

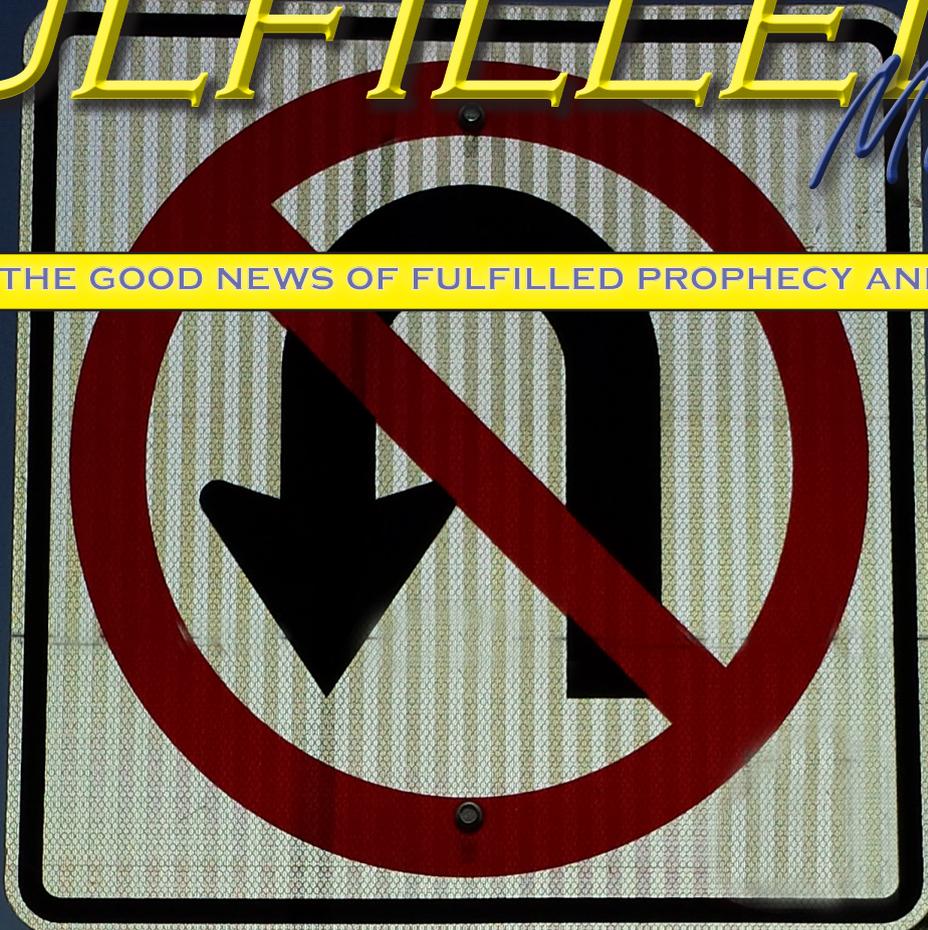
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FULFILLED!

Magazine

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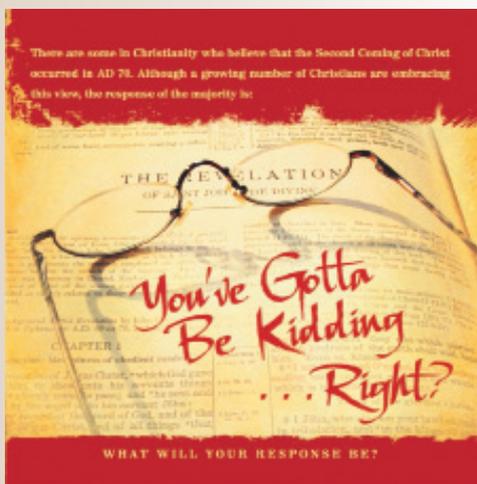
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Editor's Note...

I don't believe I've heard of anyone who feels that a better view was presented.

Apparently my publishing of Brock Hollett's and John Noe's articles in the previous issue created something of a stir in the preterist community. Although most of the comments I received directly were positive in nature, I was informed second hand that there were plenty of negative comments as well. When I say "positive" comments I do not mean that those readers were persuaded by the articles, but rather that they appreciated having the views published. They wanted to know what the perceived shortcomings of preterism were. Having read the articles, their suspicions were confirmed that there are no fatal flaws in preterism. Loose ends and quibbles over details are abundant, but fatal flaws have thus far proven elusive.

My wife made a very valid observation as we were discussing the possible backlash from the previous issue. She said that the preterist community doesn't want to be like those churches in which attendees show up one Sunday to find that the pastor has left with no explanation. There are only rumors and whispers, and speculation abounds, but no official explanation is offered.

Likewise in the preterist community. Not every preterist is active online, and many may only hear "whispers" that so-and-so is

no longer a preterist. But exactly why is not very clear. Well, we have now heard from two individuals, and the whispers can be replaced by these individuals' actual views and reasons for leaving preterism. I don't believe I've heard of anyone who feels that a better view was presented.

My one regret in publishing the previous issue is not having lined up some response articles that I could announce in that issue. At least then readers would know that there was more coming on the subject. Unfortunately, like those who live financially paycheck-to-paycheck, I live editorially issue-to-issue and article-to-article. I long for the day when I can actually plan out 2-3 issues ahead, but currently it's all I can do to get an issue out relatively on time (with an emphasis on "relatively").

Something different in this issue is the chart on *New Testament Time Passages*. I'm partial to charts and diagrams, so I thought I'd try one in the magazine. Let me know what you think.

Even though I live issue-to-issue, even that would not be possible without your prayerful and financial support, for which we are always grateful.

Blessings,

Brian

Mailbag...

I agree that truth has nothing to fear from opposing or differing views. But truth is an abstraction that exists independent of men and their errors. And while truth need not fear error, men certainly can and should. The article by Brock Hollett is a good example: Brock's story about his journey into and out of preterism reveals precisely the danger error presents.

Brock states his reason for leaving preterism is that he was convicted by the "power of the Spirit" that resurrection "is concerned with God raising dead bodies from the tombs and graves." The quotation Brock provides is from Isaiah 26:19, 21. The version Brock cites appears to be the Revised Standard Version, a notoriously false translation by liberal scholars that changes "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 to "young woman," and instead of Mary saying "I know not a man" says "I have no husband" (Luke 1:34) (lots of young women bear children without husbands, but only Mary bore Christ without knowing a man). The truth is, the word "bodies" is not in the Hebrew of this text, nor does the LXX have the word "corpses" as Brock falsely claims. The fact is there are no verses in the Bible that teach the resurrection of the flesh. The Pharisees took this position and it was refuted by Jesus when he said that in the resurrection we will be as angels (Matt 22:30). "*Quickening our mortal bodies*" in Romans 8:11 refers to mortifying the deeds of the flesh, not the resurrection of putrified corpses. Sadly, Brock rashly rejected preterism based upon false translations of Scripture and a misunderstanding of the text.

