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VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1

FULFILLED!

Magazine

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PRETERISM

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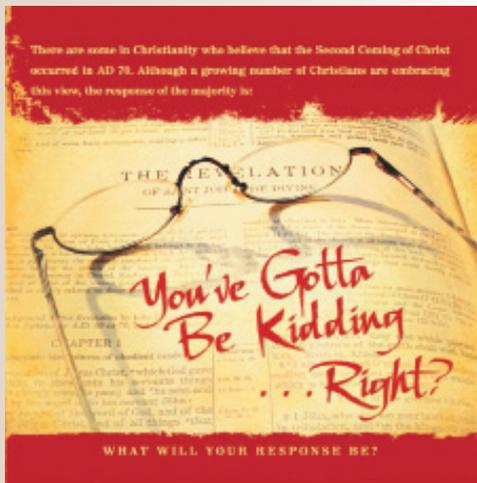
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General Editor
Brian L. Martin

Copy Editors
Mike Beidler
Kayla F. Martin

Design & Layout
Brian L. Martin
Kayla F. Martin

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How to contact us
FULFILLED! Magazine
3784 Camanche Pkwy N.
Ione, CA 95640

fcg.brian@gmail.com

(530) FCG-AD70 [324-2370]
Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

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Editor's Note...

... Truth has nothing to fear from opposing or differing views.

The last six months have been hectic, to say the least. Last spring and summer were fairly consumed by projects on our Napa house so we could put it up for sale. The house sold in September, just in time for me to start a shutdown schedule at work which entailed 12-hour shifts with one day off every fourteen days. (As a reminder, I work at an oil refinery, and when we shutdown a unit it's kind of like a NASCAR pit stop; we clean out the unit and repair everything that can't be done during operation, as quickly as is safely possible. Obviously we aren't running around with air guns and fuel tanks, but, just as the race drive is losing time while in the pit, so the refinery is losing money while the unit is not running.) That left very little time or energy to unpack, let alone work on the magazine. Nevertheless, I still planned on publishing a winter 2013 issue, although I knew it would be late. I was making slow progress until my plans came to halt on Thanksgiving, when what had originally been diagnosed as pink eye turned out to be shingles. That put an end to the winter issue. I returned to work in mid-December and then in January we had another shutdown at work. Thankfully this shutdown was much shorter and easier. Still, that pretty much shot the month of January.

With all of that behind me I'm hoping that I can get back into full-swing with FCG. We still have a number of projects to do at our

new home, but after the first few are completed the remaining projects can be tackled at our leisure.

Over the past several years a number of prominent preterists, many of whom have written for *Fulfilled!* Magazine, have left preterism. In this issue we hear from two of these individuals—John Noë and Brock Hollett. While Brock has abandoned preterism and returned to futurism, John has “left” preterism in the sense that he believes that preterism is merely the eschatological starting point and there is more beyond.

I feel that Truth has nothing to fear from opposing or differing views. If full-preterism is the true, biblical interpretation of eschatology, then it will prevail against all challenges. If full-preterism is not true, biblical eschatology, I want to know—don't you? Obviously, I don't have the time to explore every opposing or differing view within Christianity, nor is that the goal of *Fulfilled!* Magazine. However, when prominent advocates of full-preterism change their views I think that is germane to the content of *Fulfilled!* Magazine. Therefore, I invited John and Brock to share their views with you so that you can have an accurate understanding of what they believe and decide for yourself if you feel either one has found something that full-preterism has missed. While I don't want to influence your decision, let me just say that I see nothing to compel

me to change my view or the direction of *Fulfilled!* Magazine. This is not to say that serious questions and issues have not been raised—they have. Yet it seems to me that these items are better resolved within the context of full-preterism than by changing the context. But again, I'll let you decide.

The preterist community is growing at an increasing rate, as are the resources it produces. Please check out the ads scattered throughout the pages of this issue for

conference announcements, book offers, etc.

We are continually thankful for your prayers, comments, and financial support; without them this magazine wouldn't exist. Some planted, others watered, but it is God who gives the growth. Thanks for being part of the process.

Blessings, *Brian*

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Into and Beyond Preterism

by John Noë, Ph.D.

My immersion into the preterist movement began in 1992, the year after my idealist book, *The Apocalypse Conspiracy*, was published (Wolgemuth & Hyatt / Word, 1991). I was on a book tour in Cincinnati, Ohio, and being interviewed by the main AM radio station. A couple of days later a pastor from the Parkman Road Church of Christ in Warren, Ohio, called me and excitedly exclaimed, “I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Here I am driving through Cincinnati and someone is on WLW talking about preterism!”

“What’s preterism?” I asked.

Shortly thereafter, I dove headlong into preterism—attending conferences, devouring books and magazine articles, and bombarding its authors, speakers, and leaders with questions. I learned a lot, benefited greatly, and ended up writing three (full) preterist books that were published by the International Preterist Association: *Beyond the End Times* (1999), *Shattering the ‘Left Behind’ Delusion* (2000), and *Dead in Their Tracks* (2001).

But then I began to discover that some significant things seemed to be lacking. For one, most preterist authors and speakers (including me at the time) were so focused on exploring and explaining what happened circa AD 70 that we gave little, if any, attention to post AD 70 reality. Also during this time, I started asking tougher and more challenging questions such as: How many comings of Jesus are there—past, present, and future? Why do you call it a “spiritual kingdom” and a “second coming” when Scripture never uses this terminology? How can we do the works of Jesus if the gifts of the Spirit have been withdrawn? And if they are withdrawn, doesn’t that mean that Christ’s kingdom, post AD 70, is different-natured from what Jesus was presenting, teaching, modeling, and conferring? What’s the relevance of the prophecy of Revelation following its fulfillment? What happens to a believer after physical death? And many more.

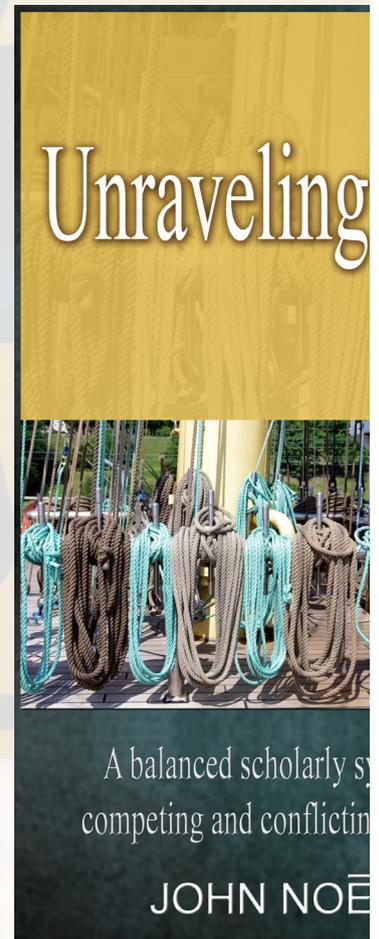
Also during my tenure, I engaged in numerous public and private discussions and debates on these and many other issues. Most were civil. Some were not. But because of the weak, non-scriptural, and/or “I don’t know” responses I kept receiving, I realized I needed to look further and elsewhere. Not surprisingly, some preterists were not pleased with my questions and the direction they felt I was headed. They warned that if I persisted I would lose my standing and influence in the preterist movement. In ways, their warnings have proven prophetic. A few even accused me of “betrayal” and of being guilty of “sending people to

hell.” Nowadays, other preterists, in their defensive zeal, are upset with me as well.

