sound any more imminent today if, as many claim, the end is imminent? In other words, how much *more awake* can we become? Or how much *nearer* can salvation get? Besides, if “the day” of verse 12 is yet to arrive, wasn't Paul's

language to his audience at least somewhat deceptive?

My whole point, of course, is this: There's power in the concept of eschatological completeness, that is, in the absolute fulfillment of God's end-time promises; so—if we are truly persuaded of this—let's walk and talk like it! Surely we can see how living out our *confidence* in God's fulfilled promises would very positively affect our lives and the lives of those around us; so let's *feel* it, and thus walk and talk like it! (If you have access to a copy of Max King's *The Cross and the Parousia*, grab it and read pages 669 through 703 [or at least through 688] for more thought-provoking and encouraging material along these lines.)

So far I've emphasized what people

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Tony E. Denton

Tony E. Denton, a full-time Minister since 1982 and with a commentary on Hebrews in the works, may be reached via:

www.asitefortheLord.com



Preterists and our Daily Walk

loyaltytotruth.com

What an overwhelming attraction the real truth of present-day new covenant Christianity would be to the people of this world! Think about it. Finally a scenario that God could fully embrace versus the fatalistic one that He has rightly shunned for all of these years. The transformation of all on planet Earth would be such that one could hardly imagine the untold positive effect.

I See a Church

Prior to the Protestant Reformation was a period in history that later became known as the Dark Ages. I can

see a day where Church historians will look upon our present era as the waning edge of the Dim Ages. At that future time, denominational divisiveness will be no more. Instead of being “a mile wide and an inch deep,” as some have described the Church, it will have three-dimensional magnificence as John saw in his vision on Patmos.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . . The city is laid out as a square . . . twelve thousand furlongs . . . Its length, breadth, and

height are equal (Rev 21:2, 16 NKJV).

There is order and purpose to how a good God with great joy in His heart does as He pleases. Since the day that Peter had revelation of the carpenter from Nazareth's true identity, the Lord has been building His Church as His primary agency to effect change on the earth.

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah,

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Michael A. Lawrence

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Preterism and Our Daily Walk

by Tony E. Denton

...continued from page 7

see in us as we live and share our Christianity with them. But there's another very important aspect to our confidence around others that I'd like to emphasize, and it specifically involves what we have to share with those of whom we disagree. See, as preterists, we possess the greatest tool (viz., the preterist paradigm itself) for dealing not only with the disseminators of man-devised models of *unfulfilled* biblical prophecy (despite numerous passages such as Luke 21:22), but also with the detractors of Christianity in general (Muslims, Jews, atheists, et al.), most of whom employ those man-devised models (e.g. amillennialism and premillennialism) against Christians in

an attempt to prove that Jesus and His disciples were false prophets, because, according to those commonly held models, their claims of imminency never reached fruition. So . . . are we ready to contend for and defend the true Gospel—the real, *bona fide*, actual **Good News** (Jude 3)?

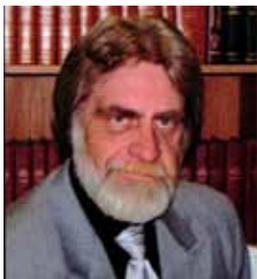
There's one last significant detail to consider: In the realm of politics, no one has the upper-hand that the preterist has when it comes to making our world—especially our own country—better! Just our biblical understanding of old (physical) Israel and new (spiritual) Israel has the potential to have a major affect on foreign policies concerning the modern-day State of Israel. This would go a long way in avoiding wars, in saving billions of dollars, and perhaps even in provoking others to reconsider their biblical, and consequently political, position. I've contemplated this to the point that it seems to me an almost Garden of Eden of political peace on our planet is within reach if

we could just get the world to see that we have this colossal mess today in large part due to our having been fed false religious information concerning Israel for many generations now!

So how does (or should) our preterist view affect our daily lives? It should afford us a previously unexperienced confidence, one that provides us with an assurance of our personal religion and which in turn would attract people to us so that we can share our way of life in Christ with them (see this principle in 1 Pet 3:15), providing to them something better than they had ever expected!

As I'm sure you can tell, this was written as an informal open letter of inspiration and stimulation primarily to/for fellow full-preterists; but if you're one who has yet to embrace this view of biblical eschatology, I hope and pray that these words of encouragement to my fellows will in turn motivate you to consider even more seriously the truths found in true preterist theology. †

Voice of Reason host John Anderson passes away



Well known, highly respected, and much loved preterist radio broadcaster and Bible student and teacher John Anderson had a massive stroke and went to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Tuesday April 19, 2011. He is, and will continue to be, greatly

missed by all who knew, respected, and loved him.

John, a pioneer radio program host in the modern preterist movement, was the founder and host of the preterist radio program *Voice of Reason* (VOR), broadcast on the Genesis Communications Network for the past ten years. As is evident from the many testimonials that have been received by VOR Ministries during the past three weeks (and continue to arrive), John was a positive Christian force in the lives of many during his tenure as host on the VOR broadcast ministry.

John was sometimes referred to as the “Jack Van Impe of preterism” because of his ability to instantly recall content, chapter, and verse of a vast number of Scripture passages.

In addition to the actual broadcast program, which aired four hours every Sunday night on Genesis Communications Network, John carried on a prolific telephone and conference ministry. John also had the privilege of hosting one of the first preterist conferences in the US. According to the testimonials of many who benefited from John's multifaceted ministry, he was “a good friend” who was an “intently serious truth seeker” who was willing “to be found wrong in order that he might find the truth.” The truth that he found, he shared avidly with others at every opportunity, never demanding that anyone agree with him, but that they be Bereans and do their own studies to confirm Truth.

