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FULFILLED! *Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST



AND BEHOLD, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE,
FOR AN ANGEL OF THE LORD DESCENDED FROM
HEAVEN AND CAME AND ROLLED BACK THE STONE
AND SET ON IT. (MATTHEW 28:2)



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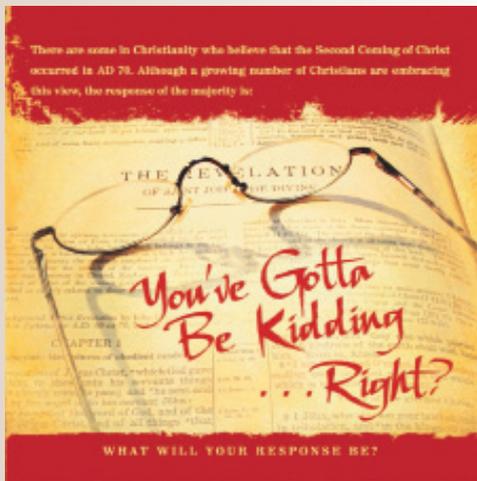
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4. Editor's Note
Please note our new mailing address.

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

6. Perspectives - Kurt Simmons
A Look At The Resurrection.

12. Creation to Consummation - Ed Stevens
Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15

14. Objection Overruled! - Don K. Preston
The Great Tribulation.

18. Preterism 101 - Charles Meeks
Reviewing the basic scriptural foundations upon which preterism is built.



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The views expressed here are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or other contributors.

Editor's Note...

In this issue we hear the other side of full-preterism's resurrection debate. Both Kurt Simmons and Ed Stevens offer their insights regarding the Individual Body View. While it is not our intent to maintain an ongoing debate on the topic, we like to share differing views on important topics like this in order to provide the reader a balanced presentation to ponder. While these two issues certainly will not resolve the debate we hope that they will stimulate further dialog and study.

This issue's "Preterism 101" column presents an excerpt from Charles S. Meek's new book *Christian's Hope through Fulfilled Prophecy*. For Christians who take a "does it really matter" approach to the various views of eschatology this excerpt demonstrates why studying eschatology is not an option, but a requirement to present a credible Christianity to its objectors. Charles' book promises to be a standard introduction to preterism.

We often receive letters and emails expressing thanks to "our staff" for their work in producing *Fulfilled!* Magazine. Because my wife and I produce *Fulfilled!* Magazine from our home in our spare time, we get a chuckle from these notes and will say "thank you" to each other. There are two other individual who provide valuable services and free up time

for my wife and I to concentrate on the various tasks involved in producing the magazine. These are Bill Greene (the same Bill in the *Kidding* video), who handles our overseas and bulk mailings for the magazine and all the DVD orders as well, and Mike Beidler, who edits almost every article for the magazine. (As is the case with this issue, I'm often so late by the time I get to writing the "Editor's Update" that I don't have time to run it past Mike. If my updates lack the quality of other articles now you know why!)

Although it is humorous to read these references to our staff, I take it as an indication of the quality of our production. If the magazine looked like it was produced in someone's back room or garage it likely wouldn't conjure images of a staff involved in the production. So we, the staff, thank you for the compliments.

The west coast is long overdue for a preterist conference and finally, thanks to James Scheller, there is a conference scheduled for this November. See the ad on the opposite page for more information and contact James if you have any questions.

As always, we appreciate your prayers, encouraging comments, and financial support.

Blessings,

Brian

... we, the staff,
thank you for the
compliments.

Mailbag...

As [does] Lorese [in the previous issue] . . . I also look forward to studying [*Fulfilled!* Magazine] out thoroughly. I pray for understanding and I believe our Father wants us to understand just as He desires us to spend time with Him in His Word. Thank you for all you do for His people. By Grace Alone,

Jeanine, KY

Thank you for all the work you do to bring love and peace to all of us.

Dolores, MN

Thanks for a great magazine.

Brent, CA

Just finished up the Summer 2013 edition. My only regret is it wasn't long enough. The articles are sometimes long but they are in depth. Sometimes I have to back up and re-read them if my attention wanes, but it is worth it.

Clint, OH

We thank you very much for putting your time and energy into this magazine. The lovers of Truth and Jesus enjoy reading each and every one of them. God will bless you much. Thank you again,

Ron & Peggy, NC



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With What Body Do They Come? A Look at the Resurrection

by Kurt Simmons

Preterists believe the general Resurrection occurred in AD 70, in connection with Christ's kingdom coming in power against the Romans and Jews to put His enemies beneath His feet (Dan 12:2; Matt 16:27, 28; John 5:28m 29; Heb 10:13). This corresponded with the destruction of Hadean death, which was the *last enemy* (1 Cor 15:26, 55; Isa 25:8). Although all Preterists agree the eschatological Resurrection occurred in AD 70, there is disagreement about the *type of body* received in the resurrection. Three views exist: 1) individual, *physical* bodies; 2) individual, *spiritual* (immaterial) bodies; and 3) a collective, mystical, *covenantal* body.

In this article, we will argue that the individual, spiritual body view is the only scripturally defensible view.

The Intermediate State of the Dead

No discussion of the Resurrection would be complete without touching upon the intermediate place and state of the dead. Indeed, raising the dead from the realm of the deceased unto their respective eternal rewards and punishments is the very essence of the eschatological Resurrection.

Scripture teaches that the "*wages of sin is death*" (Rom 6:23). God warned our first ancestors that death would ensue the day they ate of the forbidden fruit:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:17)

However, God was merciful to the couple and instituted a law of substitutes, which allowed the blood of another to take their place and atone for their sin. An animal was sacrificed instead, and the couple clothed with its skin (Gen 3:21). But the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins (Heb 10:4). Animal sacrifice was therefore merely provisional, standing as a prophetic type pointing to the sacrifice of Christ. Since the blood of animals could not take away sins, the saints could not enter heaven until the death of Jesus and the general Resurrection. Hence, the spirits of the departed dead were "gathered unto their people" in *Sheol* (Hebrew) or *Hades* (Greek) (Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33).

The picture of *Sheol* in the Old Testament is somewhat murky, but the dead are portrayed as living and conscious (Isa 14:9, 10; cf. 1 Sam 28:15-20). The picture is more complete in the New Testament, where the term *Hades*

is used instead. *Hades* had two divisions: a place of torment for the lost, and a place of comfort for the saved. The place of the lost was called *Tartarus* (2 Pet 2:4); the place of the saved was called *Abraham's bosom*, or, more commonly, *Paradise* (Luke 24:43; 2 Cor 12:4). A picture of the state of the dead pending the general resurrection occurs in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as well as several passages in Revelation (Luke 16:19-31; cf. Rev 6:9-11; 14:13; 20:4). On the last day of the pre-messianic age, Christ, seated upon the throne of His glory, began the Judgment of the quick and the dead (Matt 25:31-46; 2 Tim 4:1). Death surrendered up its dead: the just inherited eternal life in heaven; the unjust suffered eternal destruction in *Gehenna*.

