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# FULFILLED!

*Magazine*

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**Is Replacement Theology Heretical?**



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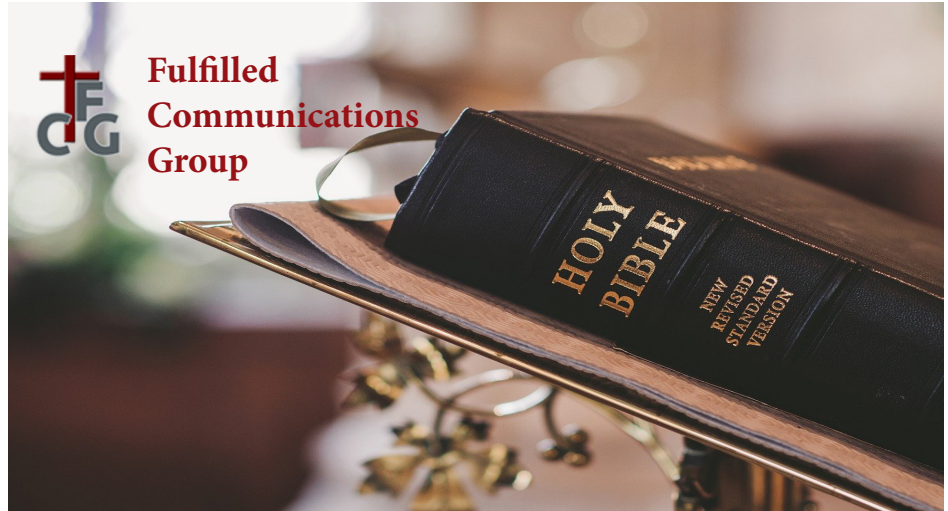
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## *Reader Beware!*

The views expressed in these pages are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FCG or other contributors. FCG does not tell readers what to believe; rather, FCG provides readers with resources intended to aid in discovering biblical foundations informing what they believe. FCG strives to give readers something worthwhile to think about—we avoid telling them what to think. Please understand that we cannot vet every contributor's various doctrinal positions or read every advertised book. We rely on you, the reader, to be a Berean: prayerfully discuss and examine all positions presented according to Scripture to establish any truth or application as you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

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## Editor's Note...

**A**S MANY OF YOU will probably agree, the arrival of spring is most welcome. Here in South Carolina (just south of Charlotte), we managed to see snow twice in January after going three years without seeing a single snowflake. The two snowfalls were nothing major, though (less than an inch both times). Our four-year-old daughter enjoyed the experience, and my wife was glad to see it as well, so I was fine with a little snow for their sakes. Of course, winter was much more “active” in some other parts of the US. As spring emerges, the many signs of nature coming back to life and blooming around us present great opportunities to reflect on, and appreciate, how God made all things new for His people (Rev 1:5) and how He has made all of His people into new creations (2 Cor 5:17).

In this issue, Don Preston returns with another overruling of a set of objections to preterism. This time, Don takes on Charlie Campbell’s “Six Reasons for Rejecting Preterism.” Don responds with an abundance of Scriptural evidence and arguments. Along the way, he shares details on the Great Tribulation, church history and archaeology, evidence for the early date for the book of Revelation, Babylon the great, and more.

Ed Stevens provides the third installment in his series, “History After the End.” In this installment, Ed shares his viewpoint on how God planned to “build and perpetuate the church into the new age” after what he views as a restart due to the Rapture. Ed includes discussions on the New Testament manuscripts, other documents, and more.

T. J. Smith wraps up this issue by addressing the topic of “replacement theology.” As he noted at the end of his last article, he takes the view that replacement theology is “something clearly demonstrated in Scripture and not something to reject.” This material comes from one of his “*Understanding the Bible for Average Christians*” book volumes.

In the next issue, expect the first of several (probably four) articles on the topic of the Millennium and Satan’s short release in Revelation 20. These articles will vary in terms of the proposed starting dates and end dates of the 1000 years, but each view reflects a belief that this prophecy has been completed. Within these articles, there will be some verse-by-verse commentaries of Revelation 20:1-10. I trust that readers will have plenty of food for thought as we explore a passage that has been used as the basis for very prominent and large-scale belief systems in Christian eschatology.

As a reminder, “The Preterist Community” has a giving portal at Samaritan’s Purse, an organization which meets the needs of hurting people around the world. Please see the inside cover for the direct link. An additional and worthy giving opportunity exists with a ministry led by Rob Mitchell, *Kingdom Now Ministries*, which provides for the needy in Tulsa, Oklahoma ([kingdomnowministries.com](http://kingdomnowministries.com)). Your prayers and financial support for the ministry of FCG are also greatly appreciated.

Blessings in Christ,

*Adam Maarschalk*



Adam Maarschalk  
Editor  
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# *Heal Our Hearts, Heal Our Land, Heal Our World*

by *Brian L. Martin*

... if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chron 7:14)

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The following is from Herbert Lockyer's *All the Prayers of the Bible*. This is Moses' prayer for Israel after the golden calf incident, along with Lockyer's commentary. I believe that both the prayer and the commentary can be readily applied to the United States of America, in which most of our readership resides, and most likely to any other country in which you may be reading this. Consider prayerfully Lockyer's claim that "too few of us are willing and ready to stand in the gap."

## **Prayer for Delay of Deserved Judgment**

*And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. (Exodus 32:31-32, KJV)*

What another tribute to Moses, as the incomparable prophet-intercessor, this distressing and profoundly moving chapter affords! How he could pray for an apostate people in language reaching unparalleled heights of self-sacrificial devotion! (See also Deuteronomy 9: 26-29.) On the Mount, the place of intercession, Moses pleaded for Israel. In spite of Israel's revolt against God and their disloyalty to Moses, he stepped into the breach, as God encouraged his servant to plead for others. Too few of us are willing and ready to stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30). With what passion Paul could plead for his kinsmen according to the flesh (Romans 10:1)!