How could Brock conclude that preterism denies the hope of resurrection to those living beyond AD 70? I have been a preterist for over 30 years and have never once heard this view articulated by any preterist.

All preterists believe there remains the promise of eternal life following the death of our physical bodies. To paraphrase the words of St. Paul: "*We shall not all sleep [in Hadean death] but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet [that calls each of us out of this life]*" (1 Cor 15:51, 52). And, Christ "*shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*" (Phil 3:21; cf. 2 Cor 5:1-10).

Brock argues that denying the resurrection of our physical bodies denies the "eternal incarnation" of the Son. Good! It is difficult to imagine a more unscriptural doctrine than the eternal incarnation of Christ. Scripture expressly states that the "last Adam" (Christ) became a life giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Paul says, "*The Lord is that Spirit*" (2 Cor 3:17). The last time I checked, spirit is not flesh. Jesus now has a "*glorious body*" (Phil 3:21), not the body of humiliation received at the incarnation.

And Brock's new system of belief (Historic Dispensationalism)? Brock tells us that it is hidden in a mystery, and is only revealed to a select few; it requires revelation by the Spirit to understand; all others will receive strong delusion. Apparently, studying to show oneself approved (2 Tim 2:15) is no longer sufficient. We need a special revelation of the Spirit to learn the truth!

Truth may have nothing to fear from error, but we men certainly do. We should all take great care to speak as the oracles of God, and be very careful about novel and speculative ideas of every kind. Preterism is eminently sound; it is unfortunate Brock never fully understood its basic doctrines and was rashly led astray.

Kurt Simmons, NM

More Mailbag on page 19



How could Brock conclude that preterism denies the hope of resurrection to those living beyond AD 70?

Creation to Consummation

Why Physical Bodies Were Not Raised

by Ed Stevens

Despite all the misrepresentations and misinterpretations contained in Brock Hollett's article in the previous issue of this magazine, he did point out an area of Preterist teaching which could use a little more clarity, specifically in regard to the nature of the Resurrection event.

Hollett argues that the resurrection of the dead can only be a "bodies out of the ground" (BOG) type of resurrection. But he is ignoring the fact that many of his fellow futurists do not teach the BOG type of resurrection, and they certainly will not grant him the luxury of assuming that the BOG resurrection is the only biblical view. So it is not just preterists who teach a different kind of resurrection. Hollett has the same obligation to biblically justify his BOG view in the same way the rest of us (both Futurists and Preterists) have to biblically justify our own respective views (whether it is BOG, souls out of Hades [SOH], Individual Body View [IBV], or Collective Body View [CBV]).

Hollett begs the question by assuming that the BOG view is correct, and uses it as the first premise in his logical argument for a yet-future eschatological Resurrection. His reasoning goes something like this:

- Since bodies have to be raised out of the ground at the Resurrection,
- And since no bodies were raised out of the ground in AD 70,
- Then the Resurrection did not occur in AD 70.

Unfortunately, Hollett is letting his unproven assumptions about the BOG nature of the Resurrection determine its timing. But it is just as valid for Preterists to argue that the *time* of fulfillment determines the nature of fulfillment:

- If the *time* of the Resurrection was in AD 70,
- And if no bodies were raised out of the ground at that *time*,
- Then the Resurrection was not a BOG resurrection.

Thus, Futurist arguments for a BOG resurrection are inadequate if it can be demonstrated from Scripture that the time of the final eschatological resurrection was at the first-century Parousia. But this means that the Preterist view of the nature of the Resurrection depends on our demonstrating a first-century *time* for the Resurrection. Consider the following:

Time of the Eschatological Resurrection?

It was revealed to Daniel that the Resurrection would occur "**at the time of the end**" (Dan 11:40). The angel told him that "**at that time . . . there will be a time of distress such as never occurred . . . everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued . . . those who sleep [in Sheol] will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt**" (Dan 12:1-2). Daniel was also told that he would "**enter into rest [in Sheol] and rise [out of Sheol] for [his] allotted portion at the end of the days**" (Dan 12:13), and that "**as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed**" (Dan 12:7).

Four of the events that were supposed to happen at this "time of the end" were 1) the Great Tribulation, 2) a rescue of the living saints, 3) the Resurrection of the dead, and 4) the Final Judgment (Dan 12:1-2; cf. Rev 20:5ff).

"At the end of the days," Daniel himself would be raised out of Sheol to inherit his allotted portion (Dan 12:13). "*All of these events*" would be completed by the time "*the power of the holy people was completely shattered*" at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Dan 12:7). Do you see the first-century timing for all four of these events?

Many Futurist commentaries recognize that the *time of distress* and *complete shattering* mentioned here in Daniel 12 are referring to the Great Tribulation upon the Christians and the complete shattering of the Jews, both of which occurred in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. That was also the time when the dead were to be raised and judged—some going to everlasting life, and the others going to disgrace and everlasting contempt (Dan 12:1-2). This sounds like the same final Resurrection and Judgment to which the New Testament refers (see John 5:28-29; Matt 25:31-46; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Thess 1:7-8; 2 Tim 4:1; Rev 20:11-12).

When does the New Testament say the Resurrection would occur? Jesus told His disciples that "*some of those who were standing there would not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming with His angels to repay [judge] every man according to his deeds*" (Matt

Hollett assumes that the BOG view is correct, and uses it as the first premise in his logical argument for a yet-future eschatological resurrection.

Responding to Brock Hollett

Studies in Redemptive History

Edward E. Stevens

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16:27-28). Notice His mention of the **Judgment** going to occur within the lifetime of some of those standing there, implying that the Resurrection also occurred at that time.

Jesus also said that “when [his first-century disciples] see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet” and the “great tribulation,” they would “**know that He is near, right at the door**” and that “*this generation would not pass away until all these things take place*,” including everything Daniel had prophesied (Matt 24:15-34). In AD 62, just two years before the Neronic persecution

(the Great Tribulation), James the brother of Jesus wrote: “*the Parousia of the Lord is near*” and “*the Judge is standing right at the door*” (James 5:8-9).

Furthermore, during the final decade leading up to the outbreak of the Great Tribulation and the Jewish war, Paul told his audiences that “*there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked*” (Acts 24:15), and that Jesus “*is about to judge the world*” (Acts 17:31). Notice the imminency language here (Gk. *mello*, “about to”) in reference to both the Resurrection and the Judgment.

Moreover, in AD 63, just one year before the Neronic persecution and the ensuing Jewish War, Peter wrote that Jesus “*is ready to judge the living and the dead*” (1 Pet 4:5),

and that “*it is time for judgment to begin*” (1 Pet 4:17). I do not know how Jesus and the apostles could have made the *time* of fulfillment for the Resurrection and Judgment any clearer. Obviously, the resurrection described to Daniel and predicted by the New Testament authors are one and the same, and it occurred during the AD 70 Parousia.