Gehenna (ge-en-na) is Greek for the Valley of Hinnom outside of Jerusalem (also called *Tophet*, Isa 30:33). The Valley of Hinnom is where 185,000 Assyrians smitten by the angel of the LORD were buried and cremated (Isa 30:31-33; 37:36). During periods of idolatry, it was also used by the children of Israel to sacrifice their children to *Molech* (2 Chron 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31); Josiah later defiled the place so that it might never again be used for that purpose (2 Kings 23:10). In the time of Christ, the Valley of Hinnom served as the city dump for Jerusalem. It is there that the bodies of over 600,000 Jews who starved to death in the Roman siege of Jerusalem were cast. The phrase "*where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*" takes its source from here (Isa 66:24; Mark 9:44, 46, 48), and refers to the maggots and endless fires that fed upon the dead. The imagery is applied by extension to the eternal fate of the lost in the next world (Matt 5:22; 18:8, 9; James 3:6). In Revelation, Christ's enemies—the beast, the kings of the earth, the false prophet, and the dragon—are cast directly into *Gehenna* upon their defeat (there called the *lake of fire*), indicating that the Judgment of the quick and the dead was then underway (Rev 19:20; 20:10; 2 Tim 4:1). This should be compared to the Old Testament where, upon defeat, God's enemies were cast into the "pit," or *Sheol* (Ezek 31:14-17). John portrays the Judgment and eschatological Resurrection:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which

Individual Body View (IBV) of resurrection. The Corporate/ in the previous issue.



Kurt Simmons

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were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:11-15)

The “sea” in Revelation is associated with the Gentiles (the four Gentile world powers in Daniel’s seventh chapter rise from the Great Sea; the Roman “beast,” whose number is 666, also rises from the sea). The sea, or *deep*, is also associated with Hades (Luke 8:31; Rom 10:7). Therefore, the sea in this passage probably refers to Tartarus and those outside of covenant relationship with God. However, questions of this sort aside, we see that the very essence of the eschatological Resurrection involved Hades and raising the dead unto their respective rewards. Paul summed it all up in his chapter on the Resurrection when he said “O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor 15:55). With the destruction of Hades (that is, Hadean death), the saints now go directly to heaven upon physical death (cf. Rev 14:13), the unsaved to Gehenna.

With this overview of Hades and the Resurrection behind us, we are prepared to discuss the type of body received.

The Corporate Body View

We find traces of the Corporate Body View (CBV) doctrine expressed as early as 1845, when Robert Townley wrote his book *The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ a Past Event* (London, 1845). A modern proponent of this view is Max King, who made it popular during the 1970-80s. At one time, the majority of Preterists likely embraced the CBV, but numbers have dramatically declined in recent years. Both Townley and King were led into Universalism by this view, which has brought it under increased scrutiny and criticism, causing many to seek alternatives.

Briefly stated, the CBV interprets the Resurrection mystically. Where the rest of Christendom teaches that the “natural body” refers to man’s physical body and the “spiritual body” refers to the incorruptible body received in the Resurrection, the CBV holds that the natural and spiritual bodies refer instead to Judaism and Christianity, respectively. According to King:

Resurrection has reference many times to the change from the Jewish system to the Christian system, where the material body of Judaism is put off in death and the spiritual body of Christianity is resurrected in life.¹

The natural body that was sown . . . answers to the fleshly or carnal system of Judaism . . . out of the decay

of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity . . . this is the primary meaning of Paul’s statement, “it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body. There is a spiritual body.”²

The CBV holds that the Old Testament law was valid and held Christians in bondage to sin until AD 70. Justification from sin (the Christian’s “resurrection”) would come only with the destruction of Jerusalem. According to King:

Judaism was the metaphorical grave of the spiritual dead out of which the resurrection took place.³

One must look to the Jewish system as the state and power of death to be destroyed by the reign of Christ.⁴

Paul wanted to attain unto the resurrection of the dead . . . as represented in the Jewish system.⁵

The last enemy to be destroyed was death (1 Cor 15:26), and Israel was that ministration of death (2 Cor 3:7).⁶

Paul said it was then that “death was swallowed up in victory” . . . But how was death swallowed up in victory? The answer is obvious. Where was death resident? Did it not reign in the mortal or natural body of Judaism . . . But when that body died, and from it arose a spiritual body clothed with incorruption and immortality, death was defeated.⁷

Reduced to its essential elements, the CBV rests upon three pillars, each of which we believe to be objectively false. These are:

1. The Old Testament law was valid, binding, and obligatory until AD 70;
2. Atonement was incomplete and the saints remained under the debt of sin until AD 70; and
3. Grace and justification from sin arrived only in AD 70 at the fall of Jerusalem.

These are logical corollaries of each other. If one is shown to be wrong, the others will be wrong as well. For example, if it is shown that the Old Testament legally terminated at the cross, then grace and justification will have arrived at the cross, and so forth. So, what does Scripture say? When did the old law end and the gospel of grace begin? Here there can be no doubt: The Old Testament ended at Calvary.

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, saying, “*This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many the remission of sins*” (Matt 26:28). Jesus’ blood inaugurated the New Testament (cf. Heb 9:20). It is a fundamental maxim of law that there can be only one will or testament in force at a time. The last or latest will revokes all earlier ones. The epistle to the Hebrews says “a

Continued on page 8

Resurrection and the Kingdom

by Kurt Simmons

testament is of force after men are dead” (Heb 9:17; cf. Heb 10:9). Therefore, the New Testament came into effect upon Jesus’ death. Since there cannot be two Testaments in force at one time, the Old Testament necessarily ended at the cross.

At Jesus’ death, the veil of the temple, representing our separation from God, was “rent in twain,” showing that the way into God’s presence was now open through the death of Christ (Matt 27:51). The temple service and blood sacrifices were a prophetic foreshadow of good things to come (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). A shadow ends where the body begins. Paul says the body (substance) of our faith is the cross of Christ (Col 2:17; 1 Cor 2:2; Gal 6:14). Therefore, the shadow of the law ended at the cross. Paul states that Christ “*abolished in his flesh . . . the law of commandments contained in ordinances*” (Eph 2:15). The verb here is in the perfect tense, showing completed action in the past: Christ abolished the law in His flesh (viz., at the cross).

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (Col 2:13, 14)

Again, the perfect tense (“having forgiven”) is used. If the apostle wanted to say that the Mosaic Law was abolished and Christians had forgiveness of sins, what words could he use to make it clearer than those recorded here? Notice also that Paul says the saints were already “quickened” and had experienced spiritual resurrection at conversion (faith, repentance, and baptism) (cf. Eph 2:1, 6; Rom 6:3-6). Thus, the CBV’s insistence that the saints were dead in sin until AD 70 is wide of the mark.

Two entire epistles (Galatians and Hebrews) are devoted to the proposition that the law was no longer valid and need not be kept. A special counsel held in Jerusalem by the apostles concluded there was no need to keep the ceremonial law (Acts 15:24-29). We thus read that the dietary laws and law against Jews keeping table fellowship with Gentiles were revoked (Acts 10; Gal 2:11, 12; 1 Tim 4:4); the law segregating Gentiles from Jews in the temple was revoked (Eph 2:14, 15); the feast days and Sabbath days were revoked (Gal 4:10; Col 2:16); and circumcision, the very epitome of the Old Testament law, was revoked (Gal 2:2-5; 6:15). If all these are revoked, what part of the law does the CBV argue was still valid after the crucifixion of Jesus, keeping the saints under the debt of sin?

The epistle to the Romans states, “*Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace*” (Rom 6:14; cf Gal 5:2). Not under the law. How can

proponents of the CBV deny simple and direct statements like these and maintain credibility? At His ascension Christ became our high priest (Heb 9:11, 24). The epistle to the Hebrews says “*for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*” (Heb 7:12). A change of the law! Christ’s sacrifice and priesthood revoked the Aaronic priesthood and temple sacrifices. As for atonement being already complete, we have Paul’s testimony, saying, “We have now received the atonement” (Rom 5:11). As well, the author of Hebrews declares, “*For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified*” (Heb 10:14; perfect tense, showing completed action in the past).