On Sunday night, April 24th, four hours of programming paying tribute to and memorializing John were provided on his *Voice of Reason* radio program (GCN), and another two hours for the same purpose occurred on Thursday evening, April 28th, on AD70.net. These programs are archived on these websites: www.gcnlive.com/programs/voiceOfReason/ www.AD70.net

... Best yet to Come?

by Michael A. Lawrence

...continued from page 7

for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matt 16:16-18 NKJV; Christ uses a word-play between Peter's name, which in Greek [Petros] means rock, and the rock of Peter's revelation from the Father).

Again, the plan is simple: the Church leads, either in truth or in error, and the rest of the world follows suit. I see a day when the earthly Church is truly committed for the long haul and no longer engaged in the frantic defeatism of end-time hysterics. No more hand-wringing while waiting for Christ to return and snatch us out of here. He returned already! No more over-emphasizing the need to get as many baby Christians with their tickets punched as possible before the rapture train leaves for heaven. A balanced fivefold approach with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers enabling the Church to grow into the stature and likeness of our Lord is what I envision.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ. . . . the firstborn among many brethren

(Eph 4:11-15; Rom 8:29b NKJV).

I see leaders guiding with integrity of heart and skillfulness of hand—directing a symphony of submissive hearts, the many willing to embrace the truth with a great vigor that affects every practical aspect of their lives.

So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands (Ps 72:78 NKJV).

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Heb 13:17 NKJV).

No more waiting for God to do something that will make us truly free and able to overcome any circumstance. He did that already. No more languishing in the stalemate of waiting for a God who has already done all the heavy lifting and is waiting for us to take hold of the plow and never look back.

But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62 NKJV).

I can see a Church whose false guilt concerning Old Covenant Israel has long since been eradicated and replaced by a pure conscience conceived in unavoidable truth: We are God's Israel—those uniquely endeared ones who were in His heart and mind all along.

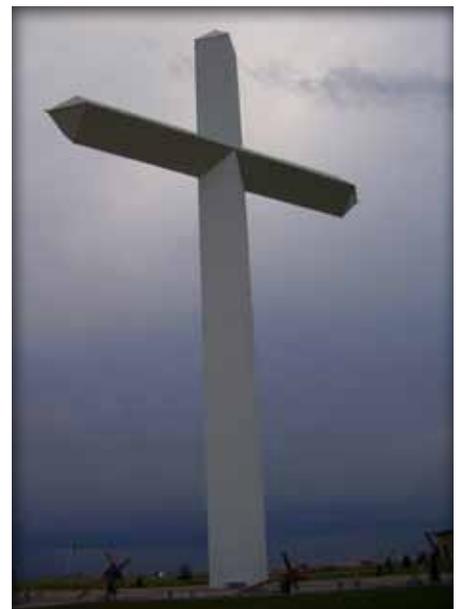
But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. . . . As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place

where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called the sons of the living God." Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, [only] the remnant will be saved" (Rom 9:6-8, 25, 27 NKJV).

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. . . . Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. . . . And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:7, 16, 29 NKJV).

I can see an overcoming Church leading the world by laying aside the insensitivity and hypersensitivity that perpetuate all racial, political, social, economic, and religious prejudice. I can see a Church who knows that words are more powerful than bombs and, "speaking the truth in love," will grow up to transform the world.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Eph 3:20-21 NKJV). †



Creation to Consummation

The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31)

All These Things Came to Pass (Part 7)

by Ed Stevens

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth his angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31 NAS95 boldface added)

Of all the biblical texts that seem to teach the *rapture*, this one (along with 1 Thess 4:17 and John 14:3) has to be one of the most commonly referenced. Yet surprisingly, pre-trib rapture advocates like Thomas Ice reject the rapture interpretation here because this angelic gathering of the elect occurs *after* the tribulation, and therefore does not fit their pre-trib paradigm. Mid-tribbers and post-tribbers, however, use this passage as their flagship text.

Some may object, “The word *rapture* is not in the Bible, so why use it?” They may be surprised to know that the word *rapture* actually occurs in the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The Latin word *rapiemur* comes from *rapio*, which means to *seize, snatch, or carry away* (*Wheelock’s Latin*). The Greek word *harpazo*, which is translated *caught up* in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, is identical in meaning to the Latin word *rapio*.

Others may protest the rapture idea because they have heard it was invented by Margaret MacDonald, an early 19th-century Scottish girl. However, it was only the concept of a *secret* pre-trib rapture theory that she helped develop, not the concept of the rapture itself. The idea of living saints being caught up into the unseen realm at Christ’s Parousia was taught originally by Jesus and the apostles.

Regarding this text (Matt 24:31), Thomas Ice wrote, “Matthew chapter 24 is about a future time when . . . the Lord [will] *gather* His elect (saved Jews at the end of the Tribulation) from around the world and bring them to Jerusalem . . .” (LaHaye and Ice, *The End Times Controversy*, p. 198). So we see that the pre-tribbers do not view this as a rapture text at all, but rather as a regathering of the Jews back to Jerusalem sometime in our future.

Ken Gentry puts a different spin on Matthew 24:31—one with which both Gary DeMar (*Last Days Madness*, pp. 173-177) and John Bray (*Matthew 24 Fulfilled*, pp. 216-226) seemingly agree. Gentry interprets the *angels* as human preachers, and the *gathering* as the building of the church after the destruction of Jerusalem (Ice and Gentry, *The Great Tribulation Past or Future*, p. 64). However, as Don Preston explains, it is not consistent for a Full Preterist to take that approach:

The problem with Chilton (at the time he wrote) and Gentry is that they see the gathering of Matthew 24:31 as a process that was to *begin* with the destruction of Jerusalem, instead of seeing it as the climax of a process begun on Pentecost. (Preston, *We Shall Meet Him in the Air*, p. 179)

Preston goes further to describe the gathering as “the gathering of the ‘dead’ at the coming of Christ” (*We Shall Meet*, 180). However, he is not referring to the raising of disembodied souls out of Hades and giving them immortal bodies (my view). Instead, he is referring to “a gathering (restoration) into spiritual fellowship . . . with God” and “the transformation from the Old Creation to the New Covenant temple of the Messiah” (*We Shall Meet*, p. 184). This interpretation of the gathering is often described as the *collective body view* of the resurrection.