These *time* statements of Jesus and the apostles leave no wiggle room for Futurists like Brock Hollett. Jewish, Islamic, and skeptical critics use these time texts to discredit Christianity, leaving Futurists with no viable defense. Either Jesus came in the lifetime of that first-century generation to raise the dead and judge “*every man according to his deeds*” as He promised, or He was a deceiver and false prophet, and our faith is founded on a fable, just like all other religions.

Therefore, it seems that the first two points of our logical argument below support their conclusion:

- The *time* of the Resurrection had to be AD 70,
- And since no bodies were raised out of the ground at that *time*,
- Then the *Resurrection* was not a BOG resurrection.

However, even though that conclusion stands on the solid rock of the biblical *time* statements, an AD 70 Resurrection must provide an explanation for all the scriptures Hollett used in his article supporting the concept of a BOG *nature* of resurrection. He is pitting the biblical *nature of fulfillment* texts against the biblical *time of fulfillment* texts. Both sets of

biblical texts must be correct, since Scripture can neither be broken, nor can it contradict itself. Instead, it is our interpretation and application of those biblical texts which need correction. No matter how well supported our logical arguments may be, they can never overturn Scripture. So, in the remainder of this article we need to deal with the biblical texts cited by Hollett, and explain why Preterists do not believe the final eschatological Resurrection was a BOG type of resurrection.

Where Were the Dead Ones?

Upon physical death, all of the Old Testament dead went to Sheol (or Hades). This was a place in the unseen realm (the Underworld) where their conscious, disembodied souls were separated from the presence and fellowship of God, while they waited for a kinsman-redeemer (the Seed of Eve, cf. Gen 3:15) to crush Satan’s head and set them free from Hadean captivity.

Hades was the place where the dead ones went to dwell until the Resurrection at the “End of the Days.” When the promised Son of Adam (the Divine Son of Man) finally arrived at the End of the Age, He raised the *dead ones* out of

Continued on page 8

nes that the bodies ground view is uses it as the first s logical argument ure eschatological

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Change of the Living

by Ed Stevens

...continued from page 7

Hades and took them to Heaven to dwell with Him forever (Rev 20-22).

This helps us understand who the *dead ones* were, and what it meant for them to be “raised out of” the place they dwelt (Hades). The final, or eschatological, Resurrection on the Last Day was a resurrection of the dead ones out of Hades. Since the dead ones in Hades were disembodied, this was a resurrection of disembodied *souls out of Hades* (SOH).

However, that is not the whole explanation for the eschatological Resurrection. Those disembodied souls were “raised incorruptible” (1 Cor 15:52), while the living and remaining saints had immortality “put on over” their existing mortality, so that their bodies were changed from mortal to immortal without first having to die (more on this below). First we need to look at how the Church has largely misunderstood the meaning of the biblical phrase “resurrection of the dead.”

Resurrection of Flesh or Body

The creedal phrases “resurrection of the flesh” and “resurrection of the body” are not found anywhere in Scripture, yet, as Murray Harris notes, the phrase “resurrection of the flesh” was the standard creedal formula in the Eastern Church until the first council of Constantinople (AD 381), and in the Western Church until the Reformation (AD 1500).

The Eastern Church changed its creedal formula to the biblical phrase “resurrection of the dead” at the council in AD 381 (*From Grave to Glory*, Murray Harris, pp. 277-280). Harris quotes J. N. D. Kelly in noting that, of all existing creeds, the Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 “is the only one for which ecumenicity, or universal acceptance, can be plausibly claimed. Unlike the purely Western Apostles’ Creed, it was admitted as authoritative in East and West alike from 451 onwards” (*Early Christian Creeds*, Second Edition, J. N. D. Kelly, p. 296). “In this creed the expression “the dead” refers to all deceased persons, the righteous and the unrighteous alike, so that the allusion is to the general resurrection” (Harris, p. 279).

The Church of England, in 1552, changed “resurrection of the flesh” to “resurrection of the body” in their Matins and Evensong, even though neither of these phrases is biblical. But in many of the Protestant and Reformed creeds to this day, the phrase “resurrection of the *body*” has become a common formula. Harris notes that the word “body” as used in these creedal statements was “never understood as

referring to the church as the [collective] body of Christ” (Harris, p. 279). This fact needs to be kept in mind when we examine all the eschatological resurrection texts that use the word “body” somewhere in their context.

Resurrection of the Dead

The biblical phrases (“resurrection of the dead,” “resurrection from the dead,” and “raised from the dead”) simply refer to a resurrection of the disembodied *souls of the dead ones out of Hades* (SOH). They are not referring to physical flesh or bodies being raised out of the ground (BOG). The SOH meaning is clear when we examine all the biblical texts with the phrase “from (out of) the dead ones.” The word “from” in this phrase simply means “out of” and comes from the Greek preposition *ek* which literally means *to go out*. It is the word from which we get “exit” and “exodus.” So this phrase “resurrection from the dead” literally means “resurrection out of the dead ones.”

Who are the “dead ones”? They were the disembodied souls of all who died prior to Christ’s Parousia. Where were these “dead ones”? They were in Sheol (or Hades) waiting until the Resurrection. According to Revelation 20:13-15, Hades was emptied of its souls when “the rest of the dead ones” were raised out of Hades at the end of the Millennium (the Parousia). So, “resurrection from (out of) the dead ones” is simply referring to the disembodied souls of the dead ones being raised out of Hades. When we apply this “souls raised out of Hades” (SOH) concept in the following verses where these phrases are used, it greatly helps us to understand what the eschatological Resurrection really was:

- *resurrection of the dead* (ones)—used nine times in nine verses: Matt 22:31; Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; 1 Cor 15:12-13, 21, 42; Heb 6:2
- *resurrection from* (out of) *the dead* (ones)—used five times in five verses: Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2; 26:23; Rom 1:4; Phil 3:11
- *raised from* (out of) *the dead* (ones)—used twelve times in twelve verses: John 2:22; 12:1, 9; 21:14; Acts 3:15; 4:10; Rom 6:4, 9; 7:4; 1 Cor 15:12, 20; 1 Thess 1:10

Greek and Gnostic Concepts

The Greeks and Gnostics denied that their disembodied souls would be raised out of Hades to dwell in any type of body. Rather, they believed their afterlife existence would consist of a disembodied pure spirit, and that they would dwell either in Hades or somewhere in the unseen realm. They considered it blissful enough just to be free of the physical body and dwell in the unseen realm as

disembodied spirits. That is why they rejected Paul's preaching about a resurrection of disembodied souls out of Hades and a bodily afterlife. They did not want a body in their afterlife, because they viewed their bodies as prisons and corrupting influences upon their pure souls. But Paul very clearly teaches both a resurrection of *souls out of Hades*, and some type of *bodily* afterlife.

Why Were Physical Bodies Not Raised?

Of course, some futurists such as Hollett insist that the eschatological Resurrection at the Last Day must be a restoration and resuscitation of the physical *bodies out of the graves* (BOG), since that was the kind of resurrection Jesus and several others had. For example, in *When Shall These Things Be?* (Keith Mathison, ed.; P&R Publishing, 2004, pp. 287ff), Robert Strimple argues that the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:15), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:54-55), and Lazarus (John 11:38-44) were all bodily resurrected back to physical life, as was Jesus. Since Strimple believes that we are supposed to have a resurrection like Jesus', he believes we must get our self-same physical bodies back like Jesus did.