Thus, all three essential tenants of the CBV are directly contradicted by numerous passages of Scripture: The law was revoked at the cross, atonement was complete, grace had entered, and men were justified in spiritual resurrection—all before AD 70. Arguments that there was a collective body resurrection of the saints out of the grave of Judaism in AD 70 must therefore be dismissed.

The Individual, Physical Body View

The idea that the Resurrection involves physical bodies has a long tradition in the church. The Nicene Creed (AD 325) speaks merely of the “resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come,” but many later creeds speak of the resurrection of “the body,” and several creeds and confessions speak expressly of the resurrection of “the flesh.” Yet for all that, the physical body view (PBV) has virtually no scriptural warrant.

Jesus’ Teaching about the Resurrection

The resurrection of individual, physical bodies was the view of the Pharisees in Jesus’ day. We learn this from the hypothetical scenario propounded by the Sadducees to Jesus, asking whose wife the widow of seven husbands would be in the Resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in the Resurrection (Matt 22:23; Acts 23:8), whereas the Pharisees did. Thus, it is clear that the Sadducees’ question was based upon the Pharisees’ conception of the Resurrection, and was put to Jesus as an indissoluble problem refuting the Resurrection. Jesus’ response affirmed the fact of the Resurrection, but denied that it was physical in nature.



“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matt 29-32)

Three points emerge from this:

1. The resurrection is in heaven, not on earth (cf. Matt 5:10, 12; Heb 11:13-16). The body received, therefore, must be suited to the spiritual realm above, not the material realm here below.
2. Angels by definition are spirits—immaterial, intangible, and invisible. Since in the Resurrection we will be like the angels, it follows that we, too, will be spirits whose bodies are immaterial, intangible, and invisible.
3. Abraham and the patriarchs had in some form or manner already experienced a resurrection (viz., the first resurrection of the soul or spirit in Hades, Rev 6:9-11; 14:13; 20:4). But if the first resurrection involved the spirit of man, what basis is there to assume the Hadean resurrection would involve physical bodies? So far as we can tell, there is none.

Paul’s Analogy of the Seed

We may add to Jesus’ instruction about the Resurrection the words of Paul:

That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 15:37-50)

It is commonly supposed that the “seed” in Paul’s analogy is the dead body buried in the earth, but this is mistaken. That which is sown is the human soul, encased in the “seed hull” of earthly form. This is what Paul means when he says *“It is sown a natural body . . . And so it was written, The first man Adam was made a living soul.”* These parallels make clear that our souls are first “sown” in flesh via human birth. But that which is sown is not quickened (resurrected) unless it die (1 Cor 15:36). That is, we must put off these mortal bodies in physical death, if we are to be raised to heavenly life (absent from the body is present with the Lord; cf. 2 Cor 5:6-8). The seed of our human nature bears the germ (the spirit) that comes forth at death clothed upon with a body suited to heavenly life. Hence, Jesus’ physical resurrection is not the pattern of our own. Rather, Jesus’ glorified body in heaven is the pattern of our resurrection. This is clear from Paul’s statement *“the last Adam was made a quickening spirit . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”* (1 Cor 15:45, 49). God is a spirit (John 4:24). Our destiny is to become spirits with bodies suited for glory like Christ’s (Rom 8:29-30).

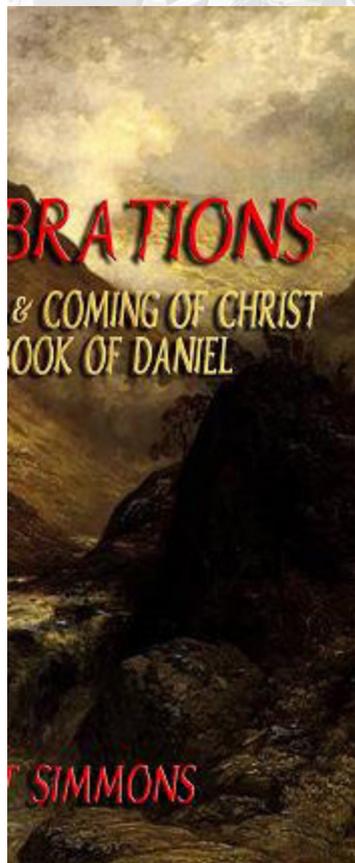
Verses Relied Upon by the PBV

Let us survey briefly the verses relied upon by adherents of the PBV.

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” (Job 19:25, 26)

This is the only verse in the Bible that makes reference to the flesh in apparent connection with the Resurrection. However, the Hebrew of this verse is so obscure and ambiguous that scholars cannot decide how it is to be translated. The marginal reading gives the rendering, *“After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh . . .”* etc. In other words, two renderings, exactly opposite in meaning, can be sustained by the original tongue. Thus, it cannot be determined with certainty what Job actually meant. Given that this is the only place in Scripture referring to the flesh in the context of the Resurrection, we would be well advised to opt for the alternate rendering. At the very least, standing as it does alone, and more especially in view of the poetic nature of the book, no essential doctrine of Scripture ought to be built upon it.

Continued on page 10



Resurrection and the Kingdom

by Kurt Simmons

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isa 26:19)

This passage does not teach a general physical resurrection of believers. Jesus' "dead body" is the only body expressly mentioned in the passage. Those that "dwell in dust" refer to the spirits of the dead in Sheol/Hades, which was conceived as a cavernous realm beneath earth's surface. The earth casting out its dead therefore does not speak to the bodies of the dead, but rather their spirits in Hades. Assuming, however, that physical bodies are intended, the better view is that the reference is to certain physical resurrections, recorded by Matthew (27:52-53), in which actual bodies rose in association with Jesus' resurrection, and not to the general Resurrection of the last day predicted to occur some forty years later.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29)

As with Isaiah 26:19, no physical bodies are mentioned in this text. All Jesus says is that those in the graves will come forth. Jesus did not say they would come forth on this side of eternity. Daniel made the like statement, saying, "*many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*" (Dan 12:2). This language is obviously poetic: The dead do not "sleep" in the earth; their spirits go to Hades (Luke 24:43; cf. 16:19-31). Hence, the idea of "waking" from the dust is merely accommodative; it points to a coming day of salvation when death would be vanquished and man goes to his long-awaited home with God and Christ in heaven.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom 8:11)

"Quickening" our mortal bodies does not refer to the resurrection of the physical body, but the regenerative effects of God's Spirit in man by the mortification of the flesh. "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*" (Rom 8:13; cf. Gal 5:24). This is all the more apparent from the verse immediately preceding, where Paul writes, "*the body is dead because of sin*" (Rom 8:10). The saints at Rome were not dead and neither were their bodies; the apostle is merely using a figure of speech. As the source of fleshly lusts, the body is spiritually "dead."

But by being brought into subjection to the Spirit, the body is figuratively quickened and made an instrument of righteousness.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:23)

This passage may be likened to Jeremiah's purchase (redemption) of his uncle's field just before the nation went into captivity. The ownership of the land was witnessed and sealed unto Jeremiah, but its possession and enjoyment were postponed until the nation returned out of captivity (Jer 32:10-44). In the same way, our inheritance has been purchased for us by Christ, and we have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, whereby we cry "*Abba, Father,*" showing that we are putative heirs of eternal life (Rom 8:15-17). The "redemption of our body" is the point at which we come into possession of eternal life and receive our immortal bodies. There is no mention of physical bodies in the passage.