But I was seeking truth wherever it might be found. That’s what drew me into preterism in the first place. That’s also what drew me beyond (full) preterism. (Please note: I did not say “out of” but “beyond.”) I now view preterism as necessary and vital but not sufficient.

So what has been the result of my twenty-some-year quest for truth and understanding in the competitive and divisive field of eschatology? Here are a few highlights.

- In 1994, after being accepted as a member of the Evangelical Theological Society and over the next eleven years, presented sixteen theological papers on issues of eschatological reform at various annual meetings around the country.
- In 1999, publically debated – “Preterist vs. Futurist” – John Noë vs. Dr. Thomas Ice, Executive Director of the Pre-Trib Research Center.
- In 2003, completed and defended my doctorate dissertation. In it, I analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the four major eschatological views of premillennialism, amillennialism, postmillennialism, and preterism and synthesized them into one meaningful, coherent, and cogent view that, in my opinion, is more Christ-honoring, Scripture-authenticating, and faith-validating than any one view in and of itself. My latest book is based on this academic work.
- In 2004, was invited to participate in a study group on eschatology meeting during the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. The group was headed by Grant R. Osborn, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and author of the book *Revelation* (2002), part of Baker Books’ Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series.

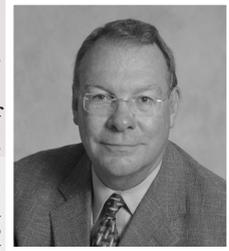


full-preterism. Although John Noë has not abandoned it, he feels preterism doesn't go far enough.

John Noë, Ph.D.

John is President of the *Prophecy Reformation Institute* and publisher of *East2West Press*. He may be reached at:

jnoe@prophecyrefi.org
www.prophecyrefi.org



Toward the end, I was asked to verbally present “An exegetical basis for a preterist-idealist understanding of the Book of Revelation.” My presentation was so well received that Dr. Osborn recommended in front of the entire group that I write up my comments in the form of an article and submit it to the editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* with his recommendation for publication.

- In 2006, that article was published in JETS.
- In 2009, conducted a 13-week seminar series based on my doctoral dissertation at the Madison Park Church of God, Anderson, Indiana. The seminar was titled “Unraveling the End: A Biblical Synthesis of Competing Views.” The sessions were recorded.
- In 2011, founded an independent publishing company, East2West Press. Its slogan is “Pioneering the next reformation.” To date, five new books incorporating my synthesis views and reformational ideas have been released. More are in the works.

- In 2014, asked to present a theological paper on the topic of my latest book at ETS’s Annual Meeting of the Midwest Region in March (pending).

In closing, below is a recap of what I consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the (full) preterist view. This recap is excerpted from the Conclusion of my latest book, *Unraveling the End: A balanced scholarly synthesis of four competing and conflicting end-time views*. I provide similar recaps for the other three views as well. Of course, you may not agree with every item on my list. And there are differences among preterists as there are among proponents of the other three views. I have also been informed that during the past few years some changes have been taking place in some of the weaknesses areas. If that’s so, I am not familiar with them. But, in my opinion, that movement could be in a right direction.

Preterist View

Strengths:

- Fully accepts the natural reading and understanding of eschatological timeframes and New Testament time and imminency statements, including those bracketing the entire prophecy of Revelation.
- Supports the first-century Holy-Spirit-guided expectations as the correct ones.
- Balances literal and figurative language for nature of fulfillment.
- Uses biblical precedent to explain the nature of fulfillment.
- Harmonizes time convergence of Old Testament time prophecies with New Testament time statements and Holy-Spirit-led expectations.
- Recognizes that eschatology is connected to Israel and pertains to the end of the Jewish age.
- Affirms that God has always had only one, continuous, by-faith people.
- Posits a positive worldview, long-term outlook.
- Acknowledges that God’s material creation is without end.
- Answers the liberal/skeptic attack on the Bible and on Christ, effectively.

Weaknesses:

- Positing AD 70 as the time of Christ’s “Second Coming” and “Return.”
- A finality paradigm that limits the comings of Jesus to only two.
- Thus, AD 70 was Christ’s final coming.
- Overly spiritualizes and diminishes the kingdom and resurrection.
- Enormous exegetical and historical burden for documenting fulfillment.
- Lack of attention in writings to the nature of post-AD 70 reality and implications for Christian living.
- Gross cessationism—some preterists advocate the annihilation of Satan, his kingdom, and of demons, and/or the cessation of the operation of angels, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the miraculous charismatic gifts, water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and even the Church itself in AD 70.

I welcome your thoughts and interest. †

Unraveling the End



olarly synthesis of four
onflicting end time views
NOË, Ph.D.

My Journey Into and Out of Full-Preterism

by Brock Hollett, M. Div., D.O.

My attraction to preterism began while studying as a seminary student at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBC). I became disgruntled with many of the traditional interpretations of the so-called “time statements” made by Jesus and His apostles concerning His glorious return. A few years after graduation, I found deep satisfaction with the preterist arguments put forth by scholars N. T. Wright, R. T. France, R. C. Sproul, Kenneth Gentry, Gary DeMar, and others. Unlike the positions of the pejoratively labeled “futurists,” the preterist paradigm seemed to “make sense.”

During the years that followed, my search for a more consistent hermeneutic caused me to sink progressively deeper into the sands of full-preterism. I became the leader and teacher of *Fulfilled Life*, a full-preterist church in Independence, Missouri. I defended preterism as the host of a weekly radio program on Larry Siegle’s *Covenant Key FM*. By 2013 I had finished writing my second book defending full-preterism and was scheduled to speak at Don Preston’s 2013 Preterist Pilgrim Weekend in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

I had long recognized that full-preterism (by definition!) posited that the resurrection of the dead and Judgment Day had already taken place. However, I experienced an emerging awareness of the necessary implications of this eschatological position. One such implication is that “the blessed hope” of resurrection was reserved only for believers who lived prior to AD 70. Full-preterists who espouse Ed Stevens’ “Individual Body at Death” (IBD) position argue that modern Christians will never be resurrected because the resurrection was a singular event of disembodied souls being raised out of Sheol-Hades in AD 70. This amounts to no less than a “transmigration of the soul” reminiscent of Gnosticism, Manichaeism, and Neo-Platonism.

Other full-preterists have conceded the point altogether by embracing Max King’s “Collective Body View” (CBV). They contend that the resurrection was never concerned with individual bodies nor with the afterlife, but with a supposed transformation of the Church out of the dead carcass of Judaism in AD 70. Both camps suffer the same fate. First, they deny that the resurrection is about the rising of individual physical bodies from the tombs and graves. Secondly, they must admit that the Bible never explicitly addresses the issue of the afterlife for Christians who live beyond AD 70 (including you and me!).

I slowly began to see the “handwriting on the wall.” Full-preterism unwittingly dismantles the theological guardrails that the Lord intended to preserve our most holy faith. Nevertheless, I continued to argue the full-preterist position that the resurrection, judgment, and rewards prophesied in the Bible pointed to events that were fulfilled no later than AD

70. Consequently, my own hope of a future inheritance and a glorious afterlife was based upon mere inference and deductive speculation, having no clear prophetic expectation in Scripture. It was no wonder many full-preterists were embracing Max King’s universalism and why others felt threatened by Rivers of Eden’s theology of “no salvation beyond AD 70”!