The righteous wrath of Moses was permissible (32:19-20). It was righteous indignation, the anger of a good man. There was nothing mean nor petty about it. "Only he who loves much knows what it is like to feel that anger which is ennobling and godlike." The most moving prayer in the Bible is the incomplete prayer of Moses: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –" Why the dash in this sentence? Why is it broken and incomplete? Was there a break in the voice of Moses, as his confession and intercession for a sinning people produced a momentary silence? "Here was a prayer with the Cross at its very heart."

# Objection Overruled!

**A** **DAM HAS REQUESTED THAT** I offer some thoughts in response to an internet article by Charlie Campbell.<sup>1</sup> An introductory note: There are actually seven points that Mr. Campbell seeks to affirm. It would take a lengthy article to fully address each point, far beyond the space limitations of this magazine. So, what I will do is to list Campbell's points and then offer some brief, but, I think, powerful points of refutation. Further corroboration of my points can be found in a host of sources, including my own books, so I urge the reader to dig deeper.

At the outset of his post, Mr. Campbell offers the common objection that is based on 2 Thessalonians 2 and 2 Timothy 2:18. In these texts, the false teachers (Judaizers) were claiming that the Day of the Lord and the resurrection had already come. Mr. Campbell asserts that preterism is a modern-day manifestation of that identical error. This is a wholly anachronistic "argument."

The indisputable fact is that the Bible posits the resurrection, the kingdom, and salvation all at the time of the judgment of old covenant Jerusalem. Space forbids a full demonstration of this, but in my book, *These Are the Days in Which All Things Must Be Fulfilled*, I catalog numerous passages in which this connection is simply undeniable. Now look at some bullet points that Mr. Campbell does not consider.

- Related to what I just said, Revelation posits the Great Tribulation for the first century. In Revelation 7:14, we find that the 144,000 of the Jewish saints came out of the Tribulation. In Revelation 14:4, we discover that the 144,000 were the "first fruit of those redeemed to God from among men." That means that they were the very first generation of Jewish Christians! (Think Pentecost onward!)
- The New Testament posits the time of the resurrection, the time of the judgment of the living and the dead as at hand and coming soon, without

delay. Peter said Christ was "ready" (from *hetoimos*) to judge the living and the dead" at His "epiphany" (1 Pet 4:5). In verse 7, he said "the end (*telos*, meaning goal) has drawn near (perfect tense of *engus - eggeken*, meaning "has arrived"). And, in verse 17, the apostle said, "The time" (the divinely appointed time, from *kairos*) has come for "the judgment" (*to krino*—the judgment, referring back to v. 5). That means that verse 17 undeniably says that the time for the resurrection had come. Since the time had arrived when Peter wrote, Hymenaeus was wrong to say it was past.

- *How is this possible?* Mr. Campbell affirms that Hymenaeus said that the resurrection was past. Evidently, he has not paused to consider the following: If the Day of the Lord and the resurrection is an earth burning (or earthly renovation) when all of the dead of all time are physically raised out of the dirt or the oceans, how could anyone convince *anyone* that this cataclysmic event had already happened? Could you be convinced that the material cosmos was dissolved yesterday? Could you convince anyone that time had ended, that all the graves were empty? See my books, *How Is This Possible?* and *The Hymenaeian Heresy: Reverse the Charges!* for a fuller exposition of the Hymenaeian Heresy.

The indisputable fact is that the Bible posits the resurrection and salvation all at the time of the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem.

We turn now to Mr. Campbell's "Six Reasons for Rejecting Preterism."

**Reason #1** — Preterist misunderstanding of "this generation"

Matthew 24:33 (sic - v. 32) says when you see all of these things know it is near... Jesus was talking about the generation of people who would be alive during the events leading up to His Second Coming, that is,

## A Response to Charlie Campbell

Don K. Preston

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during the time of tribulation . . .

Why would Jesus speak of events that were so far off? Because He was answering the question His disciples asked Him a few minutes earlier about the “end of the age” (v. 3).

Notice what they asked Him in Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 24:3 ‘What will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?’

That’s why Jesus spoke to them about events so far off. They asked! If what Jesus said in Matthew 24 was about events that would transpire in A.D. 70 (as preterists believe), then Jesus failed to answer their question.

**Matthew 10:23** – Now, there are a few different views regarding what Jesus may have meant here, so I don’t want to be dogmatic here with an interpretation. But I believe, along with a good number of Bible commentators, that Jesus was simply telling His disciples that there was so much work to be done (so many cities to reach with the gospel) that they would not finish

taking the gospel to their own country before His Second Coming.

Persecution (e.g., Acts 8:1) and a prevailing Jewish unreceptivity to the gospel prevented the disciples from going through all the cities of Israel. And to this day the job of taking the gospel to all the Jews has not been completed.

### Revelation:

“Behold I come quickly”– Jesus was not describing when the events will occur, but rather the manner in which they will take place when they do occur. He was saying that when these events take place, they are going to unfold suddenly, quickly, with great swiftness.

**Response:** It is true that Jesus was speaking of the generation that would see the signs. What was one of the chief signs? It was the completion of the great commission (24:14).

The fact is that Paul, who knew what Jesus taught (Galatians 1:10ff) said repeatedly, later in that very same generation, that the gospel had been preached to “every creature under heaven” (Col 1:23; See also Rom 10:18f; Rom 16:25-26; Titus 2:11).