The Individual, Spiritual Body View

The phrase Individual Body View (IBV) was coined to distinguish it from the CBV, rather than as a stand-alone name to describe the eschatological Resurrection. It is suitable for the one-by-one resurrection experienced as men die today, but it is not really suitable for the eschatological Resurrection. The essence of the eschatological Resurrection was Hades surrendering up the spirits of the dead, beginning with Abel until the last day of the pre-messianic age. Therefore, I prefer the phrases *Hadean Resurrection* or the *resurrection from Hades* as more descript. Since we have already surveyed the Hadean Resurrection, let us look at a few verses demonstrating the nature of the resurrection body itself:

Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor 5:5)

"Destruction" of the flesh here is best understood in terms of its mortification by denying its affections and lusts. By excommunicating unrepentant members overtaken in sin, they may be brought to shame and repentance, leading to the denial and destruction of the flesh. By thus "crucifying the flesh" (Gal 5:24), the spirit is restored to purity, suitable unto salvation. The flesh is expressly excluded from the spirit's salvation.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Individual Body View (IBV) of resurrection.

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor 4:16-18)

The material is visible and temporal; the immaterial is invisible and eternal. Although the outward and material man perishes, the inward, immaterial man is renewed day by day. The body will perish, but the spirit will inherit eternal life.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor 5:1)

Our “earthly house” refers to our mortal bodies of flesh; “this tabernacle” also refers to our physical bodies (2 Pet 1:14). Dissolution of our earthly house speaks to putting off the body in death. The “*building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” speaks to our immortal, immaterial, and spiritual bodies. These are received and enjoyed in heaven.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (2 Cor 5:2, 3)

In the Resurrection, we are clothed with our immaterial and immortal house from heaven, not our fleshly, mortal bodies of earth. “Naked” speaks to putting off the body of flesh in death; “clothed” speaks to putting on the spiritual body in the resurrection of life.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith not by sight:.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:6-8)

Could the apostle have made it plainer? We would be absent from the body of flesh that we might be at home with the Lord. If, in the Resurrection we are reunited with the body, we will be at home in the body and absent from the Lord! Clearly, that is no part of the Christian’s hope.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Cor 5:10)

This verse, following hard upon the heels of those going before, which so clearly proclaim that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, makes clear that in the Judgment men will not be clothed with houses of clay. That they are to receive the things done while in the body clearly implies that at the Judgment they would be in the physical body no more. They have passed from this life

and put off their bodies of clay and gone to be judged for the things done while still in the flesh.

Conclusion

The eschatological Resurrection of the last day consisted in the spirits in Hades receiving individual, spiritual, immaterial, immortal, and invisible bodies suited to the ethereal realm above. Other views are unsound, and should be rejected. †

¹Max R. King, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1971, Warren, OH), 191

²Ibid, 200

³Ibid, 220

⁴Ibid, 144

⁵Ibid, 194

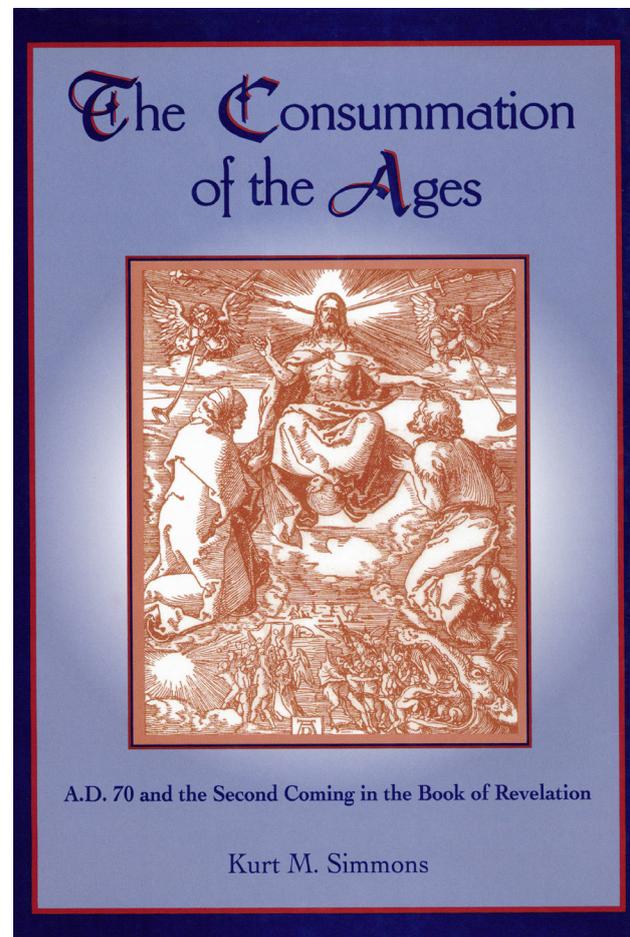
⁶Ibid, 173

⁷Ibid, 202

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Creation to Consummation

Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15

by Ed Stevens

“... but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen 2:17 ESV)

Introduction: Following is a brief but substantive explanation of 1 Corinthians 15 from the *Individual Body View* (IBV) perspective of the Resurrection.

15:1-11 – Notice the four occurrences of the phrase “*He was seen*” (vv. 5-8). These are eyewitness confirmations of the reappearance of Jesus in His self-same crucified body. These were not reappearances of a ghost out of Hades, or just a docetic (seeming) resurrection of Jesus for only evidentiary purposes. Nor were they merely metaphorical references to His collective body (the Church) being raised out of covenantal sin-death into the life of the kingdom. Instead, Paul said that Christ *was raised* (out of Hades) and reappeared in His self-same individual “flesh and bones” body that had *died*. Notice verse 11b: “. . . so we preach and so you **believed**.” This is the gospel that Paul had preached to the Corinthians—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—which they *received*, *stood in* (v. 1), and *believed* (v. 11). Paul hoped that they had not “**believed in vain**” (v. 2).

15:12-19 – There were some at Corinth who were saying that “*there is no resurrection of the dead*” (v. 12). But Paul reminded them that they already *believed* that Jesus had been raised from the dead, so why did they now doubt that others could be raised? If Jesus was raised, as they supposedly *believed*, then others also could be raised. Conversely, if the “dead ones” in Hades could not be raised out of there, then neither was Jesus raised out of Hades. Yet, they *believed* that Jesus had been raised. Paul said their *faith* in the resurrection of Christ was “in vain” (v. 2), “empty” (v. 14), and “futile” (v. 17) if there was no resurrection of the dead. This would also mean that the dead saints had simply “perished” (v. 18), that all saints were “still in their sins” (v. 17), and that their Christian lifestyle was “the most pitiable” (v. 19). This is what he later says, “. . . *If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*” (v. 32b).

15:20-23 – Since Christ was the firstfruit of the Resurrection harvest, His resurrection guaranteed that the rest of the dead would be raised. When Christ ascended, the firstfruit was presented to God, making it possible for the rest of the dead to be raised. Notice what Paul wrote in verses 22-23 regarding *when* the

Resurrection would occur. The dead saints had not yet been raised when Paul wrote (AD 57), “*but they shall [future tense] be made alive. . . at the Parousia*.” This proves that the Resurrection was not an ongoing *process* at the time Paul wrote, but rather a future *event* that would occur *at the Parousia*. This future tense “**shall be made alive**” does not work in the *Collective Body View* (CBV) of the Resurrection, but it fits perfectly with the *Individual Body View* (IBV).

15:24-28 – Paul says that Christ was already reigning in some sense at the time he wrote (AD 57), and “*must continue to reign until all His enemies were put under His feet*” (v. 25). What reign is this? It certainly is not the *eternal reign* which did not begin until the Parousia. So unless we want to posit two different reigns of Christ before His eternal reign, it means that this reign must be His *millennial reign*, during which He put down all His enemies (cf. 1 Kings 5:3), took the kingdom away from the Jews (Luke 20:16; cf. Matt 21:43), gave it back to the Father to whom it belongs (1 Sam 8:7; 12:12), and then sat down with the Father to co-reign with Him eternally (cf. Rev 21-22). When the Israelites rejected God as their king and demanded a king like all the other nations, God allowed them to set up Saul as their king (1 Sam 8:7). But soon afterward God sent Samuel to anoint David as Saul’s successor (1 Sam 13:14) from whose descendants a king (Jesus) would arise to take the kingdom away from the Jews and give it back to God (Acts 13:22-23; Luke 20:16; cf. Matt 21:43; Luke 19:12-27).