Surprisingly, Preston does seem to agree with Gentry on the human identity of the angels (or messengers) who gathered the elect. He refers to them as the messengers of the kingdom (*We Shall Meet*, p. 184). That Preston is referring to the apostles and their pre-AD 70 disciples is clearly indicated when he writes, “Those who accepted the message and the messengers were invited to enter . . . ‘into the joys of the kingdom’ . . . (Matt 25:34)” (*We Shall Meet*, pp. 184-185). Since Jesus is clearly referring to human believers (not angels) who would inherit the kingdom in this text, it means that Preston interprets the angels/messengers of our primary text (Matt 24:31) as human beings, and not angels. However, this involves a logical absurdity: the elect (human messengers) were gathering or resurrecting the elect.

In contrast, I affirm that the angels Jesus sent forth at His Parousia were actual angelic beings, and that the gathering work they performed included both a resurrection of the dead and a change of the living, so that both groups of saints were gathered or snatched away together as one group to be with Christ forever after.

Even though both Preston and I affirm that the gathering, change, and snatching away are closely connected with the resurrection (*We Shall Meet*, pp. 171-193), disagreement surfaces when he suggests that



Studies in Redemptive History

the resurrection has nothing to do with disembodied souls being raised out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies (my view), but is instead the collective body of believers (both living and dead) being raised out of sin-death into the eternal life of the New Covenant (his view). We do not differ on the fact of those connections (gathering, change, snatching, and resurrection), nor on the time of their occurrence, but rather on the nature of their fulfillment.

In regard to Matthew 24:31, there are several points we need to consider here: the tribulation; the timing and sequencing of the gathering; the question of event versus process; a similar gathering teaching of Jesus in Matthew 13; and the nature of this gathering in relation to the resurrection, change, and snatching away.

First, we need to clarify what the tribulation is. Most people assume it was the whole complex of troubles that fell upon both the Christians and the unbelieving Jews. However, when we look at what Jesus says about the tribulation in the context, we notice that the tribulation was something that would come upon the Christians: “Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you” and “for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matt 24:9-14, 21-22). It was wrath that came later upon the Jews after they had persecuted the Christians, but the tribulation here in Matthew 24 is upon Christians. In one of my previous articles in this publication, we showed that the great tribulation was the Neronian persecution (AD 64-66). It was cut short by the outbreak of the Jewish war in AD 66. This provides us with a framework for dating the Parousia and its associated angelic gathering (i.e., the rapture).

Secondly, we need to note the sequencing of this angelic gathering. In Matthew 24:29-31, the sending forth of the angels to gather together the elect occurs immediately after the tribulation at the time of the coming of the Son of Man. The sending forth of the angels to gather the elect cannot be talking about the forty-year process of preaching the gospel (AD 30-70), because the angels are not even sent out to do their gathering work until the time of the Parousia, which occurs after the tribulation. This means that the gathering was not a forty-year process after all, but rather an event that took place at the Parousia.

Thirdly, Preston connects this gathering (Gk *episunago*) in Matthew 24:31 with the gathering (Gk *sullego*) in the Parable of the Tares in Matthew 13 (We Shall Meet, pp. 300-302). Jesus interpreted this parable for us in Matthew 13:36-43, identifying Himself as the sower of the good seed and the enemy who sowed the tares as the devil. The good seed were the sons of the kingdom, while the tares were the sons of the evil one. The harvest was the end of the age (AD 70) and the reapers are angels (not human beings). In that context (Matt 13), it seems clear that Jesus was talking about real angelic beings being sent forth at the end of the age to do the gathering work. Notice that the exact letter-for-letter phraseology (“will send forth his angels”) in both English and Greek is used in both Matthew 13:41 and 24:31. The gatherers are angels, not human beings, and the gathering is an event that occurs immediately after the tribulation at the end of the age when the Son of Man comes and sends forth his angels. It is not a forty-year process of gathering.

Finally, I noted above that I agree with Preston that the resurrection, change, and snatching away are all

closely connected with the gathering. Our difference is over the nature of the resurrection event itself. The reason I consider Matthew 24:31 to be a rapture text is because it is talking about an angelic gathering at the time of the Parousia, and it does not say that the gathering was limited to only the dead in Hades. We know that it included living saints as well, since it says that the angels gathered the elect, which in the context were those saints who remained alive after the great tribulation.. This means that the angelic gathering at the end of the age included both a resurrection of the dead saints out of Hades, as well as a change of the living saints into their new immortal bodies. Then both groups—the resurrected dead and the changed living saints—now in the unseen realm, were snatched away (or gathered) by the angels to be with Christ in the heavenly realm, where they would always be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17).

If you would like to study more about the first-century gathering (rapture) of the saints, here are some resources I highly recommend:

- Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture (158-page book) by Ed Stevens. Available for order from the IPA website (www.preterist.org).
- 1 Thessalonians 4—A phrase-by-phrase analysis of the most important rapture text (1 Thess 4:13-17). Available in PDF and sent as an email attachment to those who request it (preterist1@preterist.org).
- Parable of the Tares lesson outline. Available in PDF and sent as an email attachment to those who request it (preterist1@preterist.org). There is also an MP3 audio presentation of this lesson available for order from the IPA website (www.preterist.org). ☩

Objection Overruled!

Mount of Olives Split

by Don Preston

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. (Zech 14:4)

Objection: “Zechariah 14 states that when Christ returns, His feet will touch the Mount of Olives and the Mount will split. Since this has not happened, Christ could not have returned in AD 70.”

As always, we appreciate hearing from those who differ. Let me make a few observations. First, the objection is presuppositional. It demands a literalistic interpretation of the text, and refuses to allow for Hebraic metaphoric language (more on this below). Second, it ignores the New Testament’s commentary on Zechariah. Third, it ignores the remaining biblical testimony regarding the nature of Christ’s coming. Let me flesh out these points.

