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FULFILLED! *Magazine*

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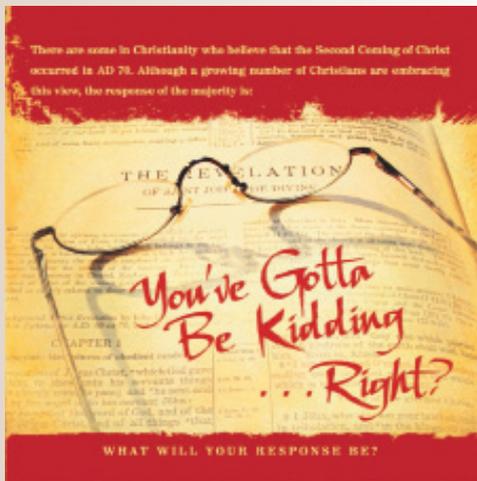
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4. Editor's Note
Please note our new mailing address.

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Editor's Note...

... please note our
new mailing address
on the previous page.

Bill Young's article "How Do We Worship our God in 'Spirit and in Truth'" in the previous issue elicited some fervent responses on both sides of the topic, leading me to remind readers of two things: 1) one of the main purposes of *Fulfilled! Magazine*, and specifically of the "Perspectives" column, is to expose readers to differing views within the preterist community. This allows iron to sharpen iron as we continue to develop our personal systematic theology. Of course, there is always the underlying question of just how tolerant we should be of differing views; should we give space or time to views with which we disagree, or should we shun them from the start? For example, when those nicely dressed individuals knock on your door to share their theology, do you politely turn them away, or do you engage them in discussion? I think that is a personal—not necessarily a "right or wrong"—decision. I tend to engage them because it allows me an opportunity to sharpen my presentation skills of biblical truths and also allows them to expose weaknesses in my theology. Others feel that we should not "waste" our time by engaging every wind of doctrine. Likewise, while I tend to feel that the Truth has nothing to fear from exposure to differing doctrines, others feel that we should be protective of the sheep by being very selective of the doctrine to which they are exposed. While I understand the principle of this concern, I wonder how many of us would have been exposed to preterism if others had screened the doctrines to which we were exposed. Thus, I tend to lean toward exposing readers to the variety of views within (and sometimes outside of) preterism. Now it should be obvious that not all of these differing views can be correct, which leads me to my second point; 2) every issue contains, in the sidebar of the index page, the following disclaimer: "The views expressed here are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or other contributors." I doubt seriously that any issue of *Fulfilled! Magazine* has ever featured two authors who agreed completely on every detail of preterism. Preterism, yes, even full-preterism, is that diverse. While there

are a variety of full-preterist newsletters, blogs, and videos—which I enjoy greatly and are valuable tools for the preterist community—these all, to my knowledge, present their creator's particular flavor of full-preterism. One of the goals of *Fulfilled! Magazine* is to not present a single flavor of full-preterism, but, in an irenic manner, allow readers to sample the different flavors in a single publication.

This segues to this issue's "Perspectives" column. Within full-preterism, the resurrection is arguably the greatest dividing doctrine, with two main competing views: the Covenant/Corporate Body View (CBV) and the Individual Body at Death (IBD) view. In this issue William Bell presents the Covenant/Corporate Body View of resurrection, while Kurt Simmons will present the Individual Body at Death view in the following issue.

You will also find in the pages of *Fulfilled! Magazine* various announcements and ads regarding preterist conferences, services, and materials. I want to remind readers that *Fulfilled! Magazine* prints these as a service to the organizers and suppliers of these items and is not directly involved in the production or distribution of these various items. Please contact the individual promoters rather than *Fulfilled! Magazine* for additional information regarding these items.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your encouraging letters and emails. While I enjoy producing the magazine, sometimes the logistics and lack of time can lead to frustration. God is faithful in that during these times He providentially sends a word of encouragement from one of you to redirect my focus from the frustrating aspects of the magazine to the edifying aspect; knowing the encouragement and blessings received by the readers.

As always, your prayers and financial support are what keep *Fulfilled! Magazine* in publication, and for that we are grateful.

Lastly, please note our new mailing address on the previous page.

Blessings,

Brian

Mailbag...

Received my magazine about a week or so ago. I take time and read each article slowly and concentrate on the subject.

Lorese, MS

Thank you for all that you do to bring the best message we could ever receive to bring peace and truth into our lives. I will be so happy to receive the Fulfilled Covenant Bible.

Dolores, MN

[Note: The Fulfilled Covenant Bible is not available from FCG—see p. 17]

It is great to be staying with my sister and have some conversations regarding the articles in the magazine. It is a great resource for we preterists who do not have much contact with like minds. Thanks to all those who put it together and do the hard work, it is much appreciated and we thank you for it. Our prayers are for you and your team who do such a good job.

Joan, Australia

Thank you so very much for continuing to publish your magazine each quarter. It means very much to many, many people, including my wife and me. I appreciate everything that all of you do for the cause of His truth!

Glenn, NC

Just finished the Spring 2013 edition of *Fulfilled!* Magazine and as always, I enjoyed it very much.

Clint, OH

The Editor's Note in the Spring 2013 edition on how we all develop our own personal theology as we arrive at some different conclusions, at different paces, really hit home. When I see the inspiration of Michael Day and other writers in your magazine with different backgrounds, I am full of joy that our Father let me see that He will open the eyes of whom He will . . . It is truly a blessing to know this!

Carol, PA



... I take time
and read each
article slowly and
concentrate on the
subject.

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Resurrection and the Kingdom

by William Bell, Jr., ThM

In this study we endeavor to demonstrate conclusively that the resurrection body of 1 Corinthians 15 is the covenantal, spiritual, corporate body of the Kingdom of God. If there is one fact taught in 1 Corinthians 15, it is that the resurrection is equated to *inheriting the kingdom*. In other words, the act of resurrection *equals* entrance into the kingdom of God. Consider this simple premise: *For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive* (1 Cor 15:21-22). As we look at those two statements, we can conclude the following:

1. *by man came death = for as in Adam all die*
2. *by Man came the resurrection of the dead = even so in Christ all are made alive.*

This is a simple formula for understanding the resurrection body of 1 Corinthians 15. It is clear that using this process, the concept of an individual body at death (IBD) does not exist in the context. Let us now build on this formula using different verses:

And as we bore the image of the one made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (1 Cor 15:49)

Here, *the image of one made of dust = both by man came death and for as in Adam all die*. Likewise, *bearing the image of the heavenly Man = to be made alive in Christ*, that is, resurrection from the dead. In our third example, we cite the spiritual body:

The body is [being] sown in corruption; it is [being] raised in incorruption. (1 Cor 15:42)

It is [being] sown a natural body, it is [being] raised a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:44)

Again we have *being sown a natural body = for as in Adam all die, by man came death*, and *bearing the image of the one made of dust*. Likewise, *to be sown a spiritual body = resurrection from the dead, being made alive in Christ*, and *to bear the image of the heavenly one*.