15:29 – What was this baptism for the dead? Several commentaries suggest that it refers to the Jewish burial custom of washing (purifying) a dead body before burial to insure that individual would be resurrected. In the case of dead relatives whose bodies were lost at sea, consumed by fire, or eaten by wild animals, a very close blood relative was allowed to be washed (baptized) “on behalf of” that dead relative to ensure his/her resurrection. Paul is neither approving nor condemning this burial custom, but rather wondering why the Corinthians practiced it if they did not believe their dead relatives were going to be raised.

This proves that the Resurrection was not an ongoing process at the time Paul wrote, but rather a future event that would occur at the Parousia.

Death in the Garden of Eden

Studies in Redemptive History

Edward E. Stevens



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15:30-32 – Furthermore, if the dead are not going to be raised, and there was not going to be any conscious afterlife, why suffer persecution and deprive oneself of this life's benefits? Why not rather indulge in all life's pleasures to the maximum?

15:33-34 – Paul rebuked the Corinthians for hanging around with “evil company” who were corrupting them, and for listening to “some who do not have the knowledge of God.” The Greek philosophers in Corinth and nearby Athens would

the Resurrection was a process at the time Paul was here, not a future event that will occur at the Parousia.

of idols, one of which was dedicated to the “unknown god.” The Greeks did not have a correct understanding of God, so it is not surprising that the Greek philosophers in Athens scoffed at Paul when he taught the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, it seems likely that Greek philosophers in Corinth were corrupting the Corinthian saints by denying the resurrection.

15:35-38 – “Some” there at Corinth, who had been influenced by Greek philosophy to deny the resurrection, were asking these two questions: 1) *How are the dead raised up?* and 2) *With what body do they come?* Both questions suggest a strong Platonic influence. Paul answers both questions by using several analogies. He begins by comparing the Resurrection to the sprouting of seeds: “*What you sow*

is not made alive unless it dies.” In essence, Paul was saying that a seed does not receive its new plant body until after the old seed body breaks open and is laid aside (dies). It is the same for the saint. We cannot get our new immortal bodies until after our mortal bodies have died. Some commentators are puzzled by Paul's statement that the seed does not die until *after* it is sown. Since they think the sowing of the seed is the *burial* of the body, the implication is that people were being buried alive! However, other commentators remind us that the *sowing* is referring to the *birth* of the person into the world. Thus, Paul is saying that humans are sown into the world at their birth, and their physical bodies have to die before they can receive their new immortal bodies. In vv. 37-38, Paul clearly says that the body in which we are sown is *not the same body* that we will have after the Resurrection. Instead, “*God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.*” In other words, we are born, live, and die in one kind of body, and come to life in a different kind of body, just like seeds do. Futurists who take the “bodies-out-of-the-graves” (BOG) view of resurrection have difficulty explaining these two verses. Paul, at the least, is teaching two different *kinds* of bodies, if not two different *bodies* altogether. The latter concept is clinched in verse 38 where we read that God gives a *new body* to “*each of the seeds.*” Thus, when the seed sprouts, the old seed body dies and returns to dust, while the new plant body rises up from the inner germ of the seed. Note also that each of

the seeds (individuals) receives its own body. This does not work in the *Collective Body View*, but it fits perfectly the *Individual Body View*.

15:39-41 – These three verses further illustrate the point about the differences between *seed* bodies and *plant* bodies. There are different kinds of flesh, and different levels of glory between terrestrial and celestial bodies, as well as between the sun, moon, and stars.

15:42-44 – Verse 42 picks up once again on the concept expressed in verses 37-38. Just as seeds are not sown in their *final* plant body that they will have after they sprout, so it is with human resurrection. God gives “it” (each individual “seed” or person) a new body at the Resurrection. The seed is sown into the world in a body that is subject to corruption, dishonor, and weakness. But it is raised in a body that is incorruptible, glorious, and powerful. The seed (individual person) is sown in a *natural* body, but raised in a *spiritual* body. Notice again that Paul is speaking of individual seeds here, not about a collective body.

Continued on page 19

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Objection Overruled!

The Great Tribulation

by Don K. Preston

Objection To Preterism: How Could AD 70 Have Been the Great Tribulation?

One of the most common objections to Covenant Eschatology is based on the doctrine of the Great Tribulation. Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice state their case in their *End Times Controversy*:

“What evidence do preterists have that the tragic siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 was indeed a fulfillment of Jesus’ description of the Great Tribulation? He said it would be a time that would be worse than any other in history from ‘the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will’ (Matt 24:21). Anyone who reads history must admit that the Inquisition and Hitler’s holocaust were far worse and occurred long after AD 70.” (Eugene, Ore. Harvest House, 2005, 12)

My response:

This objection is very common, but is based on several false presuppositions. In addition, the objection overlooks some clear, undeniable facts not only from the Olivet Discourse, but the rest of Scripture. Let me offer a four-point response:

1. Jesus undeniably said the Great Tribulation would occur in His generation.
2. The language Jesus used, calling the Great Tribulation the “greatest event ever,” is typical prophetic hyperbole.
3. In addition to the possibility that Jesus’ language is prophetic hyperbole, it is distinctly possible there is a sense, a very real sense, in which one might consider the language to be quite literally true.
4. The book of Revelation definitively confines the Great Tribulation to the first century.

Point #1– This Generation Shall Not Pass

No matter what one may think of the Great Tribulation, the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34 must be candidly and objectively dealt with. In discussing His coming, along with the other predicted events such as the fulfillment of the Great Commission, the Abomination of Desolation, and the Great Tribulation, Jesus said “*Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass until all of these things be fulfilled.*”

Ice feels the force of Jesus’ words and so claims that what Jesus was saying is that *when* the Tribulation

period (The Tribulation being a seven year period, per the Dispensational construct) arrives after the yet future Rapture, it will be *that* generation that shall see the fulfillment of all of the predicted events. Needless to say, this defines “this generation” as seven years, which is biblically unprecedented!

Of course, one could rebut Ice’s contention by showing that the predicted events of Matthew 24 did occur in the first century. In my *Into All The World, Then Comes The End*, for instance, I document that the Great Commission was undeniably fulfilled. In fact, every Greek word used by Jesus to predict or to command the Commission (translated as “earth,” “world,” “nations” etc.) was used by Paul to document that it had been fulfilled. This is not mere coincidence. It is prophecy given, prophecy fulfilled!

Ice makes the following astoundingly bad claim in regard to Jesus’ use of “this generation”: “The use of ‘this generation’ in all other contexts is *historical*, but 24:34 is *prophetic*. In fact, when one compares the historical use of ‘this generation’ at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 23:36 (which is an undisputed reference to AD 70) with the prophetic usage in 24:34, a contrast is obvious.” (*The Great Tribulation past or Future?*, Kenneth L. Gentry and Thomas Ice, Grand Rapids, MI; Kregel Publications, 1999, 103).