Be sure to read my comments above about the Great Tribulation. Since that first-century generation was the generation of the first fruit and since the first fruit was to experience the Great Tribulation, this proves that the first century generation was the generation Jesus spoke of in Matt 24:32. This proves definitively that “this generation” was not a reference to a far distant generation.

Mr. Campbell argues from a purely presuppositional position when he argues that the apostles asked about a far distant coming of the Lord and end of the age. He assumes, without offering any evidence, that the apostles were asking about some “end of time” or end-of-the-Christian-age event. But why would the apostles think of the end of time or, even more to the point, why would they link the destruction of the temple to the end of the Christian age, when the Christian age had not even begun? The temple had been destroyed in BC 586, had it not? Did time end at that time? Patently not. Thus, why would the apostles now associate the end of time, or again, the end of the Christian age, with the destruction of that temple? See my book *Watching for the Parousia: Were Jesus’ Apostles Confused?* for an in-depth discussion about the apostles’ questions, and the common claim that they were confused to conflate the predicted destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the age.

In regard to Matthew 10:23, Mr. Campbell completely misrepresents what Jesus said. The Lord was not saying that the apostles would not complete the mission due

The fact is that the Bible  
urrection, the kingdom,  
all at the time of the judg-  
vment Jerusalem.

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to Jewish persecution. His focus was on the flight of His apostles from Jewish persecution! Jesus did not even remotely suggest that the world mission would fail, as we demonstrated just above.

### Reason #2 — Silence of Church Historians

And as far as the church fathers and preterism are

concerned, there is zero indication from known writings of the church fathers that anyone understood the New Testament prophecies from a preterist perspective.

## Objection Overruled!

Don K. Preston

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There are no early church writings that teach that Jesus returned (physically or spiritually) in the first century

...

**Response:** Arguing from silence is always a tenuous practice. Basing a doctrine on what the Bible does not say is actually dangerous. This is illustrated by archaeology and history. Skeptics long argued that there was no record of the “kingdom of Israel” or “the house of David” because the archaeological record did not support the Biblical claim. Well, archaeologists kept digging and in 1993 they discovered what is called the Tel Dan stele.<sup>2</sup> It is the first historical evidence of King David. It confirms that David was king. In other words, the absence of evidence was not evidence of absence. The lack of record about David (up to 1993!) was not proof that David did not exist.

When it comes to the historical testimony of preterism, Mr. Campbell’s argument about the silence of the early writers takes too much for granted. Evidently, Mr. Campbell is unaware of the fact that only a very small percentage of the early writings have even been translated.

Gary DeMar and Francis Gumerlock illustrate this by noting:

Most of what the church fathers wrote remains untranslated - 218 Latin and 166 Greek volumes – therefore, we cannot be dogmatic in asserting what the early church Fathers believed. The works that Jeffrey studied come out to approximately 7,000 pages. While this seems a lot, the untranslated Greek and Latin works ‘weigh in at over a million pages’ (*New Testament Eschatology* [Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2024], 60).<sup>3</sup>

The point should be obvious: To claim that “no early church writer taught or believed in preterism” is far too broad of a claim.

**Reason #3** — The Christians alive during A.D. 70, as well as the church fathers, believed the Second Coming was a future event.

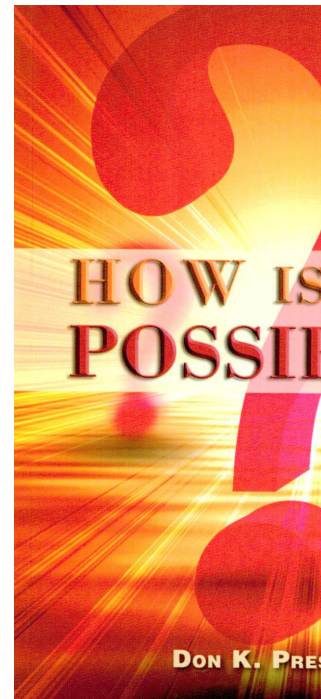
...The Didache. It is a simple collection of early church doctrine. Most scholars believe it was written near the close of the first century, most likely around A.D. 80. It was used and cited by many of the church fathers, as well as by the Christian historian Eusebius (see his Ecclesiastical Church History 3:25). So its early existence is well documented.

**Response:** Once again, Mr. Campbell makes some tenuous claims. Concerning the Didache, Gary DeMar says:

But there is a good reason to place its composition early, prior to the destruction of the temple... In the authoritative work *The Apostolic Fathers*, we read the following:

‘A remarkably wide range of dates, extending from before A.D. 50 to the third century or later, has been proposed for this document . . . The Didache may have been put into its present form as late as 150, though a date considerably closer to the end of the first century seems more plausible. The materials from which it was composed, however, reflect the state of the church at an even earlier time. The relative simplicity of the prayers, the continuing concern to differentiate Christian practice from Jewish rituals (8.1), and in particular the form of church structure—note the twofold structure of bishops and deacons (cf. Phil. 1:1) and the continued existence of traveling apostles and prophets alongside a resident ministry—reflect a time closer to that of Paul and James (who died in the 60s) than Ignatius (who died sometime after 110). ((Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, [1992] 1999), 247-248. Emphasis added)