Sounds like a solid argument, doesn't it? However, it is overlooking a few scriptures and biblical concepts. Here is the question that we need to consider: "Why were the physical bodies of the saints not raised out of the graves in AD 70?" Here are several reasons:

1. Christ could get His self-same body back, take it to heaven with Him, and keep it forever, because He was sinless. His body was never corrupted by sin and was therefore never "subject to decay" (could not return to dust), nor could it be "abandoned to Hades." Jesus had the keys to death and Hades. He could open the door, walk right in, and walk right back out again. Death could not keep him. Hades could not hold him. He is the only one who could say: 1) *The Father has given me life within myself* (John 5:26); 2) *No one can take it from me* (John 10:18); 3) *I have the power to lay it down and the power to take it back up again* (John 10:18); and 4) *"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"* (Luke 23:46—He yielded up His own spirit and died voluntarily—no one could kill Him). His body was not mortal in the sense that it was destined to die and decay and return to dust, like our bodies are (because of our sin). Since He never sinned, His body was not mortal in that sense. Therefore, Jesus could get His self-same body back, and not have to leave it behind when He went to heaven. When He ascended, that self-same "flesh and bone" body was changed into a glorious form that could dwell in heaven. He had a bodily change at the ascension. It was no longer a mere flesh and bone body after the Ascension. It was changed and glorified. It was still a *human body* which maintained the same personal and visible identity that it had while on earth, but it was a *different kind* of human body than it was during His earthly existence. Heaven requires a different kind of body to dwell there (1 Cor 15:50). The dead saints could not take their old physical bodies to heaven, so why raise them? Why not instead just give them their new bodies that were *like Christ's glorious body* (1 Cor 15:37-38; Phil 3:21)? They needed a new kind of body to dwell in heaven. Those new bodies were reserved in heaven for them (2 Cor 5:1).

2. All those who were raised before the Parousia had to have their old bodies resuscitated to live on earth again, because their new immortal bodies designed for life in heaven were *not yet available*. But in the resurrection at the Parousia, those new bodies were finally made available to them. Therefore, there was no need to get their physical bodies back, because their new immortal bodies were now available. So it was only those who were merely physically raised before the Parousia who had to get their physical bodies back to live on earth again (e.g., Lazarus, Tabitha, Eutychus, and the "many" raised in Matt 27:52-53). Their new immortal bodies were not yet available, so they could only reappear back on earth in their old physical bodies, or in some temporarily transfigured form like Moses, Elijah, or Samuel. But the Parousia changed all that. *It made heaven available to them, and that life in heaven required a different kind of body than their old corrupted physical bodies*. Since their new bodies were now available, why would God raise their old bodies? And since they were not going to dwell on earth again, why give them an old physical body that was not suited to heavenly dwelling?

3. No one could get their new immortal bodies until the Parousia. Christ ascended to the Father to prepare their new dwelling places (John 14:1-3), and their new bodies which were reserved in heaven for the dead saints until the Parousia and Resurrection events (2 Cor 5:1).

Those who were raised out of Hades before the Parousia received their old *Continued on page 12*

Increasing Imminence of the

Repent therefore and be converted . . . so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord . . . whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things . . . (Acts 3:19-20, ca. AD 30)

For that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed. (1 Thess 2:3)

ca. AD 30

ca. AD 40

ca. AD

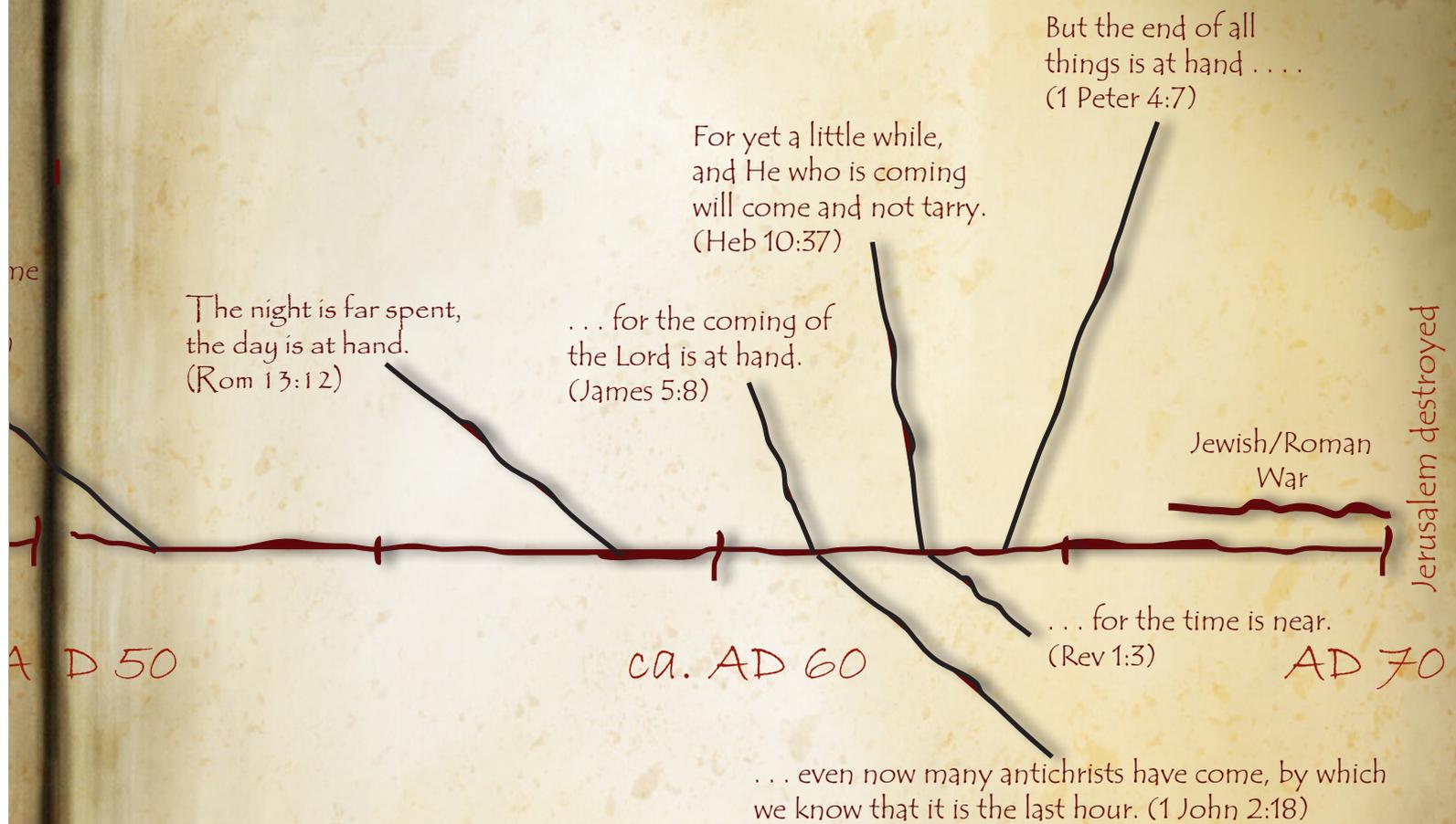
For many will come in my name saying . . . "The time is at hand." Do not go after them. (Luke 21:8; ca. AD 30)

Not Near

Jesus warned His disciples not to heed false prophets who would prematurely claim the time was at hand. Peter said Jesus wouldn't return until the times of restoration, while Paul wrote that the "falling away" must occur first. Clearly, Christ's return was not imminent during the first half of the first century.