Space forbids an in-depth analysis of this unscholarly claim, but simply take note of the blatant misuse of “*this generation*” in his quote. To suggest that Matthew 23 (Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem) is a *historical* rather than *prophetic* use of “*this generation*” is specious in the extreme. In both Matthew 23 and 24 Jesus was *predicting* coming events! I might add that that there are several other New Testament instances of “*this generation*” applicable strictly to the first century that are nonetheless prophetic. Again, Ice’s contrast between a *historical* and *prophetic* use is unwarranted and false.

So, Jesus said that the events He predicted, inclusive of the Great Tribulation, would occur in His generation, and that is in fact what happened.

Point #2: Jesus Used Typical Prophetic Hyperbole

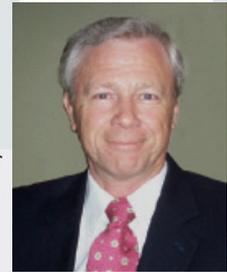
One of the main problems with the Dispensational claims about the Great Tribulation is their woodenly literal interpretation that ignores the biblical use of

The Great Tribulation

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apocalyptic language. In other words, it is common in Scripture for the writers, inspired by the Spirit, to use language that simply cannot be taken in the hyper-literalistic manner of the Dispensationalists.

In 2 Kings 18:5 we read of Hezekiah that “*there was not another king before him or another king after him that trusted the Lord like he did.*” However, just a few chapters later, when Josiah is described, we read the identical description of him! Very clearly, both statements cannot be literally true.

In similar manner, when YHVH was about to bring the Babylonians against Jerusalem in 586 BC, He said, “*I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like*” (Ezek 5:8-9). Consider that Jeremiah, when describing that destruction, said: “*The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of Sodom that was overthrown in a moment*” (Lam 4:6). Was Jeremiah telling the literal truth? Not if one applies the Dispensational hermeneutic of absolute literalism. Sodom was wiped off the map, disappearing totally, whereas Jerusalem was not! Furthermore, the events of AD 70 were, on a purely literal level, far, far worse than the conquering by Babylon in the sixth century BC!

But, no, Jeremiah did not lie. He used the language of pathos from the bottom of his anguished heart, in typical “human” fashion that does not express the rigid literalism of Dispensational thought.

It is not too much to say that the millennial interpreters will not allow the Biblical writers to express themselves like normal human beings. We often say of children, “That is the prettiest baby I have ever seen!” We express ourselves in times of catastrophe, “That is the worst thing ever!” It is the nature of human beings to express themselves in hyperbolic manner. Given the Hebraic tendency toward symbolism, poetic expression, figurative language, etc., one would think that interpreters would at least consider this, but, in the millennial paradigm, this is not permitted.

Point #3– The Covenantal Significance of AD 70

While we reject the rigid literalism of the Dispensational hermeneutic in its application to the physical dimensions of the Jewish War, there is a literal

aspect to Matthew 24:21 and the description of the Great Tribulation. That is, Jesus was neither speaking nor focusing on the physical horrors of the AD 66-70 war. Rather, He was describing the *covenantal significance* of the events and, in this regard, AD 70 does indeed stand as an event unparalleled in history—past or future.

AD 70 was the end of the Old Covenant age, the end of Torah. (See my *From Torah To Telos, the End of the Law of Moses*, for a full discussion, or, my written debate with Kurt Simmons on the passing of the Law. Both books are available on my website: www.eschatology.org). Gentry was spot on when he spoke of how the significance of AD 70 is far too often overlooked by modern students: “The significance of the collapse of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in AD 70 is little appreciated by modern Christians. But, AD 70 effectively closes out the old, typological era and removes a major hindrance to the spread of the Christian faith.” (Gentry, *The Great Tribulation*, 64). Sproul says it is imperative that Bible students “take seriously the redemptive-historical importance of Jerusalem’s destruction in AD70” (R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, 26).

Noted Postmillennialist Lorraine Boettner said, “One reason it is so difficult for some people to realize the Great Tribulation had its fulfillment in the siege and fall of Jerusalem is that they do not fully appreciate what a tremendously important event and what a landmark in history the break-up and abolition of the Old Testament economy really was” (*The Millennium*, Philadelphia, P and R, 1957, 203).

B.F. Dunelm said, “It is no exaggeration to say that the Fall of Jerusalem is the most significant national event in the history of the world” (Quote found at: <http://www.preteristarchive.com/whatsnew.html>, p.9).

Even Thomas Ice admits the incredible significance of AD 70. Commenting on Luke 21:22 he said, “Those first-century days are called the ‘days of vengeance’ for Jerusalem is under the divine judgment of covenantal sanctions recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Luke notes that God’s vengeance on His elect nation ‘is in order that all things that are written may be fulfilled.’ Jesus is telling the nation that God will fulfill all the curses of the Mosaic Covenant because of Israel’s disobedience. He will not relent and merely bring to

Continued on page 16

Great Tribulation

by Don K. Preston

...continued from page 15

pass a partial fulfillment of His vengeance. Some of the passages that Jesus says will be fulfilled include the following: Leviticus 26:27-33; Deuteronomy 28:49-63; Deuteronomy 32: 19-27; 1 Kings 9:1-9; Jeremiah 6:1-6; 26:1-9; Daniel 9:26; Hosea 8:1-10:15; Micah 3:12; Zechariah 11:6.” (Ice, *The Great Tribulation*, 98).

Now, in truth, Ice has, in this single quote, surrendered the entire Dispensational paradigm! He admitted that AD 70 was the fulfillment of all of the curses of the Mosaic Covenant, clearly not appreciating the fact that the Mosaic Covenant lies at the foundation of all biblical eschatology.

Paul said his doctrine of the resurrection was nothing but the hope of Israel, Israel “after the flesh” (Rom 9:3), found in Moses and the prophets (Acts 24:14f). He said he preached nothing that was not found in Moses and the prophets (Acts 26:21f). As I noted in my formal debate with Joel McDurmon, (July, 2012) while the Edenic and Abrahamic Eschatology promises predated Torah, those promises were incorporated into Torah and were to be fulfilled at the end of the Mosaic Age, not at some proposed end of time, or the end of the Christian age (The book, DVDs, and the Kindle version of that debate are all available from me).

Note that Ice—who, along with LaHaye lodged the objection to preterism under review here—admits that AD 70 was the fulfillment of (among other prophecies) *Deuteronomy 32*. This is an astounding admission and is the definitive answer to the objection. Here, ever so briefly, is the reason why:

- Deuteronomy 32 is a prophecy about *Israel’s last days* (v. 19f; 29f).
- According to Dispensational theology, Israel’s last

days, i.e. the seven year Tribulation period that follows the rapture, were postponed due to Jewish unbelief. This supposed suspension of the prophetic clock absolutely demands that *Israel’s last days were not being counted in AD 70!*

- And yet, Thomas Ice claims Deuteronomy 32, a prophecy about *Israel’s last days*, was fulfilled in AD 70! Did you notice that Ice cited the very verses that posited those events for Israel’s last days, and that he said AD 70 was a “complete,” not partial fulfillment?

Do you catch the power of this?