I discovered that the same “theology of inference” that had brought me into full-preterism could also be used to arrive at many bizarre eschatological positions. We had reasoned that Satan could no longer tempt people because, after all, he has been in the Lake of Fire since AD 70. I joined in preterist speculations about the possibility that the Law, sin, death, and hell could not exist in our post-AD 70 “new heavens and a new earth.” I wondered about our mandate to preach the gospel throughout the world if the Great Commission has been fulfilled. I found it increasingly difficult to divorce my eschatology from its negative moral implications since the future Day of the Lord is the primary *raison d’être* for godly living in the present age (2 Pet 3:11; Matt 25:31-46; Col 1:22-23; 1 Thess 5:23-24; 2 Thess 1:6-10, 12). Had full-preterism hijacked the moral imperative of the gospel?

I started noticing other “cracks” in full-preterism’s foundation. For instance, our affirmation that physical bodies could never “inherit the kingdom of God” (a misreading of 1 Cor 15:50) meant a necessary denial that the resurrected God-man had ascended into heaven (contra Col 2:9 and 1 Tim 2:5). This is a tacit denial of the hypostasis and eternal Incarnation of the Son of God! Something also seemed amiss with the idea that Christ Jesus is no longer making intercession for us as our human high priest (Heb 2:17).

I wrestled with many other questions. Why had full-preterism given birth to so many self-appointed teachers “without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions” (1 Tim 1:7)? Why was the movement characterized by so many foolish controversies and quarrels? The Lord Jesus warned that “a healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit” (Matt 7:18), but I saw nothing in full-preterism except a few withered figs.

I was thrilled when I received the



ave abandoned full-preterism. Brock Hollett, who has
ine in the past, explains why he left full-preterism.

Brock D. Hollett, M. Div, D.O., has earned a Master of Divinity from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBC) and has taken two years of PhD coursework in religion at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. He may be reached at: brockhollet@yahoo.com



first shipment of my book *Let No Man Separate: how partial preterists divide Scripture*. The day before I had planned to ship the first 100 copies of my book, I was heavily engaged in a comprehensive study of the biblical doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. After visiting with Ed Stevens at some length regarding my concerns, I had resolved to examine every resurrection passage of Scripture while seeking to answer two questions: What dies? What rises?

During this survey of the Scriptures, the Lord moved in my heart in a way that surprised me. He convicted me with power and full conviction of the Spirit that the resurrection from the dead is concerned with God raising dead bodies from the tombs and graves!

“Your dead shall live; their bodies [“corpses” in LXX] shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! . . . The earth will give birth to the dead . . . the Lord is coming out from his place . . . The earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain” (Isa 26:19, 21).

Alluding to Isaiah’s prophecy, Daniel wrote, *“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”* (Dan 12:2). This resurrection was anticipated by the preservation of Joseph’s bones (Exod 13:19; Acts 7:1; Heb 11:22) and was foreshadowed in the raising of corpses in the lifetime of Elisha (2 Kings 4:20, 32-37; 13:21).

Our Lord and His apostles likewise expected the rising, revivification, and transformation of our dead bodies. The Lord Himself demonstrated this power by raising Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-43), the widow’s son (Luke 7:11-17), and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). The body of Jesus had flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), as did the corpses that emerged from the tombs and appeared in Jerusalem (Matt 27:51-53). Likewise, the Spirit will redeem and *“give life to your mortal bodies”* and glorify us (Rom 8:11, 17-25, 30; 1 Cor 6:13-15), and the Lord *“will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body”* (Phil 3:21). An ontological continuity exists between the body that dies and rises again (1 Cor 15:43-44). The apostle John saw that the dead bodies of the two witnesses will stand up *“on their feet”* before ascending into

heaven (Rev 11:8-11). In addition, New Testament scholars agree that all Jews and Christians in antiquity believed that resurrection meant the rising and transformation of corpses!

This biblical doctrine of resurrection confronted my full-preterism directly and left no room for compromise. I concluded that I had been deceived and had deceived others in my ignorance. By rejecting a good conscience, I had *“made shipwreck of the faith”* and embraced a form of the Hymenaeian heresy.

“But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.” (2 Tim 2:17-18; cf. 1 Tim 1:18-20).

“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way.” (2 Thess 2:1-3).

My entire preterist paradigm fell like a proverbial house of cards. I prayed to the Lord for mercy and He faithfully restored my confidence that He was again guiding me *“into all the truth.”*

I soon met some godly Christian brothers who patiently taught me that the so-called *“time texts”* touted by preterists contain a mystery, a divine enigma concerning the *“already-but-not-yet”* nature of God’s Kingdom (see www.themysteryofisrael.org). God’s everlasting covenant with an unrepentant Israel has resulted in many cycles of blessings and curses. One cycle led to the destruction of the nation of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple in AD 70. This *“already-but-not-yet”* judgment upon a *“last days”* generation divinely foreshadowed the final desolation of Jerusalem that will occur upon the generation living at the End. This is seen in the Olivet Discourse by Jesus’ (1) deliberate use of versatile language (i.e. *“can be read either way”*) (2) indications of a delay and the unknowability of the timing of fulfillment and (3) the non-fulfillment of many details of the prophecies (*“the abomination spoken of by Daniel,”* the return of Jesus, etc.).

Why should we seek out a mystery? I learned that the Lord intends to reveal His deep and hidden mysteries to babes (Deut 29:29; Isa 28: 9-10; Matt 11:25; 13:11; Luke 8:10; 10:21; 1 Pet 1:10-11). The result is that those who operate in the flesh and embrace an academic approach to Scripture apart from the revelation of the Spirit will receive strong delusions. Yet those given prophetic insight will understand the things concerning the time of the End (Dan 11:33; 12:10). God has mysteriously *“hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* in Christ so that *“no one may delude you with plausible*

Continued on page 10



Journey from Preterism

by Brock D. Hollett

...continued from page 9

arguments” (Col 2:2-4). The gospel itself is “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” (2 Cor 2:6) with which God intends to “destroy the wisdom of the wise” by choosing “what is foolish . . . so that no human being might boast” (1 Cor 1:19, 27, 29).

As a full-preterist, I had stumbled over the mysteries and joined Muslims, traditional Jews, secular atheists, and their ilk by *scoffing* at Christians when they proclaimed that our risen Lord will return very soon. Now I realize that those without eternity in their hearts cannot see that “the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness” (2 Pet 3:9). An unexpected delay is an important theme in the Bible (Dan 9:27-28; Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6-7) and is one reason why Israel missed the twofold advent of the Messiah.

My exodus from preterism led me to freshly engage in the tedious process of rediscovering futurist eschatology. My initial interest with preterism had largely been a reaction to the unbiblical excesses of Dispensational Premillennialism (Darbyism). I had never thoroughly evaluated the nuanced, biblical basis for Historic Premillennialism, the eschatological position embraced by most of the Early Church Fathers prior to the introduction of St. Augustine’s a-millennialism.

“The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgement [sic]. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius, while Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius (as afterwards Jerome and Augustine) opposed it.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*)

A few of the Ante-Nicene Fathers such as Origen and Eusebius taught an allegorizing hermeneutic of the Scriptures, especially as it pertained to the Prophets. They rejected a literal hermeneutic that saw a future redemption of “the natural branches” of Israel at the return of Jesus followed by a literal 1,000-year millennial reign. Such men had preteristic tendencies as evidenced by their comments about the Olivet Discourse and other prophetic passages.