Our final point in this line of reasoning is this: *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*. Flesh and blood equates to bearing the image of the earthly, whereas inheriting the kingdom of God equates with the spiritual body and bearing the image of the heavenly. Now, this means that the resurrection body of 1 Corinthians 15 equals *the kingdom of God!*

Where does the Bible ever teach that each of us receives

an *individual kingdom* at death or even in life? Never! For this reason, the Bible could never teach the erroneous concept of an individual resurrection body for the eschatological resurrection. Just as the kingdom of God is a *corporate* body, so is the spiritual body of verse 42. Thus, the corresponding antithetical states of *in Adam* and *in Christ* are corporate bodies referring to opposing covenantal states.

Inherit Multiple Kingdoms or One?

Does the Bible teach that we inherit *multiple individual kingdoms*? Is Christ the head of *one* body and King of *one* kingdom, or of many bodies and many kingdoms? Yes, we understand that Jesus is “*Lord of lords and King of kings*,” but those kingdoms are not His heavenly eschatological kingdom. They are earthly kingdoms and therefore, on those grounds, are not relevant to this discussion.

The IBD view cannot be correct, not only because it contradicts the above, but also because it teaches a fulfillment of the resurrection body that extends beyond AD 70 through individual bodily resurrections at death. In other words, the *eschaton* is not complete and can never be complete as long as there is another individual “kingdom body” to rise upon physical death!

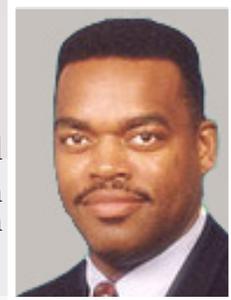
Inherit the Kingdom Prepared From the Foundation of the World

In Matthew 25:34, Jesus calls upon the righteous (many) to inherit “the righteousness” (singular), that is, the one kingdom of God. Now why do we call it “the righteousness”? It is because the Bible calls the kingdom “the righteousness.” The kingdom is certainly the righteousness of God: “*For the kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit*” (Rom 14:17). Thus,

- To enter the “joy” of the Lord means to enter the kingdom.
- To enter the kingdom means to enter the righteousness.
- To enter the righteousness means to enter into life.

Now life is placed over against death and the Law of Moses, which represents a *covenantal state*. “*For if there could have been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the Law.*” (Gal 3:21 [emphasis mine]; cf. 2 Cor 3:6). It is also important to note that Paul desired not to have his own righteousness,

orate/Covenantal Body View (CBV) of resurrection. or the Individual Body at Death (IBD) view.



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that is, an individual righteousness. For the Law said, *the man who does them shall live in them* (Gal 3:12). God offers us not our own righteousness in the kingdom but the righteousness of Christ (Rom 10:4).

Further, the resurrection body (i.e., the kingdom of God) is not an afterthought but rather a part of God's Edenic decree. The promise of Christ, whom we have already acknowledged as the resurrection body of 1 Corinthians 15:22 (cf. John 11:25-26), begins in Genesis 3:15. The seed of the woman is the "Seed" of the kingdom. Just as the Seed (Christ) was prepared, or purposed, before the foundation of the world, the kingdom of God was purposed before the foundation of the world.

That means God never intended for Adam to live forever on earth, but rather in the kingdom, which, being *in* but not *of* this world, transcends the world and is designed for both the living and the dead. Likewise, it must be obvious that Adam never ate of the tree of life. Consequently, Adam never obtained incorruption and immortality, which is only found in Christ (1 Tim 1:17, 6:16).

Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom

It is true the Bible teaches that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. However, we find the kingdom being inherited by those who, biologically speaking, *are flesh and blood!* How is this possible? It is a blatant contradiction if, and only if, we are to understand "flesh and blood" in 1 Corinthians 15:50 as biological cells and DNA. However, that is not what is meant. But before we address that point, let us note that *some were inheriting the kingdom* in the first century. Hebrews 12:28 states, "*Since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*" Several points should be noted here.

First, the Greek word *paralambonontes* (receiving), a present participle, cannot mean individuals receiving their individual kingdoms at separate times. Some have argued that the present passive verbs used in 1 Corinthians 15 refer to individual bodily resurrections throughout the redemptive era, such as with the son of the widow of Nain, Lazarus, and Dorcas.

However, according to Greek authorities, this view cannot be sustained from the Greek language. Such a concept *is not* the meaning expressed in the present passive in 1 Corinthians 15. Rather, the present passive expresses a single progressive action with a beginning and an ending. The action may focus on the beginning, intermediate, or the consummation portions of the action, but the idea is that it is *one progressive continuous action*, not multiple scattered or intermittent actions occurring over time throughout history.

Therefore, the receiving of the kingdom represents one continuous process for the saints, from the inception of their salvation to its consummation. (See the parable in Mark 4:26-29, where the kingdom is shown to be one continuous process of growing from the sowing until the harvest).

Secondly, *receiving* the kingdom equates with *inheriting* the kingdom. They mean one and the same. One who is receiving the kingdom is inheriting the kingdom. One who inherited the kingdom has received it. Can there be an inheriting without receiving? If not, neither can there be a receiving without inheriting.

In Luke 19:12, we read of the nobleman's son who went into a far country to "receive" for himself a kingdom and then return. Although this parable is taken from the historical example of Archelaus, Christ also applies it to Himself. In the parable the Bible clearly teaches that Christ, as Archelaus, inherited the kingdom.

Thirdly, Abraham receives the inheritance. "*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance . . .*" (Heb 11:8)

Lastly, the saints who are receiving the kingdom (an ongoing present action pointing to a consummation) are simultaneously inheriting the kingdom. But these saints are "flesh and blood," biologically speaking. Thus, when "flesh and blood" is made to refer to biology, it forces 1 Corinthians 15 to proclaim the very opposite of these texts, causing the reading of those texts to be diametrically opposed!

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). But biological flesh and blood was **at that very time inheriting the kingdom** (Heb 12:28). How does that work with the IBD view, which takes "flesh and blood" in the Corinthian passage to mean the physical body? To the contrary, not only is "flesh and blood," per Hebrews 12:28, used in the covenantal sense of receiving/inheriting/entering the kingdom of God, the saints began receiving it in advance of the parousia or with a view to its arrival upon the shaking of the Old Covenant "heaven and earth"! This further identifies this transition as covenantal, spiritual, and progressively consummating the eschatological event.

The Meaning of "Flesh and Blood"

In like manner, we are certain that "flesh and blood" in 1 Corinthians 15:50 cannot be interpreted to mean the physical body, but must be understood in a soteriological context. For example, Paul writes in Romans 8:9, "*but you are not in the flesh if the Spirit of God dwells in you.*" Did Paul mean these saints were not biological "flesh and blood"? No, that would be absurd. But he certainly meant they were not flesh and blood in some sense. In what sense, then, were they not "flesh and blood"?

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Resurrection and the Kingdom

by William Bell, Th. D.