Dating for New Testament books derived from Edward E. Stevens
"First Century Events in Chronological Order."

New Testament Time Passages



Approaching

In the early 50s AD, the New Testament authors, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, began claiming the "near" and "at hand" coming of Christ. What was not imminent in the first half of the century was now imminent.

... but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:25, ca. AD 63)

Response to Hollett

by Ed Stevens

...continued from page 9

physical bodies back, and dwelt on earth again. They could neither go to heaven nor receive their new immortal bodies prior to the Parousia. But all that changed at the Parousia. They could now receive their new immortal bodies and go to heaven.

4. If the dead saints were going to be raised back to life on earth, they should have had their physical bodies restored to them. However, that is not what the eschatological Resurrection was all about. The Last Day Resurrection was a “*better resurrection*” (Heb 11:35)! How could it be “*better*” if it was merely a resurrection of their physical bodies and a return to life on earth? A new immortal body and a new dwelling place (heaven) would certainly be “*better*.” In fact, Paul described it as being “*far better*” (Phil 1:23). This “*better resurrection*” was for the purpose of taking them to heaven, where they would need a new kind of body that was suited to heavenly existence. Throughout the entire process of their resurrection out of Hades, their reception of new immortal bodies, as well as their being caught up to heaven, they remained in the unseen realm. Since they never came back into the visible realm on earth, they did not need to have their physical bodies returned to them.

5. Those new bodies were not available until after Christ ascended to heaven and prepared them. Preparing new dwelling places (John 14:1-3 NAS95) and new bodies (2 Cor 5:1) were two of the things that His ascension to heaven was designed to accomplish. Then, at His return, the rest of the dead were raised out of Hades to receive their new bodies and be taken to heaven to dwell forever in their new dwelling places. Why bring them back into their *mortal bodies* to appear on earth, and then have to change them into *immortal bodies* before going to heaven? Why not bypass the physical body resuscitation and reappearance on earth, and instead give them their new immortal bodies and take them to heaven? They did not want their old bodies back, nor did they want to return to earth. They wanted a “*better*” resurrection with their new bodies with which to dwell in the New Jerusalem in heaven!

6. It was a “*better resurrection*” (Heb 11:35) because it gave them a *better kind of body* (immortal) and a *better place to dwell* (heaven). As Paul wrote, that was “*very far better*” (Phil 1:23). Abraham looked ahead and saw that “*better country*” (heaven) waiting for him. He did not want to return to the physical body and the physical land of Canaan. He wanted the

“*better things*” that were in the “*better country*” of heaven. Any saint, if given a choice between getting their physical body back and dwelling on this sinful earth again, versus getting a new immortal body and dwelling in heaven, would choose the “*better*” things (the heavenly country and the immortal body).

7. So it was not because God *could not* raise their physical bodies and restore them to an earthly existence at the Parousia, but rather because He had prepared something “*better*” for them. All previous generations had to come back into the flesh and dwell on earth again if they were raised back out of Hades, because their new bodies and their new dwelling places were not yet available. At the Parousia, however, those new bodies were finally made available to them, and heaven was opened for them as their final dwelling place. Christ raised them out of Hades, clothed them with their new immortal bodies, and received them to Himself there in the unseen heavenly realm, where they now dwell forever with Him.

Conclusion

That indeed was a “*better resurrection*.” Far better than having their physical bodies raised. God gave them new immortal bodies in which to dwell in heaven. That is the same kind of new bodies that we will receive when we die and go to heaven. We have the same “*blessed hope*” as the saints of all ages.

In conclusion, we need to mention what happened to those saints who remained alive at the Parousia. They were told that their bodies would be changed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor 15:51-54; 2 Cor 5:1-4; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2). What a profound and marvelous event that must have been for those living saints to have their bodies changed and go directly to heaven without having to experience physical death! We can now understand why they were willing to go through all kinds of tribulation and hardship in order to remain alive until that bodily change and rapture to heaven! It was a glorious hope that was set before them. And they longed for His return, so they could put on immortality without having to put off their mortal bodies first (2 Cor 5:2-4). They longed to have their “*lowly bodies*” transformed to be “*like His glorious body*” (Phil 3:21). And they were expecting to be changed to “*be like Him*” when they saw Him appear at His Parousia (1 John 2:28; 3:2).

If you would like to know more about this resurrection of the dead out of Hades, and the bodily change of the living that occurred at the Parousia, simply email me (preterist1@preterist.org) and request the “*PDF lessons on Resurrection and Change*.” I will send them as email attachments. ☩

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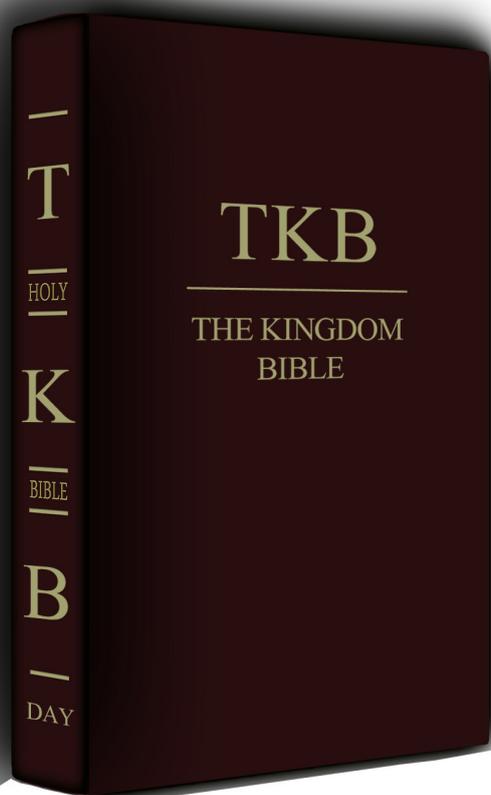
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Objection Overruled!

by Don K. Preston

Objection to Preterism: An academic approach to Scripture apart from revelation leads to delusion

A Response to Brock Hollett - #1

I found Brock Hollett's article to be severely lacking as a logical objection to the preterist view of eschatology. One article cannot fully address all of the issues raised in Hollett's article so this will be my first response in a series of articles addressing some of Hollett's objections. This initial article will address what is clearly foundational to Hollett's change, and that is his claim to direct prophetic guidance from the Holy Spirit. Hollett tells us 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 arguments' (Col 2:2-4)."