I had embraced the dangerous allegorizing hermeneutic of preterism. The result was an overt denial of the message of the Prophets that the Kingdom of God will be fully established

“on earth as it is in heaven” (e.g. Psa 22:27-31; 72:8-11; Isa 11:9; Zech 14:8; Col 1:20; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 5:10; 20:3). This hermeneutic denies that the Lord’s feet will stand on the Mount of Olives when he returns (Zech 14:3-5; cf. Acts 1:9-11) and it ignores the plethora of precise geographical details and dimensions of the Kingdom found throughout the prophetic corpus (e.g. Psa 105:8-11; Isa 2:2-5; Eze 40-48; Zech 14:3-5, 8-11).

My preterism also betrayed a sledgehammer subtlety of anti-semitism. We had become “wise in our own sight” and denied the mystery that the “partial hardening” of the Jews (Isa 6:9-13; 10:20-23) would one day give way to a national lamentation and repentance that will result in the salvation of “all Israel,” including the entire surviving remnant of the nation (Deut 4:30-31; 32:36; Isa 4:2-3; Zech 8:18-22; 13:2-3; Matt 23:39; Rom 11:5-32 especially vv. 25-29). Was this not the same “mystery of lawlessness” that led “the rulers of this age” in their vain attempts to annihilate the Jews? We rejected the notion that the Lord will return in glory to destroy all the nations that seek to destroy the Land of Israel:

“And I [the LORD] will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” (Zech 12:10).

I believe that God turned me over to a season of reprobation into full-preterism because I did not submit to the governing authorities that he has placed in the Church for our benefit (Heb 13:17; 1 Thess 5:12; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11). My overt rejection of the Lord’s spiritual gifts naturally led to a denial of the gift of “pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:7-14). I used Christian “persecution” against my preterism as an excuse for rejecting community in God’s church—“the pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). I had reasoned that the consistent testimony of the historic church could not be trusted since it had not taught that the Lord returned in AD 70. This degenerated into a denial of God’s loving desire to restrain wickedness even in the supposed absence of Satan.

I consider myself to be a work in progress and my journey to understand the hidden things of God is ongoing. My prayer is that we will follow the God of Israel wherever He leads us and courageously obey Him with humble hearts even if it means admitting we were wrong. ✠



In his commentary on *Hebrews*, M. L. Andreasen provides a strong case for dating the book of Hebrews before AD 70 by properly applying audience relevance. Yet even though he states that the fall of Jerusalem was the *supreme event* in Israel's history, and to the Jewish mind comparable to "the end of all things," this Seventh-day Adventist author was still looking for a future Second Coming and end of all things.

Some critics summarily dispose of the arguments for Paul's authorship of Hebrews by the simple assertion that the epistle was written not before but after the fall of Jerusalem, sometime in the nineties or even later. It is, of course, clear that if Hebrews were written that late, Paul could not be its author; for he died in the sixties. The date of the composition of the epistle therefore becomes important.

There are several reasons why a late date cannot be accepted. We give three.

It would be most strange if in a treatise dealing with abolition of the Levitical ordinances no mention whatever should be made of the destruction of the temple if this already had taken place. Not only was the fall of Jerusalem an important event in the history of Israel—it was the *supreme event*, in their minds comparable to the end of all things. That a writer should deal with the temple and yet make no reference to its destruction if it were already in ruins is incredible.

This becomes more evident as we consider that the author neglected one of the strongest arguments for his position by failing to make mention of such destruction if it had already taken place. If he could show that not only did God *intend* to abrogate the ceremonial ordinances but that they *were already effectively abolished* by the destruction of the temple, he would have had an unanswerable argument. Also, if at the time of the writing of the epistle the temple lay in ruins and Israel were scattered to the ends of the earth, the author would certainly not fail to mention this and show that God's displeasure had been signally demonstrated. He would thus buttress his argument for a new priesthood in place of that which had already ceased to function. The whole argument of the epistle would have taken a different direction, culminating in the indisputable fact that God had already destroyed their temple and scattered the people. It cannot be believed that an author of the standing of the writer of Hebrews would have omitted this most potent argument.

The second reason for our belief that Hebrews was written before the destruction of Jerusalem is found in the fact that the temple services are mentioned in Hebrews as still being carried on. A few illustrations out of many will suffice for our purpose. "The law *maketh* men high priests," can only refer to a present situation. (Heb. 7:28.) Had the author been looking back on a discarded practice he would have said, "The law *made* men high priests." Again, "There *are* priests that offer," would have been changed to "There *were* priests that offered." (Heb 8:4.) "Who *serve* unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" would become "Who *served*." The author observes that Christ "*suffered*" without the gate, while in the same connection he says that the blood of beasts "*is brought into the sanctuary*," and the bodies "*are burned* without the

camp." (Heb. 13:11, 12.) Christ's suffering is put in the past tense; the ministry of blood and the disposition of sacrifice are put in the present tense. This is explicable only on the ground of Hebrews' being written before AD 70.

Still another argument concerns itself with the change of viewpoint in regard to ceremonial observances that came to the believers in Jerusalem before the fall of the city. At the time of Paul's last visit there were "many thousands of Jews" in the church. (Acts 21:20.) We do not know how many "many thousands" are, but two or three thousand cannot be considered "many thousands." Besides the common people there were "a great company of priests," and also "Pharisees which believed." (Acts 6:7; 15:5.) These were "all zealous of the law," so much so that Paul had to bow to their mandate and observe an obsolete ordinance. (Acts 21:26.) This shows that they still taught that "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1.) These many thousands of believers were scattered everywhere at the time of the fall of the city, and it might reasonably be expected that, if they at that time still believed there was not salvation without circumcision, wherever they went they would carry their convictions with them; and being zealous of the law would create division and dissension in all the churches, and thus split Christendom.

But nothing of this kind took place. There was no division. Christendom was not split into Jewish and Gentile sections. There was only *one* church, and that church was not a circumcision church. Something had happened to the Jewish believers and zealots of the law, and that something must have taken place before AD 70. The appearance of the book of Hebrews gives the only reasonable solution.

Historians of the early church are under obligation to account for the sudden change in viewpoint of the Jerusalem church between the time of Paul's visit in the early sixties and the fall of the city in the year AD 70. A few years only intervened between the time of their zealous regard for the law and their turning to true apostolic Christianity. This miraculous change must have had a background. The only sufficient cause of which we know is the appearance of the epistle to the Hebrews. Those who believe in a late date for Hebrews are under obligation to produce their reasons for the preservation of the doctrinal unity of the church in view of the strong and ardent adherence to Jewish ceremonies of the Jerusalem church immediately before the fall of the city, and the opposite viewpoint held by the Pauline churches. The appearance of the book of Hebrews at precisely this time accounts for all the facts and we know of no other efficient cause. †

The Book of Hebrews, M. L. Andreasen, pp. 39-42

Creation to Consummation

The Change of the Living

by Ed Stevens

“... *the dead will be raised incorruptible . . . we shall be changed.*” (1 Cor 15:52-54 NKJV)

Of the various resurrection texts in Scripture, there are four which many of us find “difficult” to understand: 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Philippians 3:21; and 1 John 3:2. Most commentaries say these Scriptures describe *some kind of change* that occurred to *living saints* at the Parousia. But what was this *change*? According to these four biblical texts, this change or transformation into “being like Him” had the following four characteristics: (1) it was a *bodily* change; (2) it was for *living saints only* (not for dead saints); (3) it was for *individual* saints only (not for a collective body); and (4) it occurred only *at the Parousia*, not before or afterwards. Let’s examine the Scriptural support for these four characteristics. Note especially the words boldfaced and added in brackets in the biblical text quotes:

Bodily Change

- “. . . *the dead will be **raised** incorruptible . . . we shall be **changed***” (1 Cor 15:52-54 NKJV). Paul wrote that the dead saints were to be “raised incorruptible,” meaning that they “put on” their new incorruptible bodies when they were raised out of Hades at the Parousia. The living saints (Paul’s *we*) “put on” incorruption and immortality at that same time, which *changed* their corruptible mortal bodies into incorruptible immortal bodies. Thus, both the resurrected dead and the changed living saints had their new immortal bodies after the resurrection/change event. This was a *bodily* change.
- “. . . *not that we want to put off the body [the clothing of the spirit], but rather that we would be **further clothed** [or *clothed over*]*” (2 Cor 5:4 Amplified). Note the boldfaced words *further clothed* (Gk *epi-endo*). The commentaries say this word means putting on new garments *over the top of* the old, without taking the old ones off first. Immortality was put on *over the top of* their individual mortal bodies, so that their mortality was “swallowed up” (or *changed*) into immortality. Their old mortal bodies were changed into new immortal bodies. This was an individual bodily change, not merely a spiritual or covenantal status change of a collective body.
- “. . . *who will transform **our lowly body** that it may*

be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil 3:21 NKJV). Since “His glorious body” refers to Jesus’ individual body, it implies that “our lowly body” refers to the individual bodies of saints as well. This was clearly an individual *bodily* change, not merely a spiritual or covenantal status change of a collective body. There is a free PDF article available, titled “**our body**,” which provides detailed grammatical analysis of this verse in its context to show that Paul is talking about individual *bodies* being changed. Simply request it by email and we will send it as an attachment (preterist1@preterist.org).

- “. . . *it has not appeared as yet **what we will be**. We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him**, because we will **see Him just as He is***” (1 John 3:2 NASB95). Here John implies the change to be *bodily* when he writes “what we will be,” “we will be like Him,” and “see Him just as He is.” That is *body* language, and harmonizes perfectly with the *body* language in the three previous texts. They would see Christ’s individual body, and have their individual bodies changed to “be like” His glorious immortal body.

Most commentaries describe Scriptures describing *of change* that occurred to *saints* at the Parousia. Was this *change*?

Living Saints Only

- “. . . *we shall **not all sleep** . . . **the dead will be raised . . . we shall be **changed*****” (1 Cor 15:51-52 NKJV). The “we” here refers only to those saints who would remain alive at the time of the Parousia. We know this because of Paul’s contrast between the disembodied dead who would be *raised*, versus the living “we” who would have their bodies *changed*.
- “. . . *while we are **still in this tent** [our physical bodies], we groan . . . **not that we want to put off the body** [the clothing of the spirit], but rather that we would be **further clothed** [or *clothed over*]*” (2 Cor 5:4 Amplified). This builds upon what Paul had said in his first epistle (see above), and clarifies it further. Those saints who were “still in this tent” (their individual physical bodies) at the Parousia would not have to “put off” their bodies (die), but would instead be “further clothed” or clothed upon with

The Change of the Living

Studies in Redemptive History

Edward E. Stevens

Ed is President of the
*International Preterist
Association*

email: preterist1@preterist.org
website: www.preterist.org



immortality (or life), so that their individual *mortal* bodies were changed into individual *immortal* bodies. The dead were disembodied, so they had no bodies to be changed. So the dead were raised out of Hades and “put on” their new immortal bodies. But the living saints still had their mortal bodies, which required a change before they could go to heaven to be with Christ at the Parousia. So it was only those *living saints* who had immortality “clothed over” their existing individual mortal bodies.

mentaries say these describe some kind of change that occurred to living saints at the Parousia. But what change?

• “. . . *we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body*” (Phil 3:20-21 NKJV). The bodily transformation

happened to those who were eagerly waiting (while still alive) until the return of Christ. The dead, unlike the living, had no bodies to be transformed. Therefore, this bodily transformation happened to living saints only.

• “. . . *when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is*” (1 John 3:2 NASB95). Note the boldfaced words. When Christ appeared at His Parousia (1 John 2:28), those living saints saw Christ in His glorious individual body, and their individual bodies were changed to “be like” His glorious body. This bodily

change occurred to *living saints* only.

Individual Bodies—Not Collective

- “. . . *Beloved, now we [each] are children of God, . . . what we [each] will be . . . when He appears, we [each] will be like Him, because we [each] will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*” (1 John 3:2-3 NASB95). Here in verse two are four more references to “we.” Each of the “we” was a child of God, who would each see Christ at His parousia and be changed to “be like Him.” If it was talking about a collective body, it would say that the “we” were one singular “child of God,” not a bunch of individual “children of God.” Furthermore, a look at the next verse (1 John 3:3) clearly shows that John has individual saints in mind when he refers to them as “everyone” and “himself.” Each of those individual saints, *everyone* of them remaining alive at the time of the Parousia, had “this hope” of seeing Christ and being changed to “be like Him.” And that hope motivated *everyone* of those individual saints to purify *himself*. John was not talking about a collective hope causing a collective body to purify itself.
- “. . . *we [living saints] shall not all sleep [die], but we [who remain alive at the Parousia] shall all be changed . . . the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we [living saints] shall be changed*” (1 Cor 15:51-52 NKJV). This is

talking about individual *dead* saints who were *raised* out of Hades, and individual *living* saints who were *changed*—not about a collective body of saints being raised and changed. There is a contrast here between “the dead” being raised versus “we” (the living saints) being changed. Which one of those two groups of saints is the collective body? Obviously neither! Instead it is simply talking about individual dead saints being *raised* and individual living saints being *changed*. The three references to “we” (1 Cor 15:51-52) are talking about the living saints who remained alive until the Parousia. Each of those “we” who remained alive until the Parousia had their individual bodies “changed” from mortal to immortal without having to experience physical death. The dead saints were “raised incorruptible” out of Hades, while the living saints had their mortal bodies “changed” to immortal bodies by “putting on” incorruption and immortality at the Parousia.

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Objection Overruled!

After AD 70: What Now?

by Don K. Preston

Objection To Preterism: Preterism leaves nothing for believers today

Traditional futurist eschatologies have a mixed bag of theological concepts about what will supposedly take place after the end of the age. Some, mostly amillennialists, believe in the end of the space-time continuum and the resulting destruction of the physical universe. At that point, when all of the righteous are in heaven and the wicked are in hell, time and history come to an end. This was the view I once held.

On the other end of the spectrum is the idea that at the end of the age the earth/universe will undergo a radical renovation. The righteous of the ages will be physically resurrected from the dead and live on this “restored” earth. (This was the view espoused by Joel McDurmon in our formal debate [July, 2012], and by Harold Eberle, [November, 2013]. The McDurmon debate book and DVDs of both discussions are now available from me).

In the preterist community there seems to be a bit of confusion and, might I say, error, in regard to what occurred in AD 70 at the parousia of Christ. Some, taking what I personally consider to be a faith destroying position, affirm that everything came to an end in AD 70, and consequently, there is nothing for believers today.

I believe this view is misguided and based on false concepts, i.e. that the end has to be the end of *everything*. The end, in this view, could not be the end of one system and the full establishment of God’s eternal New Creation. For some reason, it is held by some that in the New Creation there is no real “human history” per se, wherein man has responsibility toward God. There is no such thing as sin, death, faith, or evangelism. While a great deal could be said on this, and will be in the future, this initial article will focus on just a few concepts that will hopefully provide food for thought, as well as reassurance that the body of Christ still has a function and a purpose beyond AD 70, and that that purpose and function will never end.