Jesus defines the term “flesh and blood” from a covenantal perspective when He states that those born of God are not born of flesh and blood:

*But as many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born, not of **blood**, nor of the will of the **flesh**, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (John 1:12-13; emphasis mine)

Jesus is speaking of becoming a son of God. Sons of God are sons of the resurrection. This is true from the inaugural (Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27), interim (Rom 8:14; Eph 2:5-6), and consummative viewpoints (Luke 20:35). Therefore, Jesus is speaking of the resurrection and says plainly that those who believe in him *are not born of the flesh, or of blood or of the will of man but are born of God*. His words are to be understood in light of His expanded discussion on this point with Nicodemus in John chapter 3:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

Nicodemus asked Jesus directly how could he be physically born again, that is, how could he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born? That would be a flesh and blood birth, but it is not the birth Jesus had in mind. Jesus made it very clear, stating emphatically that Nicodemus and Israel had to be born of the Spirit when He said, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). The observant reader will note that in John 3:3-8 Jesus is speaking of the birth of two respective covenants, i.e., the Old Covenant birth is being contrasted with the New Covenant birth.

This is evident from Jesus’ statement, *“Marvel not that I said to you [soi—singular, meaning Nicodemus], that you [humas—plural, meaning the nation of Israel] must be born again.”* In light of these statements, how can one refer to believers as being in the flesh or being born of “flesh and blood” in their covenantal relationship as sons of God?

Further, from Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus and the text in John 1:11-13, we have the same contextual setting for understanding the term “flesh and blood” as used in the above mentioned texts. It is clearly a contrast between life in the Old Covenant and life in the New Covenant.

When Jesus said He came to His own [Israel], but His own received Him not, He speaks of those under the Law. But, to those who received Him and to whom He gave the authority to become sons of God “not by blood, or by flesh

or by the will of man” (i.e., human power and authority), He is contrasting life under the “flesh and blood” Old Covenant with life under the New Covenant being “born of the Spirit,” for the terms *born of God* and *born of the Spirit* speak to the same reality.

This is the meaning of 1 Corinthians 15; otherwise, we have flagrant contradictions in the Scriptures stating those who biologically speaking were “flesh and blood” *were*, in fact, receiving or inheriting the kingdom. However, having demonstrated by Christ’s own words that “flesh and blood” referred to those under the Old Covenant Law of Moses, it becomes clear that they, as such, cannot inherit the kingdom of God via a ministry of death (2 Cor 3:7).

Who Inherited the Kingdom?

It is obvious that the saints living in the first century were already inheriting the kingdom. Since this is the eschatological action that was consummated fully with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, why is it not the case that these saints were being lifted from the earth in a rapturous escape? Their inheritance of the kingdom, being a progressive action, should mean being progressively raptured, should it not? Do IBD rapture advocates accept such an implication? No.

Moreover, not only did the living saints receive the kingdom, the dead saints also received it. Did they receive a different kingdom from that of the living? Not according to Christ:

“And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 8:11; cf. 21:43; Luke 13:28)

Therefore, the dead saints were to receive the same kingdom/inheritance as the living saints. It is not a separate individual body for each of the living, nor of the “dead ones,” but the very same “one” kingdom of God!

This explains why it was necessary for the “dead ones” of 1 Corinthians 15:35 to die (even after they were physically dead). They died both by virtue of being in Adam and living under the Mosaic Law, neither of which could truly atone for sins. Thus, they were found categorically guilty through their “transgressions of the first covenant.” This is why they remained in Hades at the time Paul wrote. They were “alive to sin” and thus yet held under the power of death through sin and condemnation of the Law, to which Paul refers in Romans 8:21 as the “bondage of corruption.” Hence, Paul, in answering the objections to the resurrection of the “dead ones,” offers the seed analogy in direct response to the questions *“how are the dead ones raised up, and with what body [kingdom] do they come?”*

Also, remember, there were two houses or kingdoms of Israel, a problem which had yet to be resolved by completing the mystery of God. God would make a new covenant, under a new King David, with both the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Ezek 37:15f; Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:7-13).

Returning to Paul's seed analogy regarding the "dead ones," he wrote, "*that which you sow is not made alive unless it dies*" (1 Cor 15:36). This means that in order for the dead to "die to sin" (remember they had already died physically, thus, they could not die that death again) they had to first be sown in Christ. But when did this sowing occur? It could not have occurred at any time prior to Jesus' own death and resurrection, because He is the firstfruits of those that slept (the "dead ones"). Therefore, at some point during Jesus' resurrection, or shortly thereafter, the "dead ones" were sown and began the process of dying to sin. That explains the present passive verbs used for their condition. I would venture to say this process began either on Pentecost or during the time Christ preached to the Spirits in Hades.

The prophet Hosea assures us that God would sow those who were not "his people" and have mercy upon those who had not been objects of God's mercy:

Then I will sow her for Myself and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy. Then I will say to those who were not My people, you are My people! And they shall say, 'You are my God!' (Hosea 2:23)

In Hosea 13:14, God promises to ransom them from the grave (i.e., Sheol/Hades). In Isaiah 26:19, God said:

Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Israel's dwelling in the dust here is their national captivity among the graves of Gentile dominion. This is evident from verse 18:

We have been with child, we have been with pain; we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

The inhabitants of the world were the Gentile rulers who held them captive. At the time, Israel was in Babylonian captivity subject to their captors. Their national deliverance was their "resurrection." When their rulers were punished and defeated, Israel was delivered from death (Isa 26:12-15).

Concerning the Sowing of the Body

Sam Frost, Kurt Simmons, and Ed Stevens all reject the Covenantal Body View of resurrection. Frost attempts to explain why in his book *Why I Left Full Preterism* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, 39-41). Frost recognizes the traditional problem of taking the seed to refer to the human body. He understands, as do we, that this view means the physical body must die in order to be raised. Since one does not bury dead seed, the analogy breaks down unless we literally bury the living saints among the dead so that they may die in order to be raised.

However, rejecting that premise, Frost offers the following as his exegetical solution. He responds that the IBD view and the Covenantal [or Corporate] Body View (CBV) both have the same inherent problem. Naturally, CBV advocates deny such a charge.

Frost argues that the "seed" represents a seed, not the human body. He then claims that the only difference between the traditional (futurist) view and the CBV view is that the definition of "body" is changed from the individual body to the corporate body. Frost claims the corporate body view only changed definitions of what constitutes the seed, but that such view errs in that it takes the seed as referring to the human body. Frost assumes this. CBV advocates *do not* take the seed as referring to the human body. That is Frost's first error.

Frost states correctly that the seed is "given" a body. However, we disagree when he writes, "It itself is not a body in Paul's example." On the contrary, the seed is both—it *is* a body, and it *is given* a new body. That is Paul's point. The seed body that is sown is not the seed body that is raised. The seed is given a new body in resurrection.

Frost goes through several elaborate arguments in an effort to prove that man is not body apart from spirit, and then turns around and argues for that very point in dissecting the germ life of a seed from its outer shell or "body." How ingenious!

So, we ask whether Frost has noticed that, per the text, the dead do not have an immortal, spiritual resurrection body at the time of writing. Paul's rhetorical questions imply that: *How are the dead ones raised up and with what body do they come?* Frost is very familiar with this view, as he argued it correctly in his *Exegetical Essays on the Resurrection*, in which he affirmed the Covenantal Body View.

Now if it was the case that the "dead ones" did not have a body (immortality/incorruption) and they had to be

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Resurrection and the Kingdom

by William Bell, Th. D.