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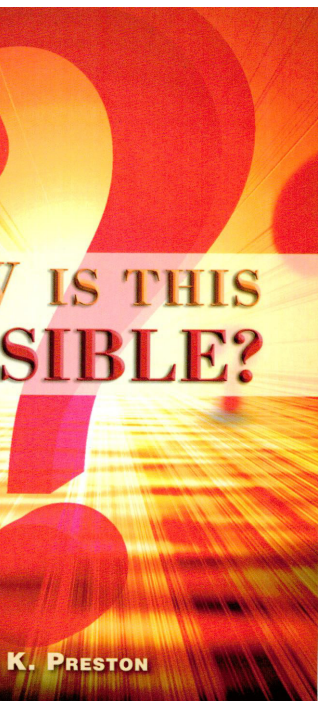
The definitive work on the Didache was written by the French-Canadian Jean-Paul Audet who concluded “that it was composed, almost certainly in Antioch, between 50 and 70” ((John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 323)), “contemporary with the first gospel writings.” ((Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didachè: Instructions des Apôtres* (Paris: Gabalda, 1958), 187-210.))<sup>4</sup>

Did the early church believe in a yet future Parousia? By and large, in the records that we have, the answer is yes. The question is, why? Several scholars have answered that by noting that, at a very early time, the early church became Hellenized and lost touch with the metaphoric nature of Hebraic apocalyptic language.

**Graydon Snyder** says that Biblical eschatology is “radically disjunctive”:

It affirms the absolute validity of God’s promises to mankind through Israel and of the historical locus of its fulfillment; yet denies that present history or the present institutions of man could lead to its fulfillment.” . . . “Paul proclaimed this eschatological form not only in terms of mythology of the cross, but also with a more full orb ed apocalyptic framework. In the Hellenistic world this apocalyptic form was understandably misunderstood. In some instances it was literalized dualistically (i.e. the myth becomes a cosmology) so that a struggle between flesh and spirit resulted. In some instances it was misunderstood chronologically (i.e. the myth becomes history), so that an actual end of time was expected... the chronological misunderstanding resulted in a problem regarding the

delay of the parousia to such a point that the community was forced to identify that disjuncture with the baptism or the birth of Jesus rather than to speak of a radical disjuncture yet at hand...in other words, the problem of the delay of the parousia is a problem only in so far as the early community misunderstood and literalized the apocalyptic (Graydon Snyder, “The Literalization of the Apocalyptic Form in the New Testament Church,” *Chicago Society of Biblical Research*, Vol. 15 [1969], 5-18).



Daniel Rogers cites additional scholars who corroborate this:

John J. Collins, for instance, dedicated an entire volume to the Hellenization of Jewish Wisdom. Many Bible scholars and students today fall into the trap of relying on these Hellenized writings to determine the common understanding of the common Jew in the time of Christ. Tom Holland, of the Wales Evangelical School of Theology, explained the problem of relying on intertestamental writings for this purpose.

“There is no doubt these documents give fascinating insight into this period of Judaism, but their relevance for the New Testament message must be questioned... They assume there is a strict equivalence in terminology and themes found in these writings and in the New Testament. They use intertestamental texts as the key for understanding the New Testament texts. This presupposes they share the same theological outlook and their meanings are transposable. However, this understanding is flawed” (Daniel Rogers, *Ancient Philosophy*, Professor Hill, September 7, 2018 (page 2f).

In addition to the problem of the Hellenization of the early church, there is another issue that Mr. Campbell does not mention. That is, we have records in very early church writings of a disappointment, indeed, even a crisis of faith over the fact that the Lord had not come at the time of the judgment of Jerusalem! Richard Bauckham speaks of a “crisis of faith” present in the post-AD 70 church over the failure of the Parousia (*Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 50, Jude, 2 Peter* [Waco, TX: Word Publishers, 1983], 293).

Likewise, Christopher Hays, along with other scholars, notes what was happening late in the first century: “It seems that a number of Christians were feeling uncomfortable with the non-occurrence of the eschatological consummation, and that different Christians leaders felt obligated to take action to control attendant disbelief in Jesus’ second coming.”

Hays quotes from 1 Clement 23:3, 50 (circa 95-97 CE), “Wretched are the double-minded who doubt in their soul and say, ‘We have heard these things even in the days of our fathers, and look, we have grown old, and none of these things have happened to us’ ...Truly his purpose will be accomplished quickly and suddenly, just as the Scripture also testifies: ‘He will come quickly and not delay, and the Lord will come suddenly to his temple, even the Holy One you expect.’”<sup>5</sup>

...continued on page 10

Former preterist Sam Frost documented how the epistles of Barnabas, Hermas and Clement all expressed this kind of disappointment over the “failure” of the Parousia (Sam Frost, *Misplaced Hope* [Colorado Springs, CO: Bimillennial Press, 2002]).

It is obvious from these citations that it is not sufficient to simply claim that the early church believed in a future eschaton. We must seek to know why they had a crisis of faith over the seeming failure of Christ to come in AD 70. That reason is simple: The New Testament writers emphatically posited the Parousia to occur in the first century.

## Objection Overruled!

Don K. Preston

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**Reason #4** — A strong case can be made that the Book of Revelation was written in approximately A.D. 95, long after the events of A.D. 70.

[Citing Irenaeus] I want you to notice when he says John the apostle had his apocalyptic vision...

“...For that was seen not very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign.” Irenaeus says John had his “apocalyptic vision (the things he writes about in the Book of Revelation) towards the end of Domitian’s reign.”

Who was Domitian? Domitian was a Roman Emperor near the end of the first century.

Here’s what is so fascinating about Irenaeus’s statement. Domitian’s reign did not even begin until A.D. 81. His reign ended with his assassination on September 18th, A.D. 96.

**Response:** While a book could be written in response to just this singular point, the reader needs to be aware of how much Mr. Campbell simply asserts but offers no documentation for his claim. (See Kenneth Gentry’s *Before Jerusalem Fell* for one of the best examinations of the late date claims about Revelation. While Mr. Campbell seeks to convince his readers that the late date is firmly established, the reality is that this is simply not true. Let me offer a few bullet points in response.