The objection demands a literalistic fulfillment of Zechariah’s prediction of the coming of the Lord and the splitting of the mountains. The objection fails to consider that *God had come out of heaven in the past*, and the mountains had melted and the valleys split at His coming! Notice Micah 1:3f

“For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down And tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, And the valleys will split Like wax before the fire, Like waters poured down a steep place. All this is for the transgression of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, Places for planting a vineyard; I will

pour down her stones into the valley, And I will uncover her foundations. All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, And all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; All her idols I will lay desolate, For she gathered it from the pay of a harlot, And they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”

Note the following:

- God was coming down out of heaven
- He was going to walk on the mountains
- The mountains would melt under Him, the valleys would split (sound familiar?)
- Samaria would be destroyed, turned into a heap
- This coming would be as a direct result of Israel’s sin, *her violation of Torah*: “All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel”
- This destruction was fulfilled historically in the eighth century BC when Assyria invaded the ten northern tribes of Israel

If a person denies that this was a historical Day of the Lord, a nonliteral, nonphysical, nonbodily coming of YHVH, (i.e., a time of the manifestation of God’s sovereignty by His use of the Assyrians), and if they claim that it is the same “end of the age” coming of the Lord as in Zechariah, then here is what this demands.

It demands that the coming of the Lord in Zechariah must be at the time of the destruction of Samaria. It demands that the coming of the Lord in Zechariah must occur at a time when the Law of Moses would still be in effect—remember, the coming of the Lord in Micah is specifically stated to be coming on Israel for her sin.

I know of no Dispensationalists who teach that Israel will one day be destroyed in the manner described in, and for the reasons given by Micah. Further, all Dispensationalists admit that Torah was nullified in the first century (it should be noted that Zechariah 14 would also be fulfilled “in the day” in which YHVH terminated His covenant with both houses of Israel (Zechariah 11:9-11).

What this demands, therefore, is that we honor the reality of metaphoric language in Micah. And if Micah used the language of the coming of the Lord out of heaven and the mountains melting, the valleys being destroyed, etc., then this raises the distinct possibility that Zechariah is likewise utilizing a genre of prophetic language that was not intended





to be taken literally. The context of Zechariah 14 is undeniably that of the destruction of Jerusalem. Consider verses 1-5:

“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You.”

Regardless of what else might be said about this text, it clearly predicted a coming judgment of Jerusalem at the Day of the Lord (see my discussion of Zechariah in the book of Revelation in my book *Who Is This Babylon*).

Without question the context of Zechariah 14 is the destruction of Jerusalem. This leads to the question, *which* destruction? Millennialists claim that Jerusalem will be attacked during the so-called seven year tribulation, after the rapture. However, this will not work (see my book *Leaving the Rapture Behind* for a refutation of the rapture doctrine). Notice that Zechariah predicted the coming of the Lord with His saints, and the time of escape for the remnant from the horrors of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Likewise, Jesus told His disciples that

when they saw the Abomination of Desolation they were to escape from the horrors of the coming judgment (Matt 24:15-21). Jesus said that those events would occur in His generation (Matt 24:34; note also that Jesus, in Matt 24:30, cited Zech 12:10 in reference to the AD 70 war).

Only by radically redefining “this generation” can one deny the first-century fulfillment of Zechariah. Jesus was not saying that Zechariah would be fulfilled in some distant “this generation.” He was speaking to living, breathing people when he said, “this generation will not pass until all of these things are fulfilled.”

So, the context of Zechariah is clearly the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus cited Zechariah and said it would be fulfilled in His generation. That alone should definitively answer the objection. But, there is more.

Let me summarize my thoughts here:

- The coming of the Lord of Zechariah 14—the time of the splitting of the Mount of Olives—is the Second Coming of Christ
- The Second Coming of Christ is the coming of Christ to bring in the New Creation (2 Peter 3:10-13) and is also the coming of Christ in the glory of His Father (Matthew 16:27: hang onto that for a moment)
- The coming of Christ of 2 Peter 3 is the coming of the Lord foretold in Isaiah 64-66—the coming of the Lord to bring in the New Creation

With this in mind, I want to establish the nature of the coming of the Lord, and the time of the splitting of the Mount of Olives foretold in Zechariah 14 by noting Isaiah 64:1-3:

“Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence—As fire burns brushwood,

As fire causes water to boil—To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.”

Notice this:

- Isaiah is depicted as praying for YHVH to come
- He prays for YHVH to come out of heaven
- He prays for YHVH to rend the heavens, to shake the mountains
- He wants YHVH to manifest His name among the nations