“given” a body (Frost’s own terms), then the dead must be the seed, for it is the seed which is given a body. *“But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body”* (1 Cor 15:38). If not, then the seed sown is *never raised!* That is a huge exegetical problem.

Moreover, it means that if the dead were not yet in the immortal body, they were yet under the power of the mortal body, i.e. Hades, Sin, Law and Death, which clearly stands over against immortality and resurrection in the context (1 Cor 15:55-57).

Frost argues against the IBD view, claiming it teaches transmigration of the soul. Using Frost’s own words, we must judge him for doing the same:

To bring into this a second body entirely unrelated to the soul creates numerous theological problems, not to mention the example of Jesus, who was raised in his self-same body. It also smacks of a transmigration of the soul, leaving one body, and entering into another body. This is entirely foreign to biblical anthropology. (Ibid, 40)

Frost’s problems may be rooted in his attempt to bring anthropology into a discussion of eschatology and soteriology.

Further, Frost admits that the dead were being sown, although he apparently forgets what he writes and claims that the “body” of man is sown (ibid, 40)! Does not this

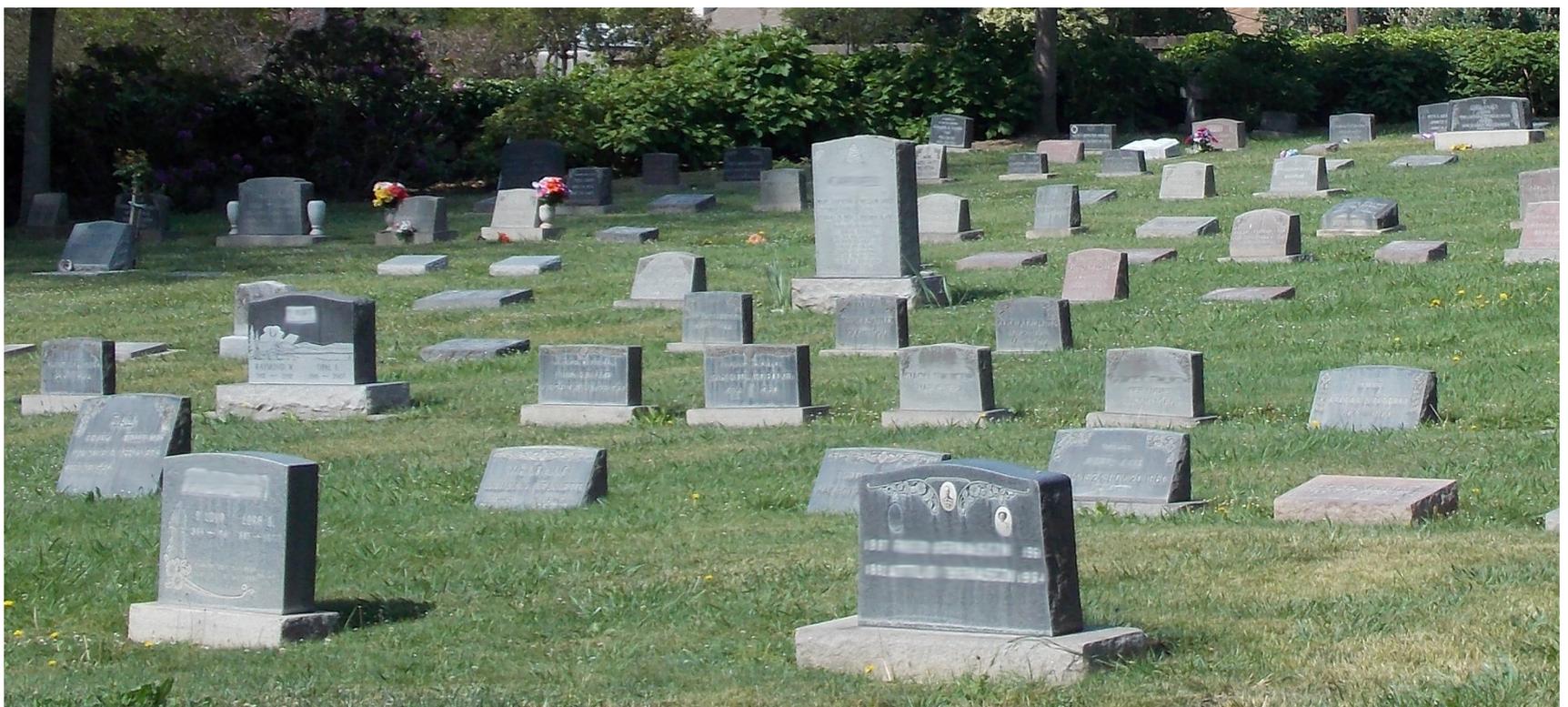
contradict his later statement (ibid, 41) that the “seed” is not a body, but is “given” a body? He has just adopted the very view he attempts to refute and thereby refutes his own position. We appreciate the work he does for us!

Paul wrote *that which you sow is not made alive unless it dies*. Frost states that sowing is death. If the seed is sown, what is it that dies? Is that not the body, per Frost? How, then, can Frost argue that the body is not the seed? He is now sent back to the drawing board to work out the same problem he claims for the traditionalists and IBD adherents, having apparently overlooked the fact that *he* is one of the scholars who teaches that position.

On the other hand, it must follow that the dead are a “type” of seed which is not analogous to the “seed bodies” of men, sun, moon, stars, fishes, or birds, though they all work on the same principle. That is precisely what the text states:

But God gives it [the seed] a body as He pleases, and to each seed [of whatever type] its own body. (1 Cor 15:38; emphasis and brackets mine)

The question then comes back to Frost, why choose the human body at all to talk about resurrection? Why not choose the stars, sun, moon, or fish? To quote Frost, “Sounds a little fishy to me!” Paul’s point is that every “seed body” he mentions in that list from Genesis, including the flesh of man, is an analogy of, and is therefore



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differentiated from, the particular “seed body” he is defining in 1 Corinthians 15. Consequently, *all* of them *must be excluded* since examples are not used to illustrate other examples.

Therefore, the “dead ones” are a “seed body” that required *more death* in order to be made alive. Further, since they were already dead, their souls residing in Hades, they could not die physically or biologically. That means they could not be sown biologically because the sowing is an eschatological and soteriological process.

Who and what determine the sowing? Is it physical death? Is it physical birth? When does the sowing begin? Sowing cannot begin apart from Christ. He is the resurrection. It is only through Him that man can *die to sin* and be raised. Therefore, *it is only through Christ that man can be sown*.

In the parable of the tares, Jesus said, “*The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field*” (Matt 13:24). In the explanation, He reveals that *He* is the sower. “*He answered and said to them: He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man*” (Matt 13:37). Therefore, sowing occurs only through Christ.

Since the dead ones were already physically dead, biological death for the seed is not an option. The “dead ones” had to die to whatever they were held by, which was sin, death, Hades, and condemnation of the Law or the “commandment.” That means they were under covenantal condemnation. In order to arise from that death, they had to *die with Christ*, whose death transformed Him from

the Old Covenant ministrations of death (a death He died by taking upon Himself the sins of the world and being separated from the Father; cf. Matt 27:46; Rom 6:10) to that of the New Covenant life.