One Hope—God’s Eternal Purpose

To determine what was to happen at “the end” we must go back to the beginning. Consider that man was on earth, in historical time, in a mortal human body (from the *dust*) subject to biological death, and in that condition he was *in fellowship with God*. Note that he

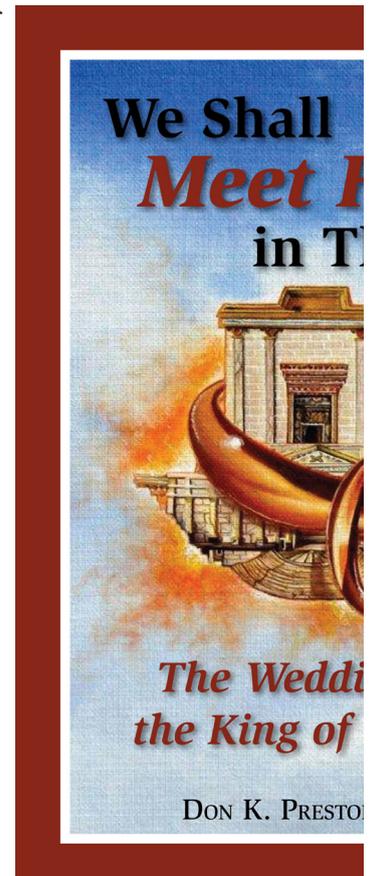
was “eating and drinking” while in the Garden, for YHWH told him to eat freely of every tree except one. Note also that Adam and Eve, prior to sin, were given the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:27-28). So, the natural human, biological, and relational functions were undeniably at work in Adam’s body prior to sin.

I fully understand that many deny that man was created mortal, already subject to biological death, prior to sin. In support of this view, I have heard it argued that man was not in any kind of “spiritual fellowship” with God in the Garden, and that he did not die “spiritually” or even covenantally the day he sinned. This is proven, we are told, by the fact that God continued to occasionally talk with Adam after he was cast out of the Garden.

This is like arguing that even though a man and woman have divorced, since they still talk to one another occasionally, *they have not severed the marriage bond!* This denial of “spiritual / covenantal / fellowship death” is based on the presupposition, unsupported by the text, that the death introduced by Adam’s sin must be biological death. See my *We Shall Meet Him In The Air, The Wedding of the King of Kings*, for a discussion and refutation of this presupposition.

My point is that when we accurately consider man in his pre-sin / pre-curse state, it flies in the face of most views of man in the Garden. So, consider again the following:

- Man was on earth. (This is not a facetious point—it is actually important.)
- Man, on earth, was “in time.” The calendar had been established, and man was experiencing the march of time.
- Man was in a body made from dust. Genesis emphatically says that man was created from the dust outside the Garden (Gen 2:6-7).
- Man was mortal, demonstrated

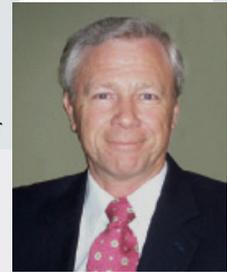


Preterism is “too final”

eschatology.org

Don K. Preston

Don is President of
Preterist Research Institute
email: dkpret@cableone.net
website: www.eschatology.org



by the fact that he was an “eating and drinking” person. After all, God told man, before he sinned, that he was free to eat of the fruit of any tree in the Garden. Thus, the normal, human, biological functions of the human body were at work in Adam.

- As William Bell sagaciously noted at the Preterist Pilgrim Weekend of 2013, if the restorationist views of those who posit a literal restoration to the pre-sin Eden are true, then man will be restored to the condition where *temptation still exists*, and, *the law of sin and death still exists!* After all, before he sinned, Adam was undeniably subject to temptation, and he was indubitably subject to the law of sin and death.
- Finally, *before he sinned and before the curse*, man was married and given the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:27-28).

This becomes hugely problematic for those who insist that man will one day be restored to the Edenic condition, because they then turn around and argue that after the Parousia of Christ (in the restored Edenic state), there will be “no marrying or giving in marriage.”

In my formal debate with Joel McDurmon (July, 2012), McDurmon made the “no marrying or giving in marriage” argument. I responded that this was problematic for him in light of Genesis 1:28 and the mandate to be fruitful and multiply. Here, from the debate book, (p. 179) is the argument I made:

Prior to the curse, Adam and Eve were married with the mandate to procreate. Thus, marriage, conjugal relations and children existed in the pre-sin Eden. Here is a concise presentation of my argument:

In the resurrection, the pre-sin state is restored (McDurmon).

In the pre-sin state, Adam and Eve were married, engaged in conjugal relations, being mandated to bear children.

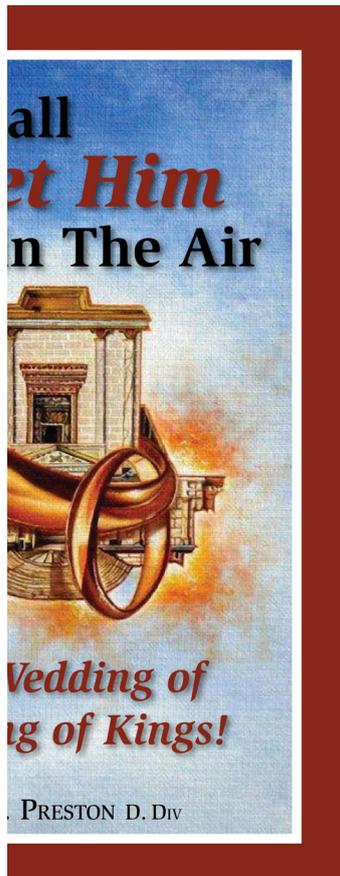
Joel believes that in the restored pre-sin state, there is no marrying, conjugal relations or child bearing, per Luke 20.

Therefore, the pre-sin state, where there was marriage, conjugal relations and child bearing, cannot be restored per Joel’s interpretation of Luke 20.

McDurmon was clearly stunned, as was the audience. All McDurmon could do was to reiterate, with no substantiation, or actual response to my argument, his “no marrying or giving in marriage” mantra. That is clearly deficient, however, as a growing number of scholars are beginning to recognize. In fact, As N. T. Wright writes: “The point is that the Levirate law of marriage on which the Sadducee’s apparent *reductio ad absurdum* is based, only applies when the people of JHWH are constituted by marriage and begetting. Jesus is announcing the dawn of a new age, the time of resurrection, in which this would not be the case.” (N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1996) 402, n. 109). Get your own copy of my debate with McDurmon from my website (www.eschatology.org) and see for yourself how he failed to touch the argument.

Likewise, Frost, before abandoning the truth of Covenant Eschatology, made the following excellent observations: “In the new age *Ezekiel* pictures the restored Israel being brought back into the Land. God will dwell with them and they will dwell with him. He will ‘increase them with men like a flock’ (36.37). Again, ‘they will dwell there, even they, and their sons (ben), and their sons of sons forever . . . I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever’ (37.25,26; in the Hebrew a ‘son’ is assumed as one ‘begotten’ by marriage). It is clear from this passage and numerous others that in the restored ‘age to come’ multiplication of children will continue, and it is perhaps to this well known aspect of that time the Sadducees are alluding to.” (Sam Frost, *Exegetical Essays on the Resurrection*, Ardmore, Ok., JaDon Management

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PRESTON D. DIV

After AD 70

by Don K. Preston

...continued from page 15

Inc. 2011, 94f; This book is available on my websites).