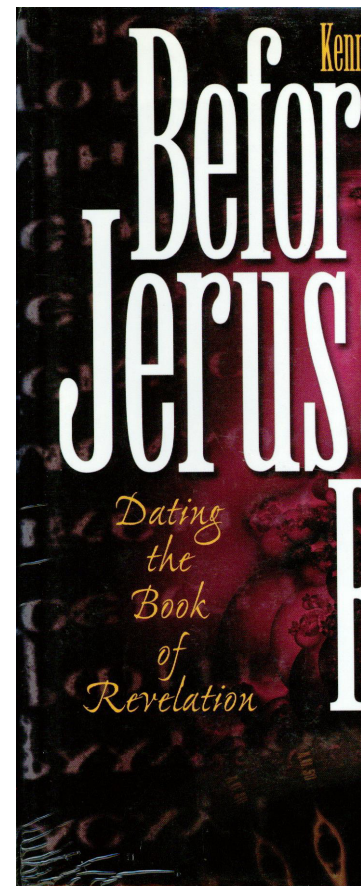
- While the current consensus among scholars is that Revelation was written in the reign of Domitian, this view is changing:
- Early attempts to use archeology to prove that certain Christian individuals were involved in the alleged persecution have, in recent times, found to be faulty and in need of correction. Improved assessments of dating techniques have effectively placed the key individuals outside the persecution time frame that could have involved Domitian.
- Revisionist historians have sought to rehabilitate Domitian's place in history and their efforts have provided a credible alternative to long standing accounts from traditionalist historians. It is extremely likely that Domitian was not as bad as he has been portrayed and that he did not persecute Roman Christians at any time during his troubled rule.”<sup>6</sup>

Robert Briggs offers this: “The alleged evidence for a Domitianic persecution against Christians turns out on closer scrutiny to be highly nebulous at best and therefore ought to be dismissed as illusory.”<sup>7</sup> These kinds of quotes could be multiplied many times over.

Revelation is written in the midst of persecution in the seven churches of Asia. They were promised imminent vindication at the coming of the Lord (Rev 22:10-12). The indisputable fact is that if one posits Revelation in the time of Domitian, Rome, the ostensible persecutor, did not fall for almost 400 years, thus lying outside the delimitation of “*these things must shortly come to pass*” (Rev 1:1-3).

Kenneth Gentry has noted:

Another detriment to the strained interpretations listed above is that John was writing to historical churches existing in his own day (Rev 1:4). He and they are presently suffering “tribulation” (Rev 1:9a). John’s message



(ultimately from Christ 1:1) calls upon each to give careful, spiritual attention to his words (2:7, etc.). John is deeply concerned with the expectant cry of the martyrs and the divine promise of their soon vindication (6:10; cp. 5:3-5). He (John, DKP) would be cruelly mocking their circumstances (while committing a ‘verbal scam’ according to Mounce) were he telling them that when help comes it will come with swiftness—even though it may not come until two or three thousand years later.<sup>8</sup>

In another work, he wrote:

The New Testament epistles were speaking to real people in their original settings. Historically, the early church to whom the apostles write exists in throes of a rapidly expanding and increasingly deepening persecution. Consequently, the warnings of persecutorial suffering apply to the original recipients in a direct, relevant, and important way. We misconstrue them if we universalize them so as to require the continued persecution of the church until the second advent.<sup>9</sup>

To suggest, as Campbell does, that all Revelation communicates is that when the Lord finally gets around to coming, even if that is tens of thousands of years removed from the time of Revelation, that He will take the fastest chariot out of heaven is untenable and completely counterintuitive. Consider Revelation 22:10: “*And he said to me, ‘Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.’*”

Consider that Revelation, as all scholars agree, anticipated the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, including the book of Daniel specifically. The prophecy of the resurrection, for instance (Revelation 11 & 20), draws on Daniel 12. Daniel was told to seal the vision of his book because it was far off. It was not near.

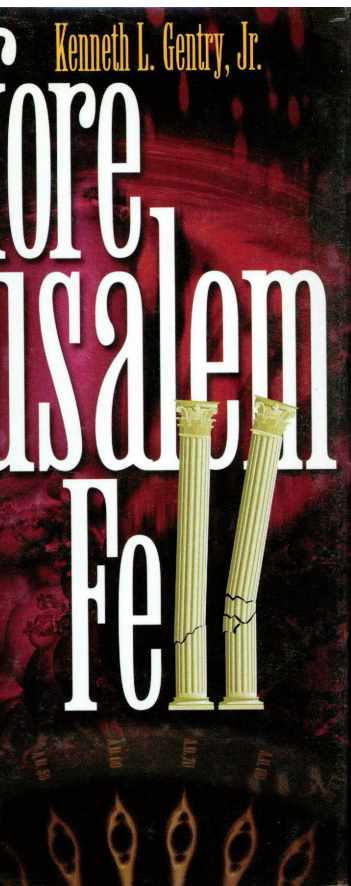
John, however, reiterating Daniel’s prophecies, was told, “*Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.*” What Daniel foretold was not near when he wrote, so he was to seal the book. John, repeating Daniel’s prophecies, was told, “*Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.*”

It is patently not proper, therefore, to simply affirm that John was being told that, when the end would finally come, it would just occur rapidly. That destroys the temporal contrast between Daniel and Revelation.