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Heb 9:15, NKJV)

I would suggest that the sowing occurred when Christ’s death began to be applied to the saints who were under the first covenant. It is my judgment that, since neither Old nor New Testament saints could be raised apart from the other, their deliverance began at the same time and would likewise consummate at the same time. I would use the same passage (Heb 11:39-40) to establish both points, although I would not insist on a precise beginning point as long as it upheld Christ as the firstfruits.

In Summary

First, we have examined the parallel statements of 1 Corinthians 15 to establish that the soteriological and eschatological equivalent of resurrection is the “kingdom of God.”

Secondly, we argued that the kingdom of God is one body rather than many bodies, and is that divine, heavenly, covenantal body out of the heavens which came down to be with men. It is the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Thus, its provisions of life were for both the living and those who died, enabling all to live forever with God even beyond physical death.

Thirdly, we examined the contextual meaning of “flesh and blood,” demonstrating this terminology in context (1 Cor 15:50; John 1:11-13) to mean life under the Old Covenant. We showed clearly that those who were biologically flesh and blood did in fact inherit/receive the kingdom of God. This totally refutes the IBD and traditionalists’ views that “flesh and blood” in the resurrection context equates with “biology” or is non-covenantal.

Fourthly, we established that both the living saints (Heb 12:28) and the “dead ones” (Matt 8:11) inherited the single eschatological kingdom of God, not multiple individual kingdoms.

Finally, we examined the meaning of sowing the body, the identity of the seed, and the meaning of the seed analogy in the light of the traditionalists’ view. We demonstrated that those views do not align with Paul’s reasoning, and therefore are rejected even by Frost’s own measure. Thus, the CBV is a better solution, is established, and stands as the eschatological resurrection view of choice. †



Creation to Consummation

What Kind of Death?

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)

Every student of God’s Word knows that his theological system must be built on a solid interpretation of Genesis 2-3, or it is just a house of cards. All theology (especially soteriology) must begin where the Bible begins—in Genesis, where *death* first appeared as the ultimate enemy of mankind (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:26).

The way we define the *Death* of Adam in Genesis will determine the way we understand *Resurrection* and *Life* in the New Testament. Therefore, we need to know what kind of death God *threatened* against mankind, and what kind of death they *actually died* on the day they ate the forbidden fruit.

Adam’s Original Condition at Creation

Adam was created neither mortal nor immortal, but with the possibility of becoming either, depending on his obedience to the command God gave him: “From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17). Adam was created *mortal* in the limited sense that he was “able to die,” but not yet *fully mortal* in the sense that he was “subject to death” and “destined to die.” He would only suffer that kind of full mortality when he ate from the forbidden fruit. Nor was he created already *immortal*, because immortality is not something you can lose. Once you have it, you cannot lose it. Adam was “able to sin” and “able to die,” so he was not immortal at his creation.

Our Ultimate Destiny

The *ultimate destiny* of God’s people was always to go to heaven, even before Adam and Eve fell into sin in the Garden. Had they not sinned, they would have retained access to the Tree of Life and not suffered physical death. They would have completed the days of their probationary test in the Garden, and then their bodies would have been “changed” into their immortal forms without experiencing physical death, and then taken to heaven to live with God forever. The translation of Enoch can be seen as similar to what Adam and Eve would have experienced if they had passed the test, but not exactly the same, since Enoch was not sinless and therefore did not get immortality at his translation. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would have been “changed” and taken to heaven without suffering physical death. Here is how the fourth-century church father St. Augustine explained it in his commentary on 2 Corinthians 5:1-4:

If Adam had not sinned, he would NOT have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon (superinvested) with immortality and incorruption, that

his mortal (body) might have been absorbed by life; that is, that he might have passed from his natural body to the spiritual body. [Philip Schaff, ed., *St. Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings* (“On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins,” Bk 1, Ch. 2) NPNF Vol. 5; Accordance electronic ed. 14 vols. New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1886. n.p.]

The Tree of Life and the Probationary Test

God told Adam and Eve that they could “freely eat” (daily) of all the trees in the Garden, including the Tree of Life, except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This implies that they ate from the Tree of Life on a daily or regular basis. Three verses (Gen 2:9; 2:16; 3:2) show that they were allowed to “eat freely” from the Tree of Life every day if they wished. There is nothing here stating or even implying that it was only a one-time eating. Instead, it was the regular eating of it, which would have sustained their physical health and longevity until the probationary test was finished. Unfortunately, they fell into sin long before the testing period was over. Had they remained in the Garden and continued eating from the Tree of Life after they sinned, it would have sustained their physical life forever in a spiritually fallen condition and forever separated from God. That is why they had to be removed from the Garden. That removal would take away their access to the Tree of Life, forcing their bodies to begin the aging process and eventually die.

What Kind of Death Did God Threaten?

Was it physical, spiritual, or eternal death (or some combination of these) that they experienced on the day they ate the forbidden fruit? None of us would deny that they died spiritually (covenantally, relationally, judicially) on that day. Spiritual death meant that unless a sinless redeemer (the sinless Son of Adam and Son of God) died in their place, they would ultimately suffer the Second Death, or eternal death, in the Lake of Fire after the final judgment (Rev 20:14).

Since their physical bodies did not die on the day that they ate, does this mean that physical death was not included in the kind of death threatened by God? It seems obvious from the conversation between Satan and Eve that she understood the threat to be physical death (Gen 3:1-6, 13). From whom did she get that concept? From Adam. From whom did Adam get that concept? From God.

Jesus crushed the serpent’s head by dying physically to atone for Adam and Eve’s (and all the elect’s) sin. His physical death on the Cross as Adam and Eve’s substitute makes little sense if the death threatened against Adam and Eve did not at least include physical death.

St. Augustine, in the same chapter cited above, argues

Death in the Garden of Eden

Studies in Redemptive History

that when God condemned Adam to return to dust, he was not referring to the soul of Adam, but to his physical body. Therefore, the punishment that was threatened and imposed upon them included physical death. All who sin will die physically, including everyone after AD 70, since we all sin like Adam did. The only exception to this *Law of Sin and Death* was that first century generation of “elect” saints who remained alive until the Parousia, at which time their bodies were “changed” from mortal to immortal, and then were “caught up” with the resurrected saints to be with Christ forever afterwards. That generation experienced the very thing that Adam and Eve would have experienced if they had remained faithful to the command that God gave them.

Furthermore, as we will see below, we can know that physical death was included in the threat, because Adam and Eve actually did, in a very significant sense, die physically “on that day.”

How Did They Die Physically “On That Day”?

When God killed a sacrificial lamb to provide skins to cover their nakedness, that sacrificial lamb died *in their place*. They “died with” that lamb *on that day*, and “put on” the skin of that lamb to cover their guilt and shame. They also died spiritually, covenantally, relationally, or judicially in the sense that they were now condemned, separated from God, and *fully mortal* (subject to death and destined to die). Since all humanity existed in the loins of Adam, all humanity “died with Adam” *on that day* (1 Cor 15:22; Rom 5:12-21; cf. Heb 7:9-10). Just as Adam and Eve “died with” the sacrificial lamb that day, we “die with” Christ on the day of our regeneration. Just as they “put on” the skins of the sacrificial lamb, we, in the same way, “put on” Christ

at our conversion, pointing forward to the time when we will “put on” our new immortal bodies that Christ will give us at the time of our physical death.