Wright and Frost are undeniably correct in their assessments. The texts are clear. Both men agreed, as McDurmon (and others) should, that Jesus was contrasting the nature of the *covenant worlds*—Torah versus the New Covenant World that He was establishing at that very time. Jesus was not discussing the existence of marriage in the age to come as an institution per se. He was contrasting the Levirate Marriage law, which sustained and characterized the kingdom under Torah, with the New Covenant kingdom, that is not sustained by marriage and child bearing.

Certainly the story of eschatology—God's determinative purpose—is the story of restoring what was lost. Paul expresses that purpose in Ephesians 1:

“having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an

inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will . . .”

A careful analysis of the personal pronouns in this text shows that Paul was affirming how God utilized Israel to bring about His eternal purpose for all men. Notice that God's eternal purpose was to reunite “heaven and earth.” His eternal purpose was to “gather together all things in Christ . . . in heaven and on earth.”

As Paul develops the idea of restoration and reconciliation—God's eternal purpose—he tells us there was but “one hope” (Eph 4:4-5). Significantly, McDurmon, in our debate, tried to dichotomize between the hope of Israel and the Adamic hope. But of course, this is falsified by Paul in Acts 24-26, 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians, and Hebrews 11. As I noted, the Edenic hope was assimilated into the hope of Israel, and was to be realized and fulfilled at the end of Torah).

Now if God's eternal, singular purpose was to restore what was lost in the Garden, and if what was lost in the Garden was covenantal/spiritual fellowship, then one has the right to ask: Why must God end time, destroy the earth, and remove “eating and drinking”, “marrying and giving in marriage”, and man from earth, in order to restore that fellowship?

Furthermore, if, as preterists affirm, Christ came in AD 70, then everything did not come to an end in AD 70. Rather, eternal fellowship was (re) established and man, through faith, is now in the Presence of God. Heaven and earth were reunited. So, the end was not just “the end.” It

THIS BOOK IS A GAME CHANGER!
Amillennialists and Postmillennialists have been forced to recognize the “redemptive significance” of the end of the age events of AD 70. They even admit “a” parousia and resurrection, occurred! However, to avoid the implications of this admission, they have sought refuge in the fallacious doctrine that the coming of Christ in AD70 was but a foreshadowing of the “real” end.
In *AD70, A Shadow or the (Real) End?*, Don K. Preston, D. Div., has thrown down the gauntlet in his critique of the leading opponents of Covenant Eschatology, (i.e. Full Preterism). The clarity and execution of Preston's logic and ease of style kept me riveted, page after page, as he dismantled the non-sense from those opponents. Their attempts to maintain their end times paradigms are simply obliterated by the power of the gospel. This book is an exciting, scholarly read flowing beautifully from one argument to the next.

Preston has proven that to say AD 70 was typological means:

- That another Elijah must come as a precursor to the ultimate end.
- That the end of the age demands the end of the “unending Christian age.”
- That Christ must divorce the church which is only a type of a new people to come.
- That the bride of Christ must become a harlot and be destroyed!
- That Christ does not marry the church at his coming but divorces her... and much more.

This book is a lesson in logic, a master's course in hermeneutics and a systematic theology of Covenant Eschatology. I predict it will be a classic study for ages to come. -William Bell, Lecturer, Author

“Having come from an A-millennial eschatology background and briefly passing through the post-millennial camp I am often befuddled wondering why the usually sharp thinkers in the latter camp continue to be stuck there. In this book, Don Preston seeks to build the bridge that will allow them to cross the gap and complete their trip to fulfilled eschatology. In my view, Preston has reached fulfillment in that which he sought to do. “Shadows” gives the reader the ability to put the final puzzle pieces in place. There is no reason left for anyone to remain in the “partial” Preterist camp.”
-Jack Gibbert, Lecturer, Debater, Bible Student and Minister of over 45 years.

Don K. Preston, D. Div., is the founder and director of the Preterist Research Institute. He is a 1975 graduate of the Northside School of Preaching, and his preaching ministry spans 35 years. He is an experienced debater, having performed several formal public debates as well as radio debates with some of the leading evangelicals of the day. He is also a prolific author, with some of his books receive critical acclaim.

AD70: A SHADOWS OF THE 'REAL' END? PRESTON

**AD70
A SHADOW OF THE
'REAL' END?**

DON K. PRESTON, D. DIV.

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was in fact, the fully bloomed beginning.

Of course, this question addresses but one of the scenarios listed above, but it is an important question nonetheless.

To briefly address the second scenario above: Why must God “re-create” earth and turn man into a non-eating, non-drinking, non-marrying human being, *in order to restore spiritual fellowship*? Does eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, somehow restrict fellowship with God? If so, how? Wasn’t man eating and drinking, and reproducing prior to the loss of fellowship?

The point is that man did not lose his physical body when he sinned. He did not lose the earth when he sinned. Time did not begin when he sinned—somehow necessitating the “end of time” to restore man to a “timeless” state. Man did not suddenly feel the need to “marry and give in marriage” when he sinned, nor did he suddenly experience hunger pains for the first time.

So, if it was God’s eternal purpose to restore/reconcile “heaven and earth” in Christ, and if AD 70 was the climax and fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose, then man, on earth, in time, in physical bodies, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, is now, by faith, once again living in the presence of God. Heaven and earth are reconciled in Christ.

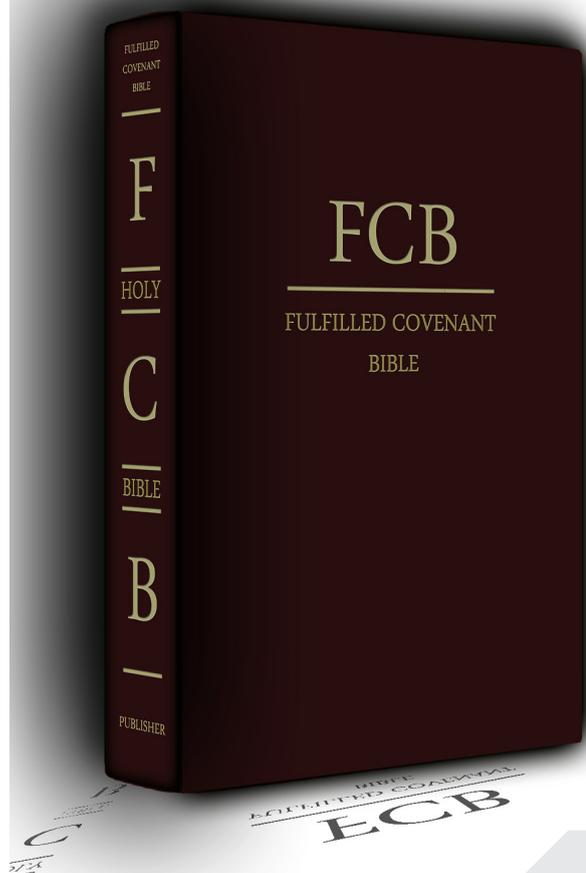
The implications of this are profound, since it means that—post AD 70—men in Christ will continue to live on earth, in time, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and in fellowship with God. Then, upon

physical death—a perfectly natural condition—man transitions out of the time/space continuum into God’s dimension. (Interestingly, there are many scholars who are now stating that biological death was a natural part of the Edenic creation).

In other words, it was never God’s eternal purpose to end “human history.” It was not His intent to “end time.” And, it was not His purpose to recreate a physical, utopian kingdom on earth. It was His purpose and intent that man, restored to fellowship, would live in fellowship with Him while on earth, continuing to experience normal human relations, until death removed man from the physical realm.