Look now at some more points from Revelation that overrule Campbell’s claims:

- The sins committed by Babylon of Revelation were historical sins that simply do not fit the city of Rome.
- Babylon was the city that killed the Old Testament prophets (Rev 16:6). See my book, *Who Is This Babylon?* in which I document that the terminology used in chapter 16 demands that the prophets in view were old covenant prophets. And here is a simple, but profound truth: Rome never killed a single Old Testament prophet! Only one city in the Bible is ever described as the city guilty of killing the Old Testament prophets: “*It is not possible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem*” (Luke 13:33).
- It was the city “*where the Lord was crucified*” (Rev 11:8). Note that the text says that the “*great city*” was “*spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.*” The truth is that only one city in all the Bible is ever spiritually called Sodom, and that was old covenant Jerusalem (Isa 1:15f; Ezek 16 / 23).
- It was the city that was killing the apostles and prophets of Jesus (Rev 18:20-24). Jesus said it was Jerusalem that would kill His apostles and prophets (Matt 23:29-37; Luke 11:49).
- It was the city that had shed all the blood shed on the earth (Rev 18:20-24). This is almost a quotation from Matt 23:35-36).
- It was the city whose measure of sin for killing the servants of God and His Son was now full (Rev 17:6f).

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# First Generation AFTER the End

**ONE OF OUR READERS** asked the following excellent questions: “[In view of] the rapture and the long silent gap [afterward] ... *what was God’s plan* to build and perpetuate the church into the new age? There didn’t seem to be any *apostolic succession* (so no one-on-one, face-to-face passing on of the torch). And the later church fathers couldn’t correctly interpret the eschatology of the New Testament even though it was pretty evident to first century Christians. Where was the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit in all of this?”

The Rapture removal of all saints at the Parousia definitely forced the Church to restart. However, even though there were no true Christians left behind to guide the next generation, they did have the writings of the apostles. And since those documents were inspired by the Holy Spirit, they were fully capable of instilling faith in those who read them. Thus, God provided everything that was needed to convert the lost and rebuild His Church.

## Gospel Had Been Preached

Jesus had commissioned His twelve apostles to “make disciples of *all the nations*” (Matt 28:19), and to preach the gospel throughout “*the whole world*” before the end came (Matt 24:14). And according to Paul, that mission was accomplished (Rom 10:18, 16:26; Col 1:6, 23).

This means the gospel had been proclaimed wherever the twelve tribes had been scattered in the Diaspora. And since many of them rejected the gospel, it was preached to the Gentiles also, so that many Jews and Gentiles all over the Roman world had heard the message. And since not many of them believed the gospel before the

Parousia, it is no surprise to see some of them beginning to believe afterward.

Philip Schaff, explains how this most likely happened:

After the intense commotion of the apostolic age there was a [silent or dormant period] ... But the soil of heathenism had been broken up, and the new seed planted by the hands of the apostles gradually took root. ... The foundation was laid strong and deep by the apostles themselves. The seed scattered by them from Jerusalem to Rome, and fertilized by their blood, sprung up as a bountiful harvest [*History of The*

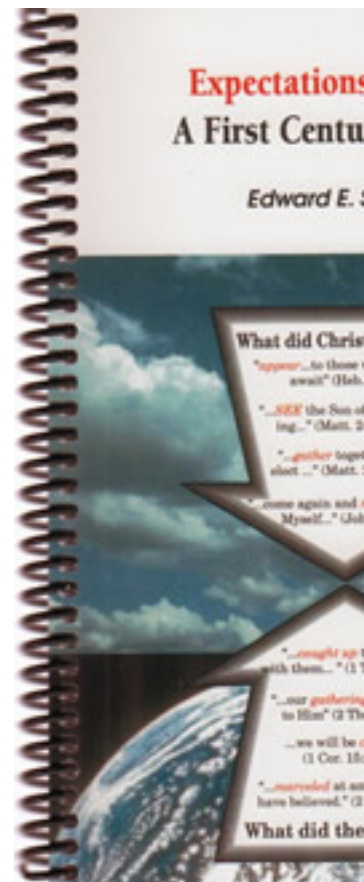
*Christian Church* (Ante-Nicene, vol. 2)].

## New Testament Manuscripts Were Available

The apostles wrote, copied, and distributed hundreds (if not thousands) of manuscripts all over the Roman world and Diaspora. There were so many manuscripts in existence after the Parousia that they could not all be gathered up and destroyed. I am sure the Jews tried to eliminate them, but there were too many in circulation. Many of them survived in libraries, scriptoriums, and other public records.

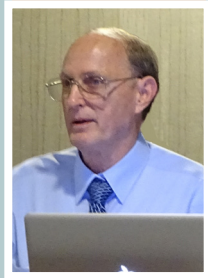
The rabbis had copies, and so did the Gnostics, Judaizers, heretics, and apostates. And there is evidence that some of them tried to corrupt the text, or rewrite them according to their own heretical beliefs.

Charles Hill . . . points to several post-70 writers who taught that the end-time events were *still future*, thus implying that those events *never happened* in AD 70.



# nd How did the Church restart?

Edward E. Stevens



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But since there were so many copies still available, they were not able to alter those texts without being noticed.

And because there were so many copies still in existence, it is easy to see how the next generation after the Parousia was able to learn the gospel. It seems certain that many, like *Justin Martyr* (early second century), came to faith by reading some of those manuscripts. And those New Testament documents not only contained the gospel, but everything else that was needed to rebuild and maintain the Church.

The gospel, which is the *seed of the kingdom* (Matt 13:18), was sown all over the Roman Empire before the end. Not all of that seed sprouted before the Parousia.

Some of it sprouted afterward. And others who had not heard the gospel before AD 70 learned about it through the New Testament writings which were still available. So, it was not a complete “restart” from *nothing*, but rather the sprouting of the seed that had *already been planted* beforehand. It was only a matter of time before a new “crop” of Christians arose, and they now had the inspired written Word (Sword of the Spirit) to guide them.