- **Deuteronomy 32:19-27 was completely fulfilled in AD 70 (per Ice)**
- **But, Deuteronomy 32:19-27 was a prophecy of events in Israel’s last days (v. 19f; 29f)**
- **Therefore, Israel’s last days were present and completely fulfilled in AD 70**

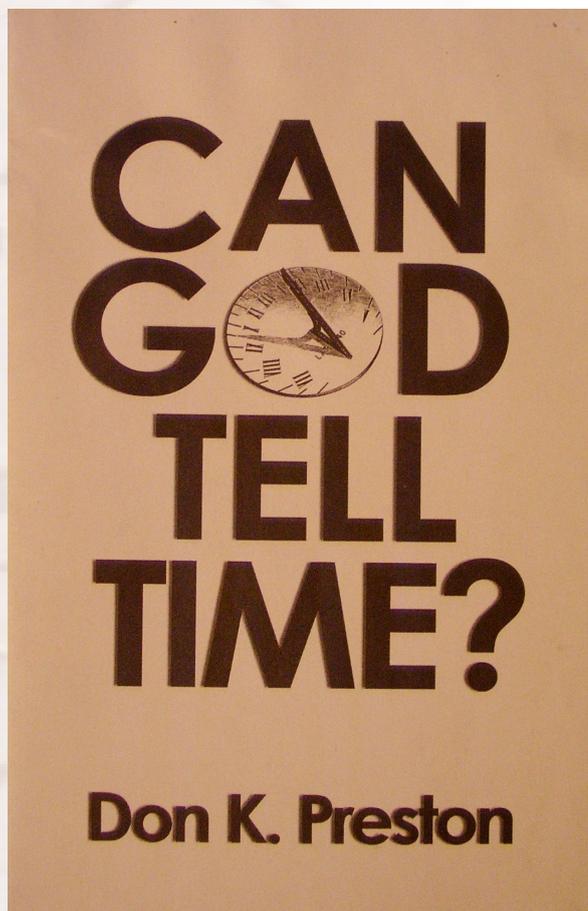
This is incontrovertible. If Israel’s last days were present in AD 70 then the postponement doctrine is falsified. The Great Tribulation belongs to AD 70, and on this basis alone, the objection under discussion is falsified. But, there is more.

If we take Matthew 24:21 in a covenantal context, it has tremendous implications for all futurist eschatologies. Remember, the fall of Jerusalem was the end of the age and Jesus’ *parousia* (Matt 24:3f). Jesus said that event would be the greatest event ever, past or future. This is because there had never been the end of a covenant age before.

For 1500 years Torah and Israel had stood as God’s exclusive covenant and covenant people. That Old Covenant could not bring life or righteousness (Gal 3:20f), and was pre-ordained to end in order to bring in the New Covenant age of Messiah, and the New Creation. This New Covenant age, in stark contrast to the Old, brings justification, life, righteousness and grace.

So ask yourself this question: Would the end of the New Covenant age of life, righteousness, justification and life, not be worse, *far, far worse*, than the end of the Covenant that could not give any of those things?

- In AD 70 a *nation* came to an end. Futurists say the *entire cosmos* will be destroyed.
- In AD 70 a covenant of death came to an end. Futurists tell us that someday, the New Covenant age of life,



- righteousness and grace will come to an end.
- In AD 70 God's exclusive dealings with a single nation came to an end. Futurists tell us that one day, God will no longer deal with mankind in history.
- In AD 70 a temporary covenant came to its determined end. Futurists tell us the eternal, everlasting covenant age—that is said to have *no end*—will in fact come to an end.

Undeniably, if the futurist paradigm is correct, the future end of the age would be far greater, far worse, than the events of AD 70. And yet, this cannot be if Jesus was speaking in Covenantal terms when He said the end of the Old Covenant age would be the greatest event the world had ever seen, or would ever see.

Point #4 – The Great Tribulation and the 144,000

For brevity, let me give some bullet points regarding this final point. For a fuller development of these points, see my *Blast From the Past: The Truth About Armageddon* book, available on my websites.

- In Revelation 7 and 14 John saw the 144,000, who represented the righteous remnant of the twelve tribes.
- The 144,000 were the first fruit of those redeemed to God from man (Rev 14:2-4). Thus, they were the first Jewish Christians (hang onto that for one moment).
- The 144,000 experienced the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:14f)!

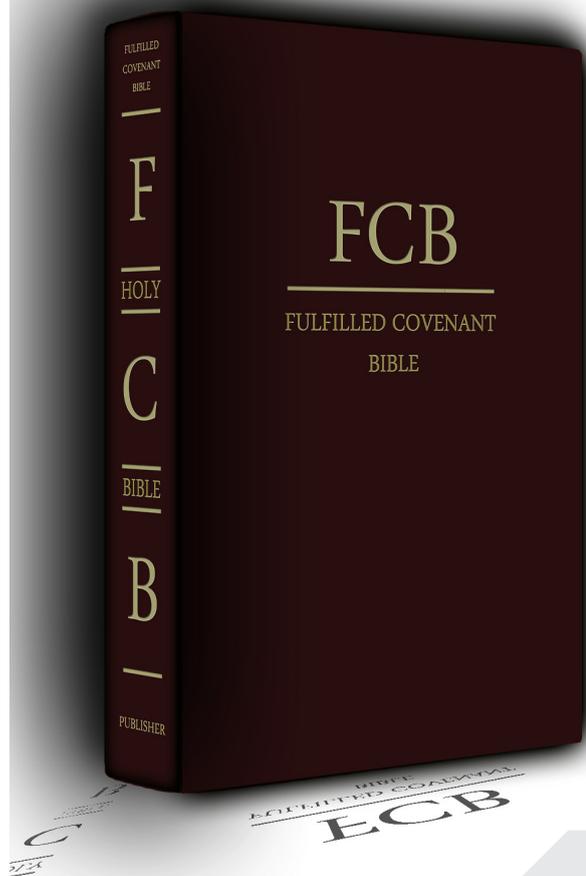
- Therefore, the Great Tribulation belonged to and occurred in the first century, the time of the first fruit.

Notice that Revelation does not say the 144,000 were the first fruit of the Tribulation period. No, *they were the first to be redeemed by the work of Christ*. And again, of logical, inescapable necessity, since they experienced the Great Tribulation, then the Tribulation belonged to the very beginning of the proclamation of Christ's redemptive work!

The first fruit cannot refer to any event in our future, for anyone in our future cannot, by the very nature of the case, be the first fruit of those redeemed to God from man! We today are many generations later than the first fruit. Neither we, nor any future generation can ever be the first fruit of those redeemed to God.

Thus, the doctrine of the 144,000 definitively posits the Great Tribulation in the first century; just as does the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 32, as admitted by Thomas Ice; just as does the covenantal significance of the fall of Jerusalem; and just as does Jesus' emphatic declaration that the Tribulation was to be in His generation.

When we take this evidence into consideration, either singly or collectively, it points us inexorably and irrefutably to the conclusion that the Great Tribulation occurred in the first century. The objection is Overruled! †



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Preterism 101

Charles S. Meek, MBA

In this issue we present an excerpt from Charles' new book, *Christian Hope through Fulfilled Prophecy*

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For assuredly, I say to you, **you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.** (Matthew 10:23)

If you ask your pastor about this passage, there is a good chance he will dance around it. He may say that it refers in some way to Jesus' First Coming. But Jesus was already upon the earth, so He could not have been talking about his First Coming. Jesus must have been predicting his Second Coming—that it would occur within the lifetime of some of those hearing his words. This would be consistent with the "this generation" language in the Olivet Discourse. We will consider this passage and numerous others in more detail in Chapter 7. This passage is not unique. . . .

Many Christians dismiss these passages by assuming that Jesus must not have really meant what He seems to have said. However, in an apparent inconsistency, most Christians accept the notion that *other* writers of the New Testament besides Matthew, Mark, and Luke (i.e., Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, and the writer of Hebrews) also believed that Jesus would return in their own generation, that is, while some of them were still alive. The problem should be obvious. These modern Christians don't believe Jesus, but they admit that the apostles and other contemporaries of Jesus took Him at *face value* about when He would return. . . .