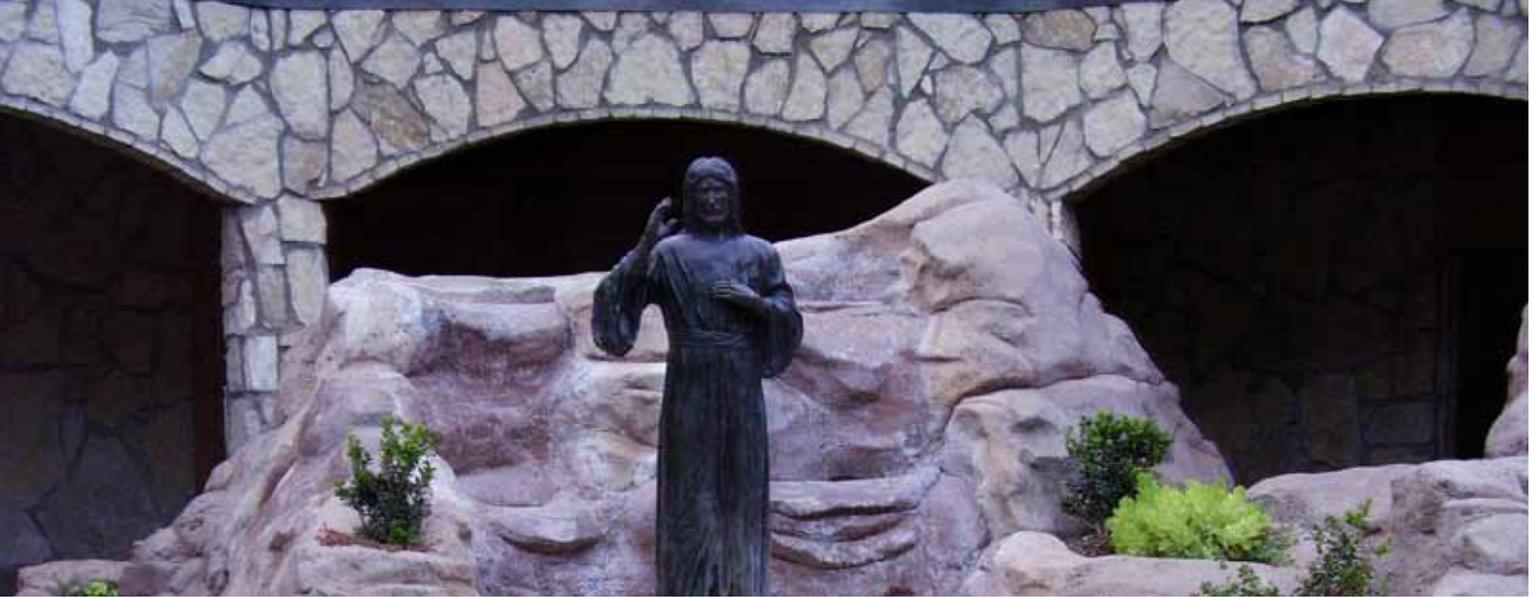
Here is where it gets critical:

- Isaiah wants YHVH to come down—*as He had come before: “You came down”*
- He wants YHVH to do awesome things—*like He did before: “When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down”*
- He wants YHVH to shake the heavens—*like He did before: “the mountains shook at Your presence”*
- He wants YHVH to manifest His name and His presence to the nations—*like He had done before*

So we see:

- The coming of the Lord of Zechariah 14 is the coming of 2 Peter 3
- The coming of the Lord of 2 Peter 3 is the coming of the Lord foretold by Isaiah 64-66
- The coming of the Lord of Isaiah 64 was to be a coming of the Lord like He had come before
- However, the previous comings of the Lord were never literalistic, visible, bodily descents of YHVH out of heaven
- Therefore, the coming of the

...continued on page 14



The Mount of Olives

by Don Preston

...continued from page 13

Lord of 2 Peter 3 (and Matt 16:27—the Second Coming of Christ) was not to be a literalistic, visible, bodily descent of Jesus out of heaven

Now, let's take a look at Matthew 16:27 and John 5:19-21. In Matthew 16:27 Jesus said that His coming—the Second Coming—was to be “in the glory of the Father” (see my book *Like Father Like Son, On Clouds of Glory* for an exhaustive discussion of Jesus' prediction here). What Jesus was saying was that he was going to come as the Father had come in the past. Is this not precisely what Isaiah 64 predicted? Of course it is! Notice now John 5:19-20:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel . . . For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

Note the following:

- Jesus said the Father would no longer judge
- The Father had committed all judgment prerogative to the Son
- Jesus would judge in the same manner that he had seen the Father judge
- Men would (should) honor the Son in the same manner, in the same way they honor the Father, as a result of Jesus judging in the same manner that the Father had judged

Jesus had never seen the Father literally come out of heaven, visibly, bodily. Yet, as seen above, Micah says He did come out of heaven, and the earth melted, etc. in the invasion of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians. This is how Jesus had seen the Father come out of heaven, split the earth, melt the earth, shake the heavens, come with fire, the sound of the trumpet, and with his angels, all in the past.

Let me summarize my thoughts once again:

- The coming of the Lord of Zechariah 14 is the Second Coming of the Lord
- The Second Coming of the Lord was to be “in the glory of the Father,” i.e., of the same nature as the previous comings of the Lord in the past (e.g., when Jesus had seen the Father come)
- But, the previous comings of the Lord had never been a literalistic, visible, bodily coming of the

Lord out of heaven, at the literal destruction of the earth (Isa 64:1-3)

- Therefore, the coming of the Lord of Zechariah 14 was not to be a literalistic, visible, bodily coming of the Lord out of heaven

Just as YHVH had come out of heaven and walked on the melting mountains, by sovereignly utilizing the Assyrians to accomplish His judgment purposes, Jesus was going to come, (and did) “in the glory of the Father” by sovereignly utilizing the Romans to judge the Old Covenant world/age of Israel in AD 70.

In summary, the objection above ignores the demonstrably metaphoric nature of the “coming of the Lord” language and ignores the fact that God had come in the past, but had never come visibly, literally, bodily. When God came, the mountains shook, the earth melted, etc.—the very language utilized by Zechariah. The objection fails to honor the fact that Jesus was to come *in judgment* as He had seen the Father come in judgment. And again, Jesus had never seen the Father literally, bodily, visibly come in judgment. The objection fails to honor Jesus' application of Zechariah to His generation. In fact, the objection fails to consider all of the textually relevant, prophetically attested, historically verified evidence.

Our analysis of Zechariah—which has barely even touched the hem of the garment of the relevant evidence—has totally falsified the objection. The objection is overruled! †

Gleanings From The Past...

Throughout the centuries of Church history, many writers have written from the perspective of a past fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Most of them failed to take that perspective to its logical conclusion (Full Preterism) and still applied a few various prophecies to their future. With that caveat in mind, their works contain many gems that can serve two purposes: 1) provide additional Preterist perspectives, and 2) demonstrate that, although Full Preterism may have experienced its greatest development in the last fifty years, many others have been blazing that trail through the centuries. In this issue we offer an excerpt from Reverend George Wilkins' **The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem as connected with the Scripture Prophecies**, 1816. Reverend Wilkins was the domestic chaplain to the Earl of Kennoull, and Vicar of Lowdham and Lexington, Nottinghamshire.