*The Seed* is where the *continuity* is, both in the gospel that was orally preached beforehand and in the written Word that remained afterward. So, there was never any danger of the Gates of Hades

prevailing against the Church, as long as the Seed remained. Neither the Great Tribulation, nor the Rapture, could prevent the regrowth of the Church. That seed began to sprout and grow immediately after the Parousia and Rapture.

### Were There Any Other Documents?

In order to downplay the significance of the silence after AD 70, and to avoid lending any support to the first century Rapture, some preterist leaders suppose that there must have been some other documents after AD 70 which mentioned or taught full preterism. And they suppose that the reason why no one has found any of those full preterist writings is because of one or more of the following situations:

These writers . . . affirmed that those events were “about to occur” in their lifetime in the very near future.

- Early church leaders *destroyed* those documents
- The Vatican has them *hidden* away somewhere
- They exist but have *never been translated* into English

However, Dr. Charles Hill (New Testament professor at *Reformed Theological Seminary* in Florida) explains the improbability of those theories:

Even if some had wanted to cover up such central events and Christian teachings – supposing for the moment that they occurred in something like a [full-preterist] fashion, and were preached and taught and written about – it taxes the imagination to conceive of how such a campaign could have been successfully conducted throughout the entire church, which for centuries had no central authority capable of such crushing censorship. Clarence A. Forbes argues that the early Christians were



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remarkably disinclined to call for the destruction of heretical books [“Books for the Burning,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 67 (1936): 114-25]. And even if no primary document survived, we would surely have reports of the events or the controversies surrounding them, as we do for so many other controversies in the church. Some descriptions and critiques of Christianity from pagans have also survived, and evidently these wells are as dry as the Church’s with regard to [full-preterist] sources. Those who have been involved in the discovery, collection, translation, and publishing of new documentary finds for the

## First Generation AFTER...

Edward E. Stevens

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past several decades have hardly been answerable to any ecclesiastical authority, and so their failure to unearth [full-preterist] documents could hardly be due to any churchly conspiracy [“Eschatology in the Wake of Jerusalem’s Fall,” *When Shall These Things Be?* Keith Mathison, editor. pp. 109-110].

Furthermore, there is no justifiable reason to think that the Roman Church has any preterist documents hidden in their vaults, since Jesuit preterists like Alcázar (1618) would have used them as ammunition against the Reformers.

And the suggestion that some full preterist documents exist, but have not yet been translated, reveals a very shallow understanding of the field of *textual studies*. Over the past 200 years, thousands of textual scholars have read those documents in their original languages (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, and Coptic), and they know exactly what those documents contain.

All of the earliest manuscripts have been translated into multiple languages. If there were any full preterist statements found in those manuscripts, they would have known about them and reported them. So, just because some of those documents have not yet been translated into English, it doesn’t really matter.

In the last 150 years since J. P. Migne (1800-1875) compiled his *Complete Patrology*, many more manuscripts have been found, identified, translated and published, but there still have been no full preterist writings found.

Moreover, even though it may be true that some of the later Latin, Coptic, and Syriac writings have not been translated into English, we still know what they contain. And if textual scholars who read those manuscripts had found any full preterist statements, we would know about them.

This lack of full preterist documentation in the first five centuries becomes even more clear when we hear textual scholars like Dr. Charles Hill say, “An early Christian writer who is even aware of a [full-preterist] eschatology in the church has yet to be found” [*WSTTB*, p. 107].

So, while all of us full preterists continue to cherish the hope that an early church manuscript might one day be discovered which claims the fulfillment of all end-time events, or reveals the post-70 saints’ awareness of the full preterist view, we need to face the realistic probability that *no such document ever existed in the first place*. If all of those few faithful remaining saints were raptured, then none of them would have been left on earth afterward to write any documents or claim the fulfillments. And since that silence and absence is the very scenario that we find after AD 70, it points unmistakably to a rapture. †

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**For further study, get these resources from our website: [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)**

*Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture* by Edward E. Stevens

*Final Decade Before the End* by Edward E. Stevens

*Outbreak of the Zealot Rebellion* (free article by email request: [preterist1@preterist.org](mailto:preterist1@preterist.org))

Jesus said that Jerusalem was to fill up the measure of her sin, which included the slaying of the prophets, as well as His apostles and prophets, in the first century (Matt 23:29- 37; See also Paul in 1 Thess 2:14-16, where Paul accuses Israel and Jerusalem of doing the very things that Revelation accuses Babylon of doing). This raises a serious question, or several questions actually.

Jesus was saying that the foregoing fathers of Jerusalem had killed the prophets. And their guilt would be filled up by the Jews of the first century. That means that it had taken Israel literally centuries to finally fill up the measure of her sin by persecuting the saints. Consider then that, as noted, the evidence for a Domitianic persecution is slim (to none). So, how was it possible for Rome to fill up the measure of her persecutorial sin in such a short period of time?

Even the sources that are commonly cited to show that Domitian persecuted the church posit that there was persecution only within the last two years (at most, perhaps even *the last year*) of his reign, and that it involved very few people. Did that fill up Rome's measure of sin? You then have to jump forward to the reign of Trajan (circa AD 112) when the issue of Christian persecution is even mentioned. Yet, it is clear that it was not in any way a Roman policy. How could one argue that, in contrast to Israel's long, bloody history, the focus of Revelation is on Rome?