This is more than revealing—it's ironic and troubling. It tells us that Hollett is claiming special, "divine" revelation directly from the Holy Spirit that others do not have. Apparently, Scripture cannot be understood using context, logic, proper hermeneutic, plausible arguments, and academic rigor. According to Hollett, it takes the "revelation of the Spirit" given to those with, "prophetic insight concerning the time of the End." Ironically, Hollett simply refers us to scriptural citations, expecting us to read them and obtain his "special insight" from those texts. But, if we don't have his special prophetic revelation, how are we to understand these passages as he does? Are we to simply accept his word, without "proving all things"?

A casual reading may not reveal just how critical this is to everything else Hollett said in his article. Hollett is undeniably disclaiming logic, analytical thought, proper hermeneutic, and contextual consideration. None of this means anything, unless one has the "revelation of the Spirit" and "prophetic insight concerning the End." One can but wonder what other former preterists—who do not share Hollett's new found eschatological views—feel about this claim.

Hollett was praised by other former preterists for abandoning Covenant Eschatology. But, there is a

problem here. Hollett claims that through prophetic revelation of the Spirit he now espouses Historical Premillennialism. He now eschews academic rigor (somewhat amazing considering that he is, or is studying to be, a medical doctor!). He says that those who rely on scholarship and logic just can't know the truth. Well, those who praised him for his departure from Covenant Eschatology are, in many instances, Postmillennialists! Some are Amillennialists. Some of those who praised him are engaged in pursuing academic degrees, ostensibly dependent on exegesis, hermeneutic and logic. So, did the Spirit guide Hollett to a view that condemns those other views as well? Will those Postmillennialists accept Hollett's claim to prophetic revelation that rejects their eschatology? Will those seeking academic degrees agree that "academics" provide no insight to the true meaning of God's word?

Hollett's claim is both unbiblical and untenable, leading to various types of excess and error. Let me illustrate.

In Kansas City, there is what is known as the International House of Prayer (IHOP). This is an off-shoot of the Vineyard / Latter Day Rain Movement. This group is very militant and claims direct divine revelation from the Spirit, just like Brock Hollett is now claiming. Claims of visions and inspired revelations from the Spirit abound. "Prophetic insight concerning the End" is a center piece of their claims, and, they claim that we are in the first stages of the final generation. (See an in-depth examination of IHOP and their "end times" militancy here: <http://standupforthetruth.com/2014/03/ihops-scary-presence-doctrine-part-I/>). One leader of the movement is on record as saying that he sees the next 20 to 30 years as the time when more signs and wonders will be done than ever in history and when the secular media will be overwhelmed and have to report it every day as great revival spreads. (Note: How many times have we heard such things?) Remember,

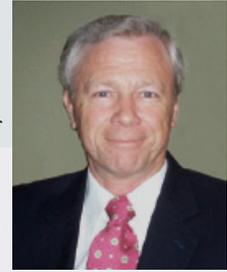


Responding to Brock Hollett

eschatology.org

Don K. Preston

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delusions

these claims are—per the leaders of IHOP—direct prophetic revelations from the Holy Spirit.

Of course, we have a problem here. Hollett claims to have now embraced the Historic Premillennial eschatology, which, he tells us, is from prophetic insight of the End, received by direct revelation of the Spirit. However, Hollett's Historic Premillennialism is at direct odds with the militant Dispensationalism of IHOP! So, we have the leaders of IHOP claiming direct prophetic insight from the Spirit concerning the time of the end (our generation). Then, we have Hollett, claiming direct prophetic insight from the Spirit concerning the time of the end, and we don't know when the end will be. We would also point out that Hollett's current views—ostensibly revealed through direct revelation of the Spirit—are at odds with the eschatology of the Mormon church of which he was once a member. Yet, that Mormon eschatology was also supposedly revealed *directly by the Holy Spirit!* Furthermore, what if I claimed that the Spirit spoke directly to me telling me that Brock Hollett was wrong—and that the preterist view is right after all? Which "Spirit guided prophetic insight concerning the time of the end" are we to accept? Does Hollett believe that the Spirit is revealing these differing eschatologies as *truth* to the respective groups? Does God contradict Himself in such a manner? Is God, in the end, a God of confusion?

Keep in mind that historically, many (if not most) of the end time prognosticators who set the time for the end of the world, claimed, *just like Hollett*, to be guided by the Spirit. They claimed that the Lord guided them to their conclusions, going so far as to claim that if their predictions did not come true at the time they said, that the Bible is not even inspired! History is littered with those false predictions—all embarrassments to the name of Christ.

There are some pressing questions that must be asked in light of Hollett's claim that he has direct prophetic insight into

the time of the end:

1.) Did the Holy Spirit give the apostles of Jesus direct, divine, infallible and authoritative prophetic revelation concerning the time of the end?

2.) Does the Spirit guide people to believe and teach things contrary to what he caused the New Testament writers to write? (Per Hollett, yes.)

3.) Whose "revelation from the Spirit" takes authoritative precedence?

Before answering the questions, the reader simply must see that Hollett's claim logically demands one of but a few choices:

A.) The New Testament writers did not receive prophetic revelation about the time of the end.

Or,

B.) The New Testament writers did receive prophetic revelation concerning the end. However, the revelation given to Hollett is above, beyond, and in addition to the revelation received by the apostles.

Or,

C.) Hollett is claiming that while the New Testament writers did receive revelation from the Spirit concerning the end times, that they did not understand what was revealed to them, but that now, he, Brock Hollett, has been given that prophetic insight.

The Apostles Did Receive Prophetic Revelation about the Day of the Lord

Notice what Jesus said in John 16:7-13:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak



Continued on page 16

Overruled!

by Don K. Preston

...continued from page 15

on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

We have here then, the unequivocal promise that the Father—who, by the way, *knew* the day and the hour of Jesus' coming—would send the Spirit to the Apostles to guide them into "*all truth*" and, "*tell you things to come.*" This means that the declarations of the apostles are the authoritative final word about the timing of the end. Any claimed "prophetic revelation" concerning eschatology must be thoroughly examined in the light of that apostolic revelation. And that includes the claims of Brock Hollett that he has direct prophetic revelation about the time of the end. Take a closer look at John 16 in the light of other facts:

1.) In fulfillment of John 16, on the day of Pentecost the Father sent the Spirit to Jesus' disciples.

2.) From Pentecost onward, the disciples were speaking and writing by inspiration of the Spirit, sent directly from the Father—who knew the Day and the Hour of Jesus' coming.

3.) In Luke 21:8 Jesus warned of false prophets who would come saying, "the end has drawn near, do not go after them." So, Jesus warned against believing (and clearly, also against making) premature declarations about the nearness of the end.