We can only imagine the horror that gripped the emotions of Adam and Eve as they watched God slay the sacrificial lamb in front of them. They saw the death tremors of that lamb as the blood spurted out of its veins and it died. Adam and Eve “died with” the lamb *on that very day*. They knew that the death the lamb suffered was what they themselves deserved. The innocent lamb died in their place. They were now fully mortal—subject to death and destined to die physically. Their souls would go to Sheol/Hades, and their bodies would return to dust. Centuries later, at the time of the end when the Son of Adam would crush the serpent’s head, God would raise their disembodied souls out of Sheol/Hades and give them new immortal bodies with which to live in heaven.

The skin of the lamb pointed to their new immortal bodies that God would provide through the death of His sacrificial lamb, that “*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*” (John 1:29). God provided the Lamb, His own dear Son, just like He provided the ram to Abraham on Mount Moriah (Gen 22:8). When we “die with” Him and “put on” Christ, we receive the hope of life in heaven with our new immortal bodies patterned after Christ’s immortal body (1 John 3:2). Our old bodies return to dust permanently and God gives us new bodies. The New Testament uses all of this language in reference to Christ, implying that He is the *antitype* that fulfills the original lamb typology in the Garden of Eden, which is again pictured for us in the Apocalypse where Jesus appears before the throne in heaven as “a Lamb standing as if slain” (Rev 5:6). As Jesus hung on the Cross dying, His disciples watched the Lamb die *in their place*. They “died with” Him

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on that day. The words of Adam Clarke sum it up cogently:

[This substitutionary sacrifice of the Lamb of God was] brought about in such a way that Satan and death should have no triumph, when the very first death that took place in the world was an emblem and type of that death which should conquer Satan, destroy his empire, reconcile God to man, convert man to God, sanctify human nature, and prepare it for heaven. [*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, comments on Gen 3:21.]

Conclusion

Whereas death entered the world through the first Adam’s sin, the Last Adam conquered the eternal consequences of that sin and death by sacrificing His physical body in place of ours. It is awesome indeed to see how God “*provided for Himself a Lamb*” to be slain for us. Jesus was that Lamb. We “died with Him” on that day, and “put on” His blood to cover our sin and shame. What a Glorious Savior! What a Great Salvation! †

[Note: “**The Fall of Adam**” is a FREE 36-page paper in .pdf format, which covers all of this in great detail, with scriptural support and quotes from several others who teach the same thing. You can obtain it by sending an email request to preterist1@preterist.org.]

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Objection Overruled!

Old Testament Time Texts

by Don K. Preston

Objection:

Preterists conveniently ignore Old Testament timing verses. Old Testament prophecies with so-called preterist timing expressions clearly require no imminency of fulfillment:

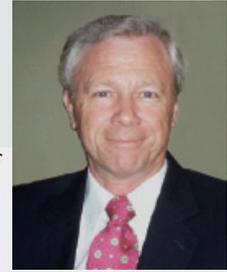
1. If preterists would start at the end of the Bible God wants them to (by the order of books), instead of starting at the other end, they might learn something about Bible interpretation.
2. If preterists would compare the Spirit's words as instructed (1 Cor 2:13), they might learn that their timing texts are prophetic phrases without definite time limitations or meanings.
3. If preterists could leave their agenda and search and submit to scripture, they might learn, for these prophetic examples from the Old Testament scriptures simply and thoroughly refute them.
4. Deuteronomy 4:26-27 threatened Israel's soon destruction and scattering, warning that they would not prolong their days upon the land, though in round numbers the Assyrian dispersion was 800 years away, the Babylonian 1000 years away, and the Roman 1500 years away!
5. Deuteronomy 32:35 used at hand and make haste, but His wrath in due time may take centuries! Paul in Hebrews 10:30-31 used it for the Jews' judgment; see 32:36 also, 1500 years later! Deuteronomy 32 is a general prophecy of 70 A.D., but it came 1500 years earlier!
6. Psalm 68:31 foretold Egypt and Ethiopia soon worshipping God, a prophecy of the times of Messiah in the New Testament, a full millennium away. Compare Acts 2:10 about Egypt, 18:24-28 about Apollos of Egypt, and 8:26-39 about a eunuch of Ethiopia.
7. Isaiah 13:6 described the destruction of Babylon at hand, though the Medes and Persians would not actually fulfill this prophecy for another 200 years (13:17); Isaiah 13:22 saw a much more distant final desolation as near to come and her days shall not be prolonged.
8. Isaiah 21:9 foretold Babylon's fall in the past tense, though the fall was 200 years distant.
9. Isaiah 29:17-18 described in a very little while the regathering from Babylon, at the earliest 200 years distant, or better yet the gospel era of Messiah, though 700 years away!
9. Isaiah 46:13 described Israel's deliverance from their captivity in Babylon by Cyrus as near, not far off, and shall not tarry, though 200 years distant in the future.
10. Isaiah 51:5 described deliverance from Babylon as near and that had gone forth, though 200 years away. If not Babylon, then the gospel, much farther yet! See also Isaiah 56:1.
11. Isaiah 60:22 described great growth of the church by the verses preceding it, which He will hasten, though many centuries in the distant future to the prophet and his audience.
12. Isaiah 63:18 stated Israel possessed the land (1400 yrs) or temple (400 yrs) only a little while! Compared to the promise, it was short. 2000 years is short compared to eternity.
13. Habakkuk 2:3 has a prophecy of an appointed time tarrying and needing to be waited for, but it will not tarry, and it will surely come, to be fulfilled in about 100 years; observe wisely the two different senses of tarry within the same verse . . . it will not tarry too long.
14. Zephaniah 1:7,14,18 described Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon as at hand, near, hasting greatly, and speedy though still 25 years away!
15. Haggai 2:6-7 foretold Christ's first coming as a little while away, yet 400 years distant!
16. Malachi 3:1 prophesied Christ's first coming as suddenly arriving at His temple, 400 years away! Or else we understand this qualitatively of how He came. Compare Revelation 2:5.
17. Jeremiah 48:16 describes Moab's calamity as near to come and hasteth fast, which occurred five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, 23 years distant from the prophecy.
18. See also Deuteronomy 7:4; Psalm 37:10; Isaiah 10:25; Jeremiah 1:10-12; 51:33; Hosea 1:4; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Amos 8:2; Obadiah 1:15.

Dealing with the Time Texts

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Response:

The objection offered against the true preterist paradigm is one of the most ill-informed, illogical, and exegetically flawed objections one will encounter. To speak bluntly, I am appalled at how little actual exegesis is to be found in either the objection or in the verses that are offered to demonstrate that Old Testament time statements supposedly negate the New Testament time statements. One of two things has happened in regard to the author of the article. First, they did not actually read the entire context of the verses to which they appealed. Second, their presuppositional theology prevented them from accepting what the texts actually say. The objector claims:

“If preterists would start at the end of the Bible God wants them to (by the order of books), instead of starting at the other end, they might learn something about Bible interpretation.