The second suggestion, that planet earth—including bugs, slugs, and mosquitoes—was cursed as a result of Adam’s sin, and that therefore God’s eternal purpose was/is to restore man to a pristine, utopian, earthly “Eden” is called into question by a host of facts/issues that we will consider as we continue this series.

For now, I hope that it can be seen that the traditional views of man, in his pre-sin, pre-curse condition, are flawed. The traditional views of the “restoration” of man to that condition are wrong. And, the idea that the arrival of the “end” in AD 70 means that there is nothing for man today is equally wrong. If God has, through Christ, brought in the New Creation, then man, on earth, in time, as an eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage creation, can (and does!) have full fellowship with a loving God once again. †



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Change of the Living

by Ed Stevens

...continued from page 13

- “. . . For **we [each]** know . . . **we [each]** have . . . **we [each]** sigh and groan inwardly . . . **we [each]** yearn to be clothed over . . . that **we [each]** may not be found naked . . . while **we [each]** are still in this tent, **we [each]** groan . . . not that **we [each]** want to put off [be unclothed] . . . but rather that **we [each]** would be further clothed [or clothed over], so that what is mortal . . . may be swallowed up by life . . .” (2 Cor 5:1-4 Amplified). Here are more references to “we” (i.e., the saints who remained alive until the Parousia). Each of those individuals in the “we” group *knew* something, *had* something, *sighed* and *groaned*, and would be found at the Parousia either “naked” (dead and disembodied) or still alive in their physical bodies. This is not referring to a collective body being “further clothed.” Instead, Paul is saying that those individual saints, who were “found” still alive at the Parousia (i.e., still in their individual “tents”), would have their bodies changed without having to experience physical death (“putting off their bodies”). They would have immortality “clothed over” them without taking off their mortal bodies first. That immortality (“life”) *swallowed up* or changed their mortal bodies into immortal bodies. The *NIGTC* commentary explains it this way: “For indeed, as tent-dwellers, we sigh with a sense of oppression because, not wishing to become disembodied, we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling as an overgarment.” Do you catch the power of that? Some have wondered why Paul says “this tent” (singular) instead of “these tents” (plural) if he is, in fact, talking about individual physical bodies, and not a singular collective body. Perhaps the *Jamieson Fausset and Brown* commentary (on 1 Cor 15:53-54) explained it best when they said that the demonstrative pronoun “this” in reference to “tent” was like Paul pointing with his finger “to his own body and that of those whom he addresses.”
- “. . . For [each of] **our** citizenship[s] is in heaven, from which **we [each]** also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform [each of] **our** lowly bod[ies] that it may be conformed to His glorious body . . .” (Phil 3:20-21 NKJV). Note the references to “we” and “our.” Each of the individual saints had a citizenship in heaven, was eagerly waiting for Christ’s return, and had a “lowly body” that would be

transformed to be like Christ’s “glorious body”. Since the word “body” here is singular, the Collective Body View claims that this proves it can only be talking about a transformation (or change) of a singular collective *body*, not of a whole bunch of individual *bodies* (plural). That sounds like a good argument at first, but it ignores what Paul had just said to those saints in the preceding context. For instance, Paul explains his own personal attitude about constantly striving for perfection (Phil 3:12-14), and urges each of the individual “brethren” there at Philippi to “have the same attitude” and “keep on living by that same standard” and “follow his example” and “walk according to the pattern” which the apostles were exhibiting (Phil 3:15-17). Then he warns them about those who were walking as “enemies of the cross of Christ” who would end up being destroyed because they had “set their minds on earthly things” (Phil 3:18-19). In contrast to that “earthly” mindset of the “enemies,” Paul posits “our heavenly citizenship” (Phil 3:20). The “our” (“we” or “us”) in the context is referring to both the Philippian “brethren” and the apostles (Phil 3:13-17). Just as each of those individual “enemies” had “set their minds” (plural) on earthly things, so also each of those individual saints should set their minds on their own individual heavenly citizenship. Do you see the contrast here? Therefore, it was not a collective body that had one singular citizenship, but individual saints each of whom had a citizenship in heaven. Now compare this phrase “*our citizenship*” in verse 20 with “*our lowly body*” in verse 21. See the similar usage of a plural “our” with a singular noun? If each of the “our” saints in verse 20 had their own individual “citizenship”, why couldn’t each of the “our” saints in verse 21 have their own individual “body”? This grammatical construction of a plural possessive pronoun (“our”) with a singular noun (“citizenship” or “body”) is a common idiomatic expression in both Greek and English, and there are many examples of it in the New Testament where it is clear in the context that it is referring to each of the individuals in the plural group having their own copy of that singular item. I have a thirteen-page PDF article, entitled “**our body**”, which thoroughly deals with this grammatical issue. To get it, simply email me and request it by title, and I will send it as an attachment (preterist1@preterist.org).

At the Parousia—Not Before or After

- “. . . in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet . . .” (1 Cor 15:52 NKJV). This change would

occur at the last trumpet, which was at the Parousia (cf. 1 Cor 15:23; Matt 24:31; John 5:25; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 12:19; Rev 10:7; 11:15). This was a brief, momentary event *at the Parousia*, not a long drawn-out process beforehand or afterward.

- “. . . we yearn to be clothed over [put on over]. . . with our heavenly dwelling [celestial body], so that by putting it on **we may not be found naked** [without a body] . . . but rather that we would be **further clothed**, so that what is mortal [our dying body] may be **swallowed up by life**” (2 Cor 5:2-4 Amplified). Commentaries note that the clause “we may not be found naked” seems to be referring to the bodily state in which those living saints would be **found at the Parousia**, when they would all stand in Christ’s presence (2 Cor 4:14). Paul states that the living saints yearned to remain alive *until the Parousia* when immortality (or *life*) would be “put on over” them, so that their old mortal bodies were swallowed up (or changed) into new immortal bodies, without having to experience physical death of their old bodies first. Do you catch the power of that?
- “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body . . .” (Phil 3:20-21 NKJV). Notice that this transformation was to take place at the **return of Christ** from heaven, which Paul said was “at hand” just five verses later (Phil 4:5). The transformation was not an already ongoing process for a collective body, but rather a future event for individual saints **at the Parousia**.
- “. . . **when He appears**, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame **at His Parousia**. . . . **when He appears**, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” (1 John 2:28; 3:2 NASB95). There is no ambiguity here regarding *when* this change to “be like Him” would occur. It would happen “*when He appears . . . at His parousia*,” not beforehand or afterward.

Conclusion

In these four texts we did not find the idea of a collective body change, nor the idea of a spiritual-only or covenantal-only change of individual souls. Instead, we have seen that the change was: (1) a *bodily* change; (2) for the *living saints only*; (3) for *individual* saints only; and (4) occurred only *at the Parousia*. Since all four of these texts contain all four of these characteristics, the conclusion seems inescapable: The change spoken of in these four texts was an *individual bodily change* from mortal to immortal (without experiencing physical death), which occurred only to those saints who *remained alive* at the time of *the Parousia*.

If you would like to know more about this *change* of the living saints at the Parousia, there are some free PDF articles available which deal with it in much more detail. Simply email me and ask for the PDFs on “The Change of the Living” (preterist1@preterist.org). Also, my book *Expectations Demand a First-Century Rapture* deals with it, and is available for order from our website at www.preterist.org. ☩

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

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

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

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

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

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