Catch the power of this! Jesus warned His disciples against believing or making premature declarations of the nearness of the end. But, the language of the New Testament writers is emphatic, clear, and undeniable. They affirmed—nearly 2000 years ago—with different expressions, terms, and words, that the end of the age and Christ's coming was *near, at hand, and coming without delay.*

According to Hollett however, that entire vocabulary of Koine Greek (meaning the common Greek of the day) must be mitigated, altered, and perverted to mean *nothing at all* for those first-century readers. Hollett tells us, through "prophetic revelation," that he has been given insight into the true meaning of those words, and they now mean that the coming of the Lord will occur soon—which obviously means they could not have meant that when they were originally written. This makes a mockery of language.

Hollett's claim makes the apostles out to be the

very false prophets that Jesus warned them about. Jesus said don't believe those who say "the end has drawn near" before the appearance of the signs that will prove the end is near (Matt 24:32f).

4.) Those disciples, inspired by the Spirit sent by the Father who knew the time of Jesus' parousia, wrote repeatedly that they knew that the parousia was near!

To put it another way, Hollett says the timing of the parousia was unknown to the apostles, but that he now has prophetic revelation about the time of the end. Hollett claims to know more, or to know better, than Jesus' own apostles! But, the apostles of Jesus denied that they did not know the time. In fact, Paul himself said: "*And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.*" (Rom 13:11f).

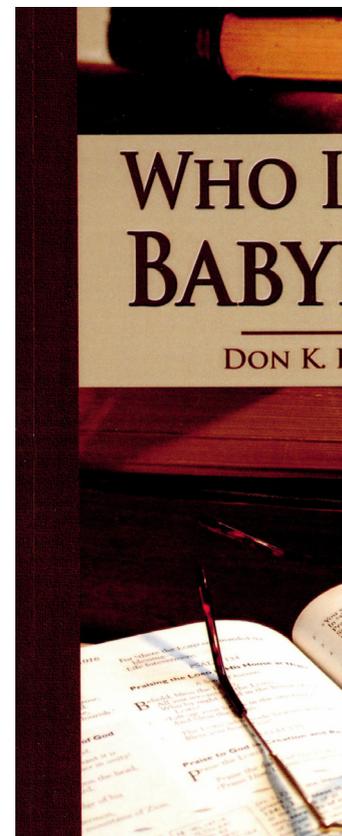
Paul was literally saying that they knew what time it was in God's eschatological drama! He used the word *eidontes* meaning that they fully knew. Further, he said they knew the *time*, and used the word *kairos*, which means "the appointed time." Then, he said "it is the *hour* for you to be raised out of sleep"; sleep being a euphemism for death. Then he said "the night is far spent, the Day is at hand." When he said "the day is at hand" the Greek is in the perfect tense, and literally reads "the day has drawn near."

So, everything that Paul said in Romans 13:11f refutes Hollett's claims. Hollett's claims set him at odds with Paul.

Hollett says the time of the parousia was an unknown mystery. (By the way, Hollett's claims about "the mystery" are completely false. Paul *never* uses the word "mystery" to speak of the timing of the Lord's coming. Hollett's claim is a distortion of Paul's doctrine of "mystery" (did the Spirit guide Hollett to distort Paul's words?). Paul, through prophetic revelation, said the time was, when he wrote, known by the Roman church.

Significantly, Paul said that anyone claiming to be a prophet, or to possess the Spirit, had to submit to his teaching (1 Cor 14:37). This answers the second and third questions above. Hollett is at odds with Paul's teaching regarding the parousia. So, it is Paul versus Hollett. And Paul takes precedence.

Peter, centuries before the appearance of the determinative signs given by Jesus, *per Hollett,*



declared: “*The end of all things has drawn near*” (1 Peter 4:7). He wrote virtually the precise words that Jesus said the false prophets would use, and *Hollett claims that Peter was nearly 2000 years, so far, premature in his declaration.*

Note also that, like Paul, John said, “*Little children, it is the last hour. As you have heard that anti-christ should come, even now there are many anti-christs, whereby you know that it is the last hour.*” (1 John 2:18). Did John receive that truth from prophetic revelation of the Spirit? If so, Hollett is wrong because John said the end time signs were present 2000 years ago, and their presence proved that the last hour had arrived. Notice Revelation 1:1-3:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

The text emphatically says that it was the Father revealing the timing of the end time events, and they were at hand. This was not “wishful thinking” on the part of John. It was not John making a premature declaration of the end.

It was the Father revealing the time of the end, and informing Jesus, John and the churches that the time was at hand. These verses totally falsify Hollett’s claims to prophetic revelation. Hollett’s claims contradict that given to John by the Father. Hollett is simply wrong.

But Revelation 1:1-3 are not the only verses in Revelation in which the Father revealed the end time events were imminent. Revelation is replete with this information. See my book *Who Is This Babylon?* for an in-depth analysis of the time statements in Revelation, with a refutation of all attempts to mitigate their objective force. The book is available from my websites: www.eschatology.org, or www.bibleprophecy.com.

Note that Revelation says it was the Father that informed John that the end time was near 2000 years ago. The Father did not say the time was unknown or that the time of the end was a mystery. The Father did not say the time of the end was hidden until a time far off—a time for Hollett

to reveal. The Father told Jesus to say, “*Behold, I come quickly*” (22:12). Thus, Hollett’s application of Revelation

to events far off from the time of John’s writing is wrong.

Note the contrast between John and Daniel, whose prophecies of the end are repeated in Revelation. Daniel was told that the end time events were far off and men would not understand them until divine wisdom and insight was given (Dan 12:9f). John, living in the time anticipated by Daniel, was told by the Father that the end had come: “*these things must shortly come to pass.*” Incredibly, Hollett says the time of understanding has been given to him, *not to John*. Hollett has set himself at direct odds with John’s testimony received from the Father. Hollett claims to have prophetic revelation and direct Spirit-guided understanding. The Bible writers said they were given the Spirit to guide them into understanding the end time events. Hollett says the time of the end was a mystery to the biblical writers; The Bible writers deny this, insisting that they knew that the parousia was near.

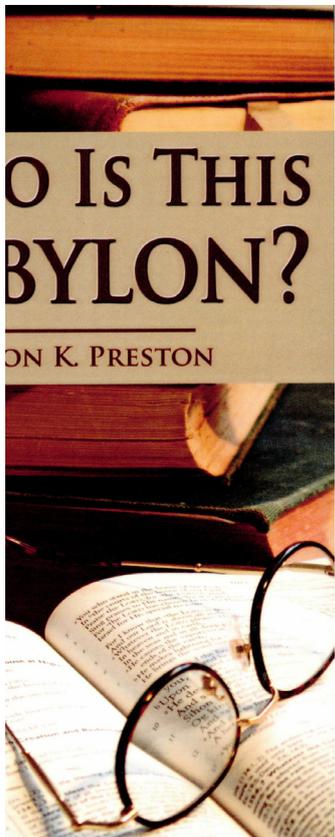
The biblical authors affirm repeatedly that they were living in the time of the end foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Hollett denies this; therefore, Hollett is wrong.