If preterists would compare the Spirit’s words as instructed (1 Cor 2:13), they might learn that their timing texts are prophetic phrases without definite time limitations or meanings.”

Space considerations prevent an in-depth examination of each of the texts/objections offered by the objector. However, the texts that are offered can be broken down into two or three classifications or headings and, therefore, to respond to one text within a heading is to respond to all. For further study of the time texts, and an in-depth response to virtually every one of the texts offered by the objector, see my *Can God Tell Time?*, as well as my *Who Is This Babylon?* In the *Babylon* book, I examine and respond to every major argument that I have encountered as an objection to the objective nature of the biblical time statements.

For this present study, let me note that the majority of texts offered by the objector can be assigned to the heading of what I call “Projected Imminence.” What I mean by this is that when the Old Testament writers referred to the last days, they understood that the last days were not the days in which they were living. In fact, they tell us very clearly that the events they speak of were far off. However, what they also say—and this is what the objector has misunderstood—is that when the last days finally arrived, the events they foretold would be *near*, *at hand*, and coming to fulfillment very *soon!*

In other words, when properly understood, every text that objector offers actually teaches that *when* “the last days” arrive the consummation would be *near*. Let me respond to a few examples offered by the objector:

“Deuteronomy 4:26-27 threatened Israel’s soon destruction and scattering, warning that they would not prolong their days upon the land, though in round numbers the Assyrian dispersion was 800 years away, the Babylonian 1000 years away, and the Roman 1500 years away!”

Response: The objector failed to note that the text emphatically speaks of Israel dwelling “a long time in the land.” After they had been in the land *a long time*, when they sinned, it would be *then* (not when Moses wrote but *then*) that they would be dispersed quickly! In other words, judgment would come on them quickly when they apostatized. So, Moses was not speaking of an imminent dispersion. He was speaking of a time *far off*, and events that would lead to an imminent judgment during that far off time. Thus, this text speaks of objective imminence.

“Deuteronomy 32:35 used at hand and make haste, but His wrath in due time may take centuries! Paul in Hebrews 10:30-31 used it for the Jews’ judgment; see 32:36 also, 1500 years later! Deuteronomy 32 is a general prophecy of 70 A.D., but it came 1500 years earlier!”

Response: Just like chapter 4, the Song of Moses spoke of a time and events that were to come many generations later (32:5-8). Why did the objector ignore this qualifying aspect? Moses was clearly told that he was speaking of events that were a long time away! This totally nullifies the objection.

“Isaiah 60:22 described great growth of the church by the verses preceding it, which He will hasten, though many centuries in the distant future to the prophet and his audience.”

Response: Once again, the objector has simply ignored the actual wording of the text. Notice that the Lord predicted the New Jerusalem, and the attendant blessings. But notice also the actual wording of v. 22: “*A little one shall become a thousand, And a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time*” (My emphasis). Notice that YHVH said *in its time* He would hasten

Continued on page 16

OT Time Texts

by Don K. Preston

...continued from page 15

fulfillment. He did not say fulfillment was at hand, or even hastening, when Isaiah wrote!

Historical Errors or Oversights

The objector overlooks, or ignores several historical realities behind some of the texts offered. He claims that Isaiah 13 predicted the fall of Babylon as near, when it was actually 200 years away. He likewise claims that Isaiah 21 foretold the destruction of Babylon as coming soon, when it was hundreds of years away.

Response:

First, Isaiah 21 does not say Babylon's destruction was at hand. The language is proleptic, a prophetic idiom which speaks of future events as if they were past because they were so certain to occur. This is far different from saying those events were near.

Second, the objector ignores the fact that Babylon, in Isaiah's not distant future, was destroyed under Sennacherib when he came against Merodach Baladan in 703-701 BC.

Third, even dispensational authors Walvoord and Zuck admitted that Isaiah 13 spoke of an event that was objectively near:

"Notice that in Isaiah's day that judgment was coming because of the tremendous political turmoil of the next several decades that would culminate with the fall of Babylon at the hands of the Assyrians in 689 BC. . . the statements about the heavenly bodies no longer functioning may figuratively describe the total turnaround of the political structure of the Near East. The same would be true of the heavens trembling and the earth shaking, v. 13, figures of speech suggesting all-encompassing destruction." (Walvoord and Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary Vol. I*, Wheaton, Ill, Victor Books, 1985, 1060)

"The word 'them' against

whom the Medes were stirred up (v. 17) were the Assyrians referred to in v. 14-16, not the Babylonians. It seems better to understand this section as dealing with events pertaining to the Assyrian's sack of Babylon in December 689 BC." (ibid, 1059f)

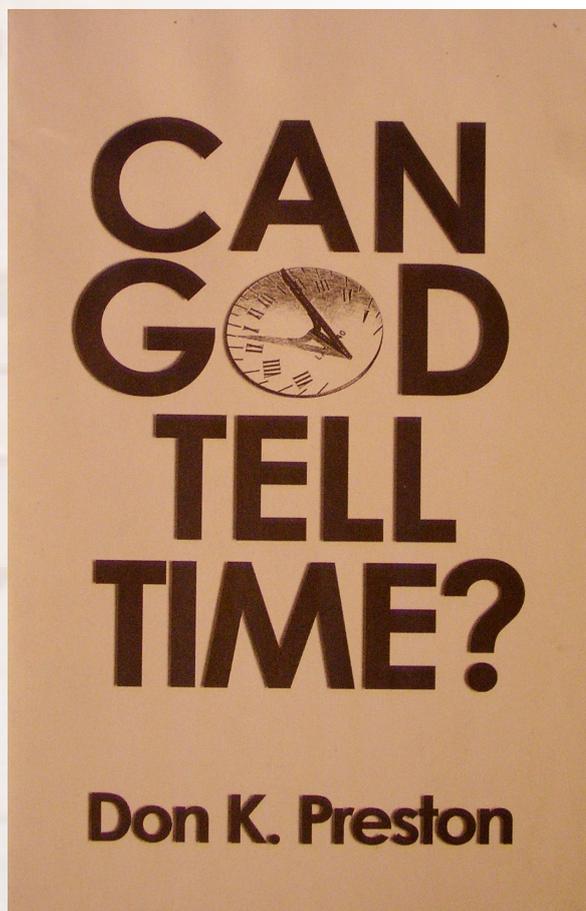
Space forbids further examination of each of the other texts offered by the objector. What we want to do now is present some other facts that the objector conveniently overlooked or ignored.

- We have numerous examples in the Old Testament in which man tried to say that God's time statements meant nothing, objectively speaking, yet God condemned them for doing so (see Ezek 12:21ff for just one example of many)! God said Jerusalem's end at the hands of Babylon was *near, at hand, coming soon*. The Judeans said the end was not near, for which God condemned them (see my *Can God Tell Time?* for additional examples).
- Jesus stated that the Old Testament prophets had foretold events of His day, and those things were in fact being fulfilled in His day (Matt 13:17f). Now, if Jesus stated the Old Testament prophets foretold His day, then any attempt to negate the imminence of the New Testament language is specious, unless we are willing to discredit the authority of Jesus Himself.
- In Luke 21:8, Jesus warned of those who would say "the end has drawn near" prematurely. Now, if the objector is correct, Jesus could not condemn premature pronouncements because, after all, time means nothing. Furthermore, Jesus' own disciples declared, "*the end of all things has drawn near*" (1 Pet 4:17; cf 1 Cor 10:11; 1 John 2:18), meaning, per the objector, they were clearly premature, for the end has not yet come some 2000 years later. Thus, Jesus' own disciples became some of the very false teachers Jesus warned them about!