Having brought the incidents of the Jewish History of the period of the revolt from the Romans, and the commencement of the war; let us briefly consider those predictions of our Saviour, which refer to events anterior to the destruction of the City, and which were as minutely fulfilled, as those bearing an immediate relation to it.

The first sign if this fatal overthrow was thus foretold: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

"Now," says Josephus, "about the third year after our Lord's death; Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, engaged in a war with Aretas, King of Arabia Patræa; and all the Tetrarch's army was cut off in battle, through the treachery of some deserters." "A sad calamity befell the Jews in Mesopotamia, and particularly those who dwelt in Babylonia; it was inferior to none which had happened before, being attended with a considerably greater slaughter than any upon record." The circumstances are too long to be introduced here, but it will sufficiently answer the present purpose, barely to state, that this disturbance broke out A.D. 40, and occasioned the death of 50,000 people.

About eleven years after the death of Christ, "when Fadus came as Procurator into Judea, he

"...let us briefly consider those predictions of our Saviour, which refer to events anterior to the destruction of the City, and which were as minutely fulfilled..."

found the Jews dwelling in Perea, in a state of commotion with the people of Philadelphia, about the boundaries of a City called Mea; which was filled with men in arms; he, therefore, seized three of the authors of the commotion, and killing one, banished the other two." "Afterwards, while the Jewish affairs were under the administration of Cumanus, there arose a great disturbance in the City of Jerusalem; and many of the Jews perished in it." At the Passover, A.D. 49, an indignity was offered to the Jews within the precincts of the Temple, by a Roman soldier; "upon which tumult arose, but as soon as a larger number of the Romans appeared, the Jews fled so precipitately, that more than 10,000 were trodden under foot and perished."

Besides these he mentions many other Insurrections; particularly one at Cæsarea, between the Jews and Syrians, contending for the equality of their rights as Citizens: and another at the same place, "when in the space of one hour above 20,000 Jews were killed, and Cæsarea cleared of its Jewish inhabitants. The Syrians also were even with the Jews in the number of the men they slew, for they killed those whom they caught in their Cities; and

indeed contentions at this time were carried so far, that at Scythopolis the number of the slain was above 13,000. At Alexandria the slaughter of the Jews went on without any regard to the aged, till the place overflowed with blood, and 50,000 of them lay dead in heaps. The people at Damascus also, at a later time, came upon the unarmed Jews, and destroyed 10,000 in the space of an hour." "In short," says Josephus, "every City throughout Syria was divided into two camps; it was the security of one party, to anticipate the destructive designs of the other; and the whole Province was full of unspeakable calamities."—So that "Wars and rumours of Wars" were extremely prevalent, and "Nation rose against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom;" when Judea was thus disturbed, and thus contended with the various powers around it, particularly at the predicted time. †



Preterism 101

A Crisis in Eschatology

by Brian L. Martin

(Much of the material contained in this series of articles can be found in “Behind the Veil of Moses,” available at online retailers)

In our last article we briefly introduced the four major views of eschatology (Preterism, Historicism, Futurism, Idealism) and stated that, of the four views, Preterism’s first-century fulfillment of Bible prophecy regarding Christ’s Second Coming fits best with the New Testament time statements regarding His return. We also noted that a first-century fulfillment creates obvious problems for the seemingly worldwide catastrophic events and Revelation’s claim that “every eye shall see Him.”

Before we explore the “worldwide” catastrophic events, it is important that we take several articles to review the New Testament time texts to better gain a grasp of the seriousness of the issue. Indeed, R. C. Sproul describes this issue as “the crisis in eschatology,” and cites renowned skeptic Bertrand Russell as an example of the attack on the credibility of the Scriptures by skeptics and liberals based upon the timing statements describing Christ’s return. In his book *Why I Am Not a Christian*, Russell wrote:

“I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospels, taking the Gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, He certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time” (quoted by Sproul in *The Last Days according to Jesus*, p. 12).

Sproul goes on to write:

“Due to the crisis in confidence in the truth and authority of Scripture and the subsequent crisis regarding the real historical Jesus, eschatology must come to grips with the tensions of time-frame references in the New Testament.”

In his video series of the same name, Sproul states that this crisis is often overlooked or ignored in evangelical circles of the Christian church, yet is of utmost importance because it has to do with the credibility of both the Bible and Jesus. Sproul cites eschatology as the primary point of attack on the inspiration of the biblical text by liberals and higher critics. The critics claim that the prophecies Jesus made with respect to the future did not come to pass within the specific timeframe that He said they would come to pass; if this is true, Jesus would be reduced to the role of false prophet.

For those of us who have grown up in church, and have been raised on a steady diet of teaching that we are living in the last days, and have been taught to apply the *soon, near, at hand* statements regarding Christ’s Second Coming to our generation, it can be difficult to put ourselves in the

place of the first-century hearers and readers of the original prophecies. This is the concept of audience relevance, and one of the duties of the student of God’s Word is to establish to whom and when a particular text is addressed. The following is an excerpt from my book *Behind the Veil of Moses* in which I develop this concept as it relates to the New Testament time texts.

Audience Relevance

While the Bible is written for all people, it was not written to all people. The book of 1 Corinthians was written to a specific first-century church, with specific first-century challenges and concerns. While Paul’s letter contains timeless truths, it also features time-specific events. For example:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me. (1 Cor 16:1-4)

The timeless truth is that it is prudent to lay aside money ahead of time for various needs within the church. The time-specific event is that Paul was going to send someone with the gift to Jerusalem. Too often when we read pronouns such as we, you, us, etc., we read ourselves into the text. Consider the following:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6-7; emphasis added)

Do we not include ourselves in the *your* of this passage? Was Philippians written to *you* or *me*? The *your* here is the saints in Philippi, not us. Does this mean that the truth communicated applies to only them? Absolutely not! This illustration is meant to show how easily we read ourselves into the text subconsciously. Consider the following:

Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus. (Acts 20:13-15; emphasis added)

Here is an example of a text we don’t read ourselves into. Why? Because it is event-specific. It is not teaching a spiritual



truth. But are not the end of the age, and the Second Coming of Christ also event-specific items? Should we not, then, use the same hermeneutic of audience relevance in dealing with those events? Consider the following passages concerning those events (the pronouns are in a bold font, and the event is underlined; remember that the audience is the first-century church):

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Truly I say to **you**, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until **they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*** (Matt 16:27-28; compare this to Simeon [Luke 2], to whom it was revealed that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Did Simeon see the Christ before his death? If so, why would some of those standing there not see Christ coming in His kingdom?)

*Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do **you** not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to **you**, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell **us**, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" . . . when **you see all these things**, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to **you**, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**" (Matt 24:1-3, 33b-34 NASB95)*

*Behold, I tell **you** a mystery; **we** shall not all sleep, but **we** shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we** shall be changed.*

(1 Cor 15:51-52 NASB)

*Let **your** forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.* (Phil 4:5 NASB)

*I charge **you** in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that **you** keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Tim 6:13-14 NASB)

*. . . and let **us** consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as **you see the day drawing near.*** (Heb 10:24-25 NASB)

*For **you** have need of endurance, so that when **you** have done the will of God, **you** may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.* (Heb 10:36-37 NASB)

***You** too be patient; strengthen **your** hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.* (Jas 5:8 NASB)

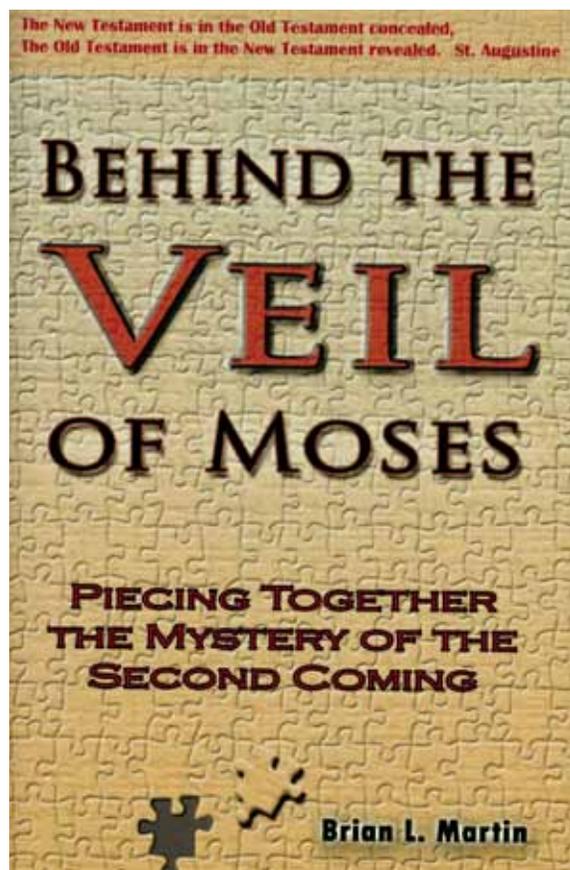
*Children, it is the last hour; and just as **you** heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this **we** know that it is the last hour.* (1 John 2:18 NASB)

*I am coming quickly; hold fast what **you** have, in order that no one take **your** crown.* (Rev 3:11 NASB)

In spite of all of these passages (and many more), many still doubt that Jesus and the inspired New Testament authors taught the New Testament saints that

the return of Christ would occur in their generation. But is this not what a plain and straightforward reading of these passages implies? When one starts reading the New Testament from the perspective of the first-century church and an imminent Second Coming, the list grows even longer. The aforementioned verses are merely the most apparent! Furthermore, we have yet to find a single verse in the whole New Testament that even hints at a far-distant, future Second Coming.

How can we wrench these statements away from their original audience? This is the crisis of which Sproul speaks and writes; this is *Christianity's Great Dilemma* of which Glenn Hill writes in his newly released book. The time statements are the primary point of attack by skeptics and liberals, and we cannot simply dismiss those attacks. ☩



The Greek Column

Tachus

by Parker Voll

*But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger . . . (James 1:19 NASB95)
Make friends **quickly** with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. (Matt 5:25 NASB95)*

*Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you **quickly**, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev 2:16 NASB95)*

*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming **quickly**.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Rev 22:20 NASB95)*

In this installment, we will look at a Greek word which functions as either an adjective or an adverb. Adjectives and adverbs are words that modify a noun or a verb, respectively. In English, adverbs typically end in *-ly* (e.g., brightly, slowly). In Koine Greek, an adverb is formed similarly by adding an *s* (*sigma*) to its adjectival root at the end.¹ The word *tachus* shows up in these forms as well as a nominal form (*tachos*).² The BDAG Lexicon defines *tachus* as:

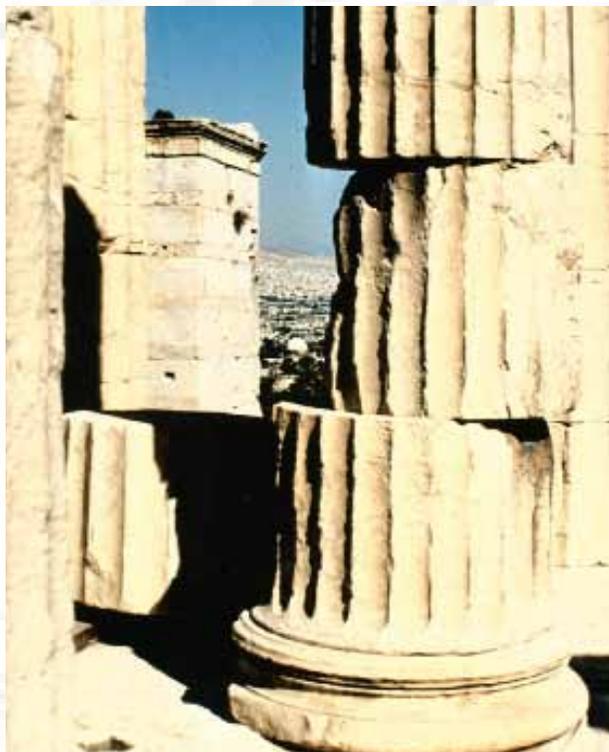
- 1) pertaining to a very brief period of time, with focus on speed of and activity or event (adj. *quick*, *swift*, *speedy*; adv. *quickly*, *at a rapid rate*);
- 2) pertaining to a relatively brief time subsequent to another point of time . . . in a short time, soon.³