Jesus said false prophets would make premature declarations of the nearness of the end. Hollett’s claims that the biblical authors did not know the time of the end means that the biblical authors—who most assuredly said the end was near 2000 years ago—were in fact some of the very false prophets Jesus warned about.

Thus, Brock Hollett has placed himself in a position of claiming greater insight, more accurate knowledge, and more “inspired, prophetic revelation” that is more authoritative than the biblical authors. He has in effect said that Jesus’ apostles were false teachers, because they made premature declarations of the imminence of the end.

If the biblical authors were right, then Hollett is wrong—dead wrong. If Hollett is right, the biblical authors were wrong—dead wrong—and we today should sit at the feet of Brock Hollett, and throw our Bibles away. There is no middle ground here.

The dangers of claims to personal, direct revelation from the Spirit are manifested in Brock Hollett’s rejection of Covenant Eschatology. His “objections” are in fact subjective claims. In subsequent articles we will address more specifically some of Hollett’s claims, and demonstrate that all of his objections are Overruled! †



Dating The Book of Acts

I recently read Dr. Gregory Boyd's *Letters From A Skeptic*. Dr. Boyd, a professor of theology at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and his atheist father, began corresponding via letter about Christianity. Dr. Boyd initiated the correspondence with his father in the hope that his father would eventually come to know Christ. After three years, 30 letters, and numerous phone calls, Edward K. Boyd, at the age of 73, did just that.

At one point in their correspondence, Edward questioned the reliability of the New Testament documents. I found the portion of Greg's response that addressed the dating of Acts and the gospels (below) particularly relevant. Although it appears that Dr. Boyd misunderstands the gospel references to "the end of the world," his arguments for the early authorship of Acts and the Gospels are nevertheless worth reading. —*Brian L. Martin*

The key to dating the Gospels, Dad, is in dating the Book of Acts, for it is accepted by almost all scholars (liberal and conservative) that Acts comes after the Gospels (with the possible exception of John). The synoptic Gospels, then cannot be dated later than Acts. So what is the dating of Acts? I would argue that it must be dated some time in the early 60s of the first century. Here are my reasons.

1. Luke (the accepted author of Acts) makes no mention of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This would be most remarkable if Acts was written after this date, especially because Luke is, throughout Acts, centrally interested in events which occur in Jerusalem. In fact, Dad, Luke makes no mention of the war that broke out between the Jews and the Romans in A.D. 66 which led to the fall of Jerusalem, though throughout his work he is concerned with Roman-Jewish relations. For example, he mentions the minor skirmish which occurred between these two in A.D. 44. But how could he then pass up the much more significant war which occurred 22 years later, a war which resulted in the destruction of the Jewish temple and the sacking of all Jerusalem?

What really drives home this point is the fact that Jesus, in Luke's Gospel, prophesies that Jerusalem would fall (Luke 21). It is, I think, most unlikely to suppose that Luke missed this opportunity to show how this prophecy was fulfilled—especially when one considers that one of the reasons Luke wrote Acts in the first place was to show how the working of the Spirit in the early church carries on and fulfills the ministry of Jesus!

In fact, all the Gospels record Jesus prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, liberal scholars who don't believe anything supernatural can occur, argue that this shows that the Gospels must be written after the fall of Jerusalem (a main reason they date the Gospels late). The Gospel authors thus supposedly put into Jesus' mouth a prophecy He never made. But what's interesting to observe here is that in all the Gospels the fall of Jerusalem is connected closely with the end of the world (Luke 21; Matt 24; Mark 13). This raises problems for interpreters because, obviously, the world didn't end when Jerusalem fell (don't worry, there is an answer to that). But the problem in the text raises an even more serious problem for the liberal view. For if the Gospel authors were fabricating a prophecy of Jesus about Jerusalem after the fact, they certainly wouldn't have fabricated a connection between it and something they know did not occur, namely, the end of the world! Do you see the point?

So I conclude that the prophecy of Jesus concerning the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 had to have been written prior to AD 70. Luke would have mentioned it being fulfilled in Acts, and none of the authors would have connected it with the world ending if, in fact, it had been written (fabricated) after this date.

2. Acts makes no mention of Nero's persecution of Christians in the mid-60s. In fact, his view of the Roman government is positively irenic. This requires us to place the document at a time when the Roman government was not hostile to Christians, a time prior to Nero.
3. Luke, in Acts, makes no mention of the martyrdom of Paul (AD 64) and Peter (AD 65), though he is very concerned to note the martyrdoms of "lesser" Christian

From “*Letters From A Skeptic*”

- leaders (e.g., Stephen, James). This is especially remarkable because half the Book of Acts is about Paul, and a large part is about Peter! This is impossible to make sense of if Luke were writing after their deaths.
4. Much of the subject matter of Acts concerns issues which are important before the fall of Jerusalem, but not after. This reflects the needs and interests of the audience, an audience which clearly has not yet experienced the fall of Jerusalem.
 5. Luke’s record of people and events in the Roman Empire has time and time again been substantiated by archeology. He reflects a detailed knowledge of the early first century, a knowledge which grows increasingly unlikely the later we place the date of this document.
 6. Luke uses expressions in Acts which were used widely early on in Christianity, but not later—not after AD 70. Jesus, for example, is called “the Son of Man,” but this title of Jesus died out very early in Christian circles (replaced by “Son of God”).

So, I would argue, Acts can be dated no later than the mid-60s, and probably a bit earlier. The Gospel of Luke was written just prior to Acts—they form a two-volume work—and Luke, it is almost universally argued, was written after Mark. It is also usually argued, for a number of good reasons, that Matthew and Luke are roughly contemporaneous with each other (pp. 94-96). †

Mailbag... (continued)

Brian, I really enjoyed the balance of this [Spring 2014] issue and commend you for putting Brock’s article in. I read your intro and understand your position. I anticipated your decision would stir up some controversy but hey that’s not a bad thing is it? Keep up the good work! I love the magazine and glad it’s not one-sided. Perfect unity is for cults, offering opposing sides shows maturity. Thank you for your ministry and openness.

Julie, via Facebook

I think it was wholly acceptable to air these peoples’ opinions, indeed vital so as to fully understand where they are in their theology and give full opportunity for direct rebuttal. We as Preterists should be open and welcome these opportunities to deal with these matters and not be locking ourselves away allowing others to set the agenda.

David, via Facebook

In [our] church the preacher started a class on the early date for Revelation. I have waited 30 years for this—I cannot believe it! The word comes alive and makes sense with all things fulfilled.

Frank, CO

Thanks for the magazines. I enjoy reading and sharing them.

John, AL

Dear Kayla & Brian,

Thanks for your good works for us. I hope your shingles are gone forever.

Robert, OR

[Thanks Robert. I’ve read conflicting reports on whether or not shingles can occur repeatedly. Some say no, others say it’s easier to get them again after once having them. But I’m with you—I hope they’re gone forever! Brian]



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Dating the Book of Acts

Chart of NT Imminency
Passages

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

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

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

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

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

Preterism
Preterism
Preterism

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