• Joel prophesied the last days, describing events that would lead up to and signify The Day of The Lord. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter said that the events of Joel's prophecy were present, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (Act 2:16). Nothing could be more clear-cut, or undeniable.

• Peter also said emphatically that when the Old Testament prophets foretold the eschatological consummation, they had foretold "these days," i.e., the days of Peter's first-century generation (Acts 3:19-24).

• Peter said the Old Testament



prophets did not know the time or the manner of the parousia, but that those things were being revealed to the first-century apostles and “*the end of all things has drawn near*” (1 Pet 1:9-11; 4:7). So, while the objector states the Old Testament prophets said the consummation was near, but their time statements meant nothing, Peter flatly contradicts this. Peter wrote that the Old Testament prophets didn’t know when the end was, while the first-century apostles knew the end was for their day!

- Jesus said the Father knew the appointed “*day and the hour*” of His parousia (Matt 24:36). He also said the Father would send the Spirit to reveal “*things to come*” to the disciples (John 17:6-13). It was the Father who revealed to the churches of Asia, “*these things must shortly come to pass*” and “*The [divinely appointed] time is at hand*” (Rev 1:1-3). Now, since it was the Father, who knew “*the day and the hour*” of Christ’s coming, and, since the Father revealed that the time had arrived, then any and all objections to the objective imminence of the parousia when John and the New Testament writers wrote are falsified and overcome.

A final note: Is it not ironic that the objector speaks of “distant” events, and events far off, as objectively expressing long periods of time, but, he refuses to honor the “at hand” nature of the language? In other words, hundreds of years are truly a long time. But, we can distort “at hand” and “quickly” into . . . well, into a long time?

The indisputable fact is that God *can* tell time, and God has always communicated truthfully about time. He condemned men for “elasticizing” and stretching His time statements of imminence into nothingness and protraction. While we have not been able to examine every single text offered by the objector, we have demonstrated the following:

- The objector ignored the wording and context of the offered texts
- The texts, properly understood, actually confirm the

objective imminence of the language

- The objector ignored historical facts which confirm the language of imminence
- Jesus and the New Testament writers explicitly stated that the time foretold by the Old Testament prophets—the last days—was present in the first-century generation
- The Father, who knew “*the day and the hour*” of the parousia, and who had promised to reveal those things through the Spirit, caused all of the New Testament writers to teach an imminent parousia; “*in a very, very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay*” (Heb 10:37)

It is simply wrong, therefore, to deny the objective imminence of the language found in both the Old and New Testaments. When Old Testament writers spoke of things that were *at hand* they were doing one of two things:

1. They were projecting imminence. They spoke of a time many generations and a long time removed from their day, but said that *when* that time arrived, the consummation would be *near* (cf. Joel 2:28; 3:1; note that Joel speaks of events for the last days, and writes “*in those days and at that time*” (3:1). He thus projects himself into the last days, and then writes “*The Day of the Lord is near*” (3:14). The day was not near in Joel’s lifetime, but rather “*in those days, and at that time*,” i.e., when the last days arrived the day would be near. And this is what we find in the New Testament—the predicted time had arrived (Acts 2:15f) and the day was at hand (James 5:6-9).
2. When the Old Testament prophets predicted events to be fulfilled soon, in their day, in their generation, those things were fulfilled shortly, just as the language demanded.

The objector has therefore failed to exercise proper exegesis and correct hermeneutic. He has failed to honor the actual words of the text, and engaged in eisegesis. The Objection is Overruled! †

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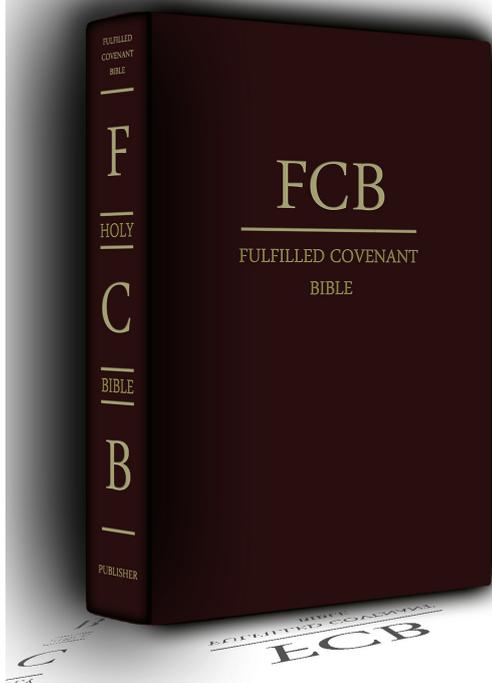
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Preterism 101

The Judgment of Babylon

by Brian L. Martin

In our previous two articles we have examined the biblical use of apocalyptic language—that earth-shaking/heaven-rending metaphoric language the biblical prophets used to describe God coming in judgment and deliverance. We saw that when this language is used in the Old Testament it is not interpreted in a woodenly literal manner. For example, this earth-shaking/heaven-rending language in Isaiah 13 is simply a metaphoric description of God judging Babylon.

If the apocalyptic language associated with judgment in the Old Testament was never meant to be interpreted in a literal manner, Jesus should have told His listeners (and the author of Revelation his readers) that this same apocalyptic language was to now be taken in a literal sense. Consider the Babylon judgment passage from Isaiah, and how closely the language parallels that of Revelation, in the table on the following pages:

Isaiah 13	Revelation
<p>4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle. 5 They come from a far country, From the end of heaven— The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land.</p>	<p>16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.</p> <p>19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.</p>
<p>6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, 8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.</p>	<p>6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"</p> <p>9:6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.</p>
<p>9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.</p>	<p>11:18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.</p>

Apocalyptic language in judgment

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<p>10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.</p>	<p>6:12-13 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.</p>
<p>13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.</p>	<p>6:14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.</p>
<p>15 Everyone who is found will be thrust through, And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.</p>	<p>19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.</p>
<p>19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Go- morrah. 20 It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.</p>	<p>18:21-22 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore." 18:8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day— death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.</p>
<p>21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there. 22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, And her days will not be prolonged.</p>	<p>18:2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!" 18:9-10 The kings of the earth who committed forni- cation and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burn- ing, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come."</p>

A comparison between God's judgment of physical Babylon in Isaiah chapter 13 and His judgment of spiritual Babylon in Revelation reveal amazing similarities. With this in mind, is it so far-fetched to believe that the book of Revelation is nothing more than an extensive prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, written in the established style of Jewish apocalyptic language? (We will develop the premise that the Babylon of Revelation represented apostate Israel of the last days' generation in future articles.) †

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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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Preterism

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