In performing word studies, it cannot be overemphasized that words find their primary meaning in how they are actually used in their various contexts. An English example would be the adjective *cool*, which would have distinctly different meanings when a meteorologist is describing weather versus an adolescent describing his roller coaster-riding experience.

However, in reviewing all examples of *tachus* in the New Testament, as well as the

Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament),⁴ we are hard-pressed to find a single example of *tachus* possessing a meaning other than that offered in BDAG. Unless one possesses a Preterist view of eschatology, this presents a problem when examining the multiple times *tachus* is used in the book of Revelation. How can a word which maintains such a consistent meaning across many generations of Greek speakers, who used it consistently to describe something occurring *quickly*, *swiftly*, or *soon*, all of a sudden take on an entirely different meaning when used in a book of the Bible? The short answer is: It doesn't. John—sometimes quoting the risen Christ Himself!—chose *tachus* because he wanted to write exactly what he intended to communicate—that the Lord Jesus would be coming *quickly*.

Futurist interpreters have developed their own theories on how to deal with this problem. Traditional dispensational teaching holds that history has run its course such that there now exist two distinct peoples of God—Israel and the Church. The signs in Revelation and elsewhere are provided so that Israel can recognize the time when Christ will return for them after the Tribulation commences (yet only after the Church has been raptured from the earth). Dispensationalism claims that *tachus* describes *how* the signs take place once





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they begin to occur, that is, the events will unfold *quickly*.⁵ Another dispensational explanation is “There is a distinction between the *soon* coming of Christ and the *imminent* coming. Scripture nowhere taught that the coming would be soon, but it consistently taught that the coming could be expected at any time.”⁶ These explanations, of course, stretch the bounds of credibility. Yet another stratagem comes from an interpretative school that recognizes correctly that the word *quickly* requires Jesus’ coming to be a first-century event; nevertheless, in the case of Revelation, John was referring to a “coming-in-judgment” against Jerusalem rather than *the* actual Second Coming.⁷ They make the arbitrary assertion that Second Coming passages which lack specific time indicators (*soon, near, quickly*) may refer to the “actual” Second Coming rather than the first-century judgment coming.⁸ A big problem with this approach is that its proponents “soon” find themselves with very few passages that refer to the supposed “actual” Second Coming.

The principle of *Occam’s razor* is often stated as, “the simplest explanation of a problem is most likely correct.” This is misleading, however, as the principle has more to do with minimizing hypotheses and suggests that we should *tend* toward simpler theories until we can trade simplicity for increased explanatory power.⁹ It is hoped that the brief look at the two examples above exposes the trend that occurs when biblical interpreters become more interested in guarding a cherished theological system rather than trying to understand what the Bible is actually saying. For instance, I can provide a simple statement like “Jesus returned in the first century” to explain the many hundreds of New Testament passages that indicate that the Apostles were expecting Jesus to return during their generation; but that simple statement is now met by futurist theories which break up the idea of Jesus’ coming into two or more types, or that it is delayed by a 2000-year gap. This is done because they must create increased explanatory power in order to override the simple solution of a first-century Second Coming. However, there is absolutely nothing I can see that demands a complicated hypothesis in this instance. If we were to look at the many diverse statements that describe the Kingdom of God, we realize the complexity of the subject and the need to think extensively about the nature of this kingdom. The question of Jesus’ first-century return, however, is extremely *uncomplicated*. While there exists no dearth of complicated questions in theology, the generation in and to which Jesus returned is not one of them. †

1. To get technical, the *n* is removed from the genitive masculine plural form of an adjective, and the *s* is added. In usage, however, the final form is subject to change, e.g., we usually see the adverb *tachus* written as *tachu*.

2. Interestingly, this form always shows up (eight times) in the New Testament as *en tachei*, a construction that actually functions adverbially. A good translation of this is “with haste,” e.g., “He, with haste, left the room.” In English Bibles we usually see this translated exactly like the adverb, e.g., *speedily, shortly, or quickly*.

3. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “*tachus*,” 993. This work is commonly referred to as BDAG.

4. The only examples that seem to take a slight turn from a description of a “brief period of time” or “swift activity” are found in Proverbs (e.g., Prov 29:20), where the adjective refers to a person who speaks hastily, without thinking about what he is saying. Even then, the basic idea of the word is intact, especially in view of the James passage quoted in the header of this article.

5. E.g., see John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, [1966] 1987), 35. He states, referring to Rev 1:1, “The idea is not that [the unfolding of Revelation] may occur soon, but when it does, it will be sudden.”

6. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 181.

7. For instance, see Gary DeMar, *End Times Fiction* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 213. He distinguishes Jesus’ coming to *judge* vs. His coming to *reign* at the “summing up of all things.” But please note that, in my opinion, DeMar is generally an excellent interpreter and has never to my knowledge expressed any animosity towards persons who hold to a consistent preterist paradigm.

8. See Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., “A Brief Theological Analysis of Hyper-Preterism,” *Chalcedon Report*, no. 384 (July 1997): 22-24, s.v. *Hermeneutic Failure*. Also see the fair-handed discussion of this and other issues in R.C. Sproul’s, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 158ff.

9. See the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam's_razor

In This Issue:

Preterism and our
daily walk

The Mount of Olives
split?

Gathering the elect

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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
Preterism

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