As we have mentioned, skeptics of various stripes weigh in on this too. They point to several passages by Jesus and his apostles to argue that Jesus did not return in the time frame He predicted (in his own generation)—so He was a false prophet. For example, Albert Schweitzer, the 1952 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for philosophy, in his book, *The Quest of*

the Historical Jesus, made this charge. Bertrand Russell also made such an accusation. Russell was one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century and the Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1950. He published a pamphlet entitled "Why I Am Not a Christian." In the pamphlet he explained that one of the reasons he rejected Christianity was that Jesus failed to return as He promised. Concerning Jesus, Russell wrote:

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. There are a great many texts that prove that . . . and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living.

Jewish and Muslim critics make this charge as well. Consider this attack by the group Jews for Judaism:

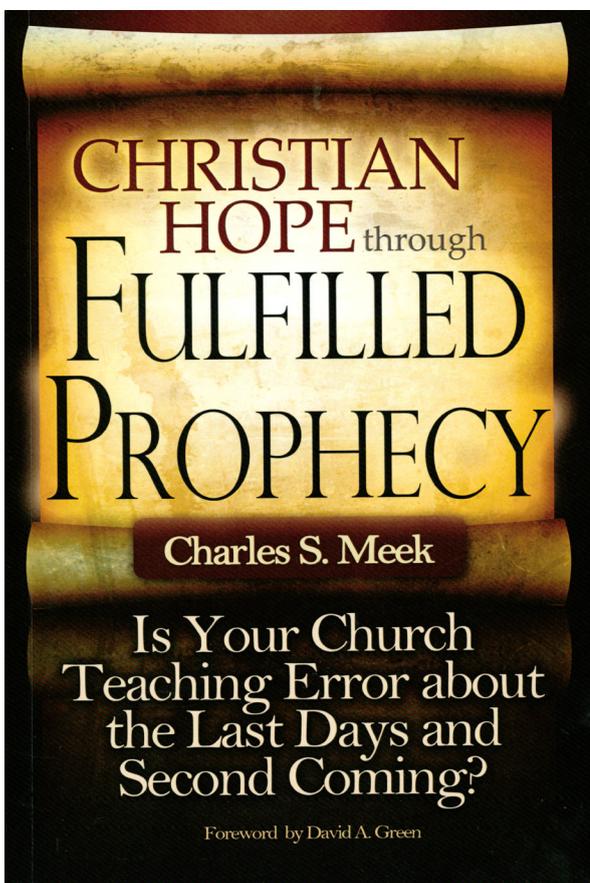
No amount of Christian theological acrobatics will ever solve the problems engendered by the historical reality that a promised imminent fulfillment made two thousand years ago did not occur as expected by the New Testament. Simply stated, Jesus is never coming back, not then, not now, not ever.

The dilemma has tentacles in every direction. It arises with the cults too. Mormons use the notion that Jesus was a false prophet in order to excuse Joseph Smith for *his* wrong prophecies. (Since Jesus was wrong, Joseph Smith can be excused.)

This problem is not trivial. Everything we know about Jesus and his teachings comes from the Bible. It is not our prerogative as Christians to ignore the biblical evidence, and invent a Jesus to suit ourselves. That would be idolatry. We cannot legitimately manufacture our hope from a false set of assumptions; we are limited to understanding Jesus and his teachings as presented in the Bible. Just as importantly, we must not present an unreliable Jesus to the world.

Some readers may suspect that perhaps this is simply about conservative or liberal Christianity, or perhaps over the question of inerrancy. It is not. These are challenges to all professing Christians. This matter is about the authority and divinity of Christ. A Christian cannot legitimately hold to the idea that Jesus was wrong.

These claims by skeptics, non-Christians, and cultists have perhaps been the most persistent attack against the Bible and Jesus that Christians have had to confront. But Christians are willing to just hide their heads in the sand. Adding to the derision are the failed end-times predictions of countless Christians through history. One can find plenty of attacks on the



Continued on page 19

Resurrection

by Ed Stevens

15:45-49 – Paul again emphasizes the fact that there are two different kinds of bodies, and that the *natural* body *precedes* the spiritual. The First Adam was earthy and made of dust, just like we are in our natural bodies. The Last Adam is from heaven and has a heavenly spiritual body, which is the bodily image the saints “*shall bear*” (future tense) after they are raised at the Parousia. Note the future tense here: those saints were not already bearing the image of the heavenly Man while they were still in their earthy (natural) bodies of dust. They did not possess two bodies at the same time. They would not “*put on and bear*” their new heavenly spiritual body *until the Resurrection*. Clearly this heavenly image is referring to a new kind of body that they would receive at the Parousia, one that would enable them to live in heaven with the heavenly Man Christ Jesus. It is interesting here in v. 49 that Paul does not distinguish between the living and the dead in bearing the image of the heavenly Man. *The implication is that both the dead and the living would put on their new heavenly spiritual bodies at the Resurrection event*. This implication becomes explicit in the next five verses.

15:50-54 – Some commentators believe vv. 50-53 are talking about the effect of the Resurrection event upon both groups, the living and the dead. Others think it is mainly a discussion about the *bodily change* of the living that occurs “*in the blink of an eye*” immediately after the dead are raised. It really does not make much difference. Both views have the living and the dead “put on” their new immortal bodies at the resurrection/change event. However, the key points that we must not overlook are the *bodily change of the living*, and *when it occurred*. Note vv. 51-52 in particular. Not all of those saints who were alive at the time Paul wrote (AD 57) would die. Some of them would remain alive until the Last Trump when the dead “*will be raised*” (future tense) and those living saints “*shall be changed*” (future tense). Notice the future tense here for both the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living. They would occur “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*” of the Parousia. This was not an already ongoing process of resurrection and change, but rather a *future* resurrection and change that would occur “*at the last trump*” in concert with the Parousia. This does not fit the *Collective Body View* at all, but it fits perfectly the *Individual Body View* of resurrection and change. We know what the Resurrection did for the dead saints: It raised them out of Hades and put them in heaven with their new immortal bodies. But what about the living saints? What was the bodily “*change*” that the living were to experience at the Parousia? Whatever it was, it was supposed to occur “*at the last trump*” right after the dead were raised (v. 52). Unless we want to stretch out the sounding of the last trump for millennia or for eternity, then it means that the *bodily change* of the living took place in connection with the Resurrection of the dead at the Parousia, and is not ongoing after AD 70. But what was this change of the living? Verses 53-54 explain what it was: It was the “*putting on*” of incorruption and immortality. For the dead, whose bodies were already consumed in corruption, it meant “*putting on*” new bodies of incorruption. For the living that were still wearing their “*flesh and blood*” mortal bodies, it meant “*putting on*” immortality which swallowed up (or *changed*) their mortality into immortality. Paul clarifies this further in his second epistle to the Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-4). Lord willing, in our next article, we will look further at that *bodily change*.

Conclusion: I invite your questions and comments. If you wish more details on the Resurrection of the dead and the change of the living, simply email me (preterist1@preterist.org) and request the .pdf files on “Resurrection and Change.” †

Continued from page 18

Internet against Christians for their falsified predictions.

All of this is detrimental to the Christian faith. If the skeptics are correct, Christianity falls on its face. Indeed, the critics of Christianity from all camps aim to discredit and destroy Christianity. . . .

Uncomfortable? Don't worry. We will thoroughly answer the charges by Christianity's critics in this book. Preterism is the view of eschatology that holds that Jesus was indeed correct. His prophecies were fulfilled in the *manner* He said they would be, and *when* He said they would be—during the generation of those living in the first century. The preterist message is one that restores the credibility of Jesus and God's Word. *This should be a tremendous comfort and re-assurance to Christians—and it sends the skeptics packing.* (pp. 17-20) †

In This Issue:

IBV Resurrection

Resurrection in
1 Corinthians 15

The Great Tribulation

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