Revelation's promise of the imminent judgment of Babylon is the anticipation of the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises made to old covenant Israel. Revelation is saturated with echoes of Old Testament prophecies of the last days judgment of the city of Jerusalem (Deut 32; Isa 24-27, 65-66; Dan 12:2-7; Zech 10-14, etc.). Why would Revelation apply all of those old covenant promises of the last days judgment of Jerusalem (prophecies foretelling the covenantal judgment of Jerusalem for the last days) to the non-covenantal city of Rome?

Note: I have not addressed Mr. Campbell's last two points, i.e., the identity of the beast in Revelation and his claims about the Great Tribulation. My comments on the dating of Revelation and the Tribulation sufficiently cover them, even though not addressing his comments on the beast directly.

In light of all of these points (and more), it is obvious that Mr. Campbell has far overstated his case. His objections are based on faulty presuppositions. He is guilty of several logical fallacies. He has actually distorted the Biblical narrative. He has made false linguistic claims. For all of these reasons (and more), his objection is overruled! †

## Objection Overruled!

Don K. Preston

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2. BAS Staff (2024, June 4). *The Tel Dan Inscription: The First Historical Evidence of King David from the Bible*. Biblical Archaeology Society. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/the-tel-dan-inscription-the-first-historical-evidence-of-the-king-david-bible-story/>
3. See also page 98, N. 8 – “Most of what the Church Fathers wrote remains untranslated in Latin (Patrologia Latina: 218 Volumes and Greek [*Patrologia Graeca*: 166 Volumes]. Therefore, we cannot be dogmatic in asserting what the early Church Fathers believed. “The patrologies combined weigh in at over a million pages” (Bloch, H. [1994]. *God's Plagiarist: Being an Account of the Fabulous Industry and Irregular Commerce of Abbe Migne* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press], 1).  
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**M**AYBE I'VE BEEN LIVING under a theological rock, but there's been this debate/argument/accusation/refutation/fleeing/running away from the charge of "replacement theology," as if it is akin to being a Satanist, anarchist or even a heretic. However, as a believer who interprets prophecy as being fulfilled, I am used to the label 'heretic.' The more I think about 'replacement theology' as something equated to anti-Semitism, the more I realize there may not be a better term to describe the new covenant the Savior won for us.

Isn't replacement theology proven in the reality that our old sinful nature was replaced with the glory of God, and that it's not just a matter of our wretched sinful man being cleaned up, re-purposed and civilized, and that we now just need to try really hard?

Here's what Yeshua said (ESV used for all quotations):

Mark 12:8-9 – "And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others." Then, someday 2000 years later, he will bring those wicked tenants back, reform them, and again put them in charge as fulfilled tenants!

Ok, so that last sentence isn't part of the verse. I added that for comedic absurdity.

**He was going to replace them** (not fulfill them)!

Here's what Yahweh said in Isaiah 3:16-24:

*"The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks,*

*and the handbags; the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils. Instead of perfume there will be rottenness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty."*

Notice that there is no mention of God redeeming those former items, polishing them up, praying over them, and re-gifting them in the new kingdom? Nope. He replaced them.

Here's what Paul wrote about replacement theology:

1 Cor 15:42-49 – "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Thus it is written, 'the first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven . . . Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

Paul clearly reveals that there is a principle involved with the kingdom; God creates a visible, real example of a spiritual reality that will occur at a later time in their history. I am going to show that this principle is demonstrated in numerous facets of Scripture.

God **replaced** Jacob's name with Israel. He did not redeem his name or **fulfill** his name.

Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah. Saul to Paul. Kephas to Peter. How were these names fulfilled? They weren't. They were **replaced** with a new name.

Jesus even went so far in His teachings as to say this:

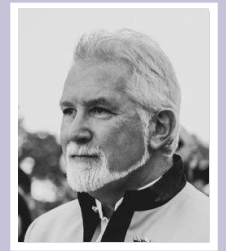
John 15:15 – "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."

Jesus did not say, "From now on I am **fulfilling** the name 'servants' to now mean friends." No, it was a total name replacement.



T. J. Smith

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Paul, in his writings, understood this new replacement concept:

Col 1:13 – “He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

Paul did not write, “He has purified and fulfilled the dominion of darkness to become an acceptable vessel for his use, and has fulfilled us into this newly remodeled, formerly dark kingdom.” No, he wrote that God replaced it.

Rom 1:25 – “. . . who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.”

Paul did not write, “. . . who fulfilled the truth of God for the lie.” No, these 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews exchanged/replaced the truth of God for the lie.

So, we see, even in the smallest of expressions and figures of speech, the thread of replacement theology.

Replacement theology has only been demonized by the Church to protect the misunderstood future blessings of national Israel. This misunderstanding of the physical kingdom vs. spiritual kingdom goes unnoticed, mainly by futurist Zionists. Zionists are the ones who want to continue to live in a fantasy that Jesus will split that eastern sky and set up a physical reign in Jerusalem. That can't happen in their world if Jews are no longer God's really, really, real first true love. They can't comprehend God putting away His first wife, even one who cheated on Him with every yahoo in town.

None of these Zionists would stand for that kind of unfaithfulness in their own marriage, but they think God would? None of them would divorce an unfaithful spouse and remarry a faithful, loving spouse with the intent of someday remarrying the first spouse. If we can't accept that type of dysfunctional behavior, why would we think Yahweh would? Aren't we made in His image? Didn't Paul say we have the mind of Christ? Are we not on the same wavelength as the Father when it comes to sin? Do

we know something God doesn't know?

This entire argument of villainizing believers who see replacement theology as a theme demonstrated throughout Scripture is only being pushed as a narrative by those wanting to keep national Israel as the favored child. The Christian Church is now seen as the “ugly-red-headed-buck-toothed-step-child” who Yahweh can't wait to move past in order to once again return to the unfaithful, covenant-breaking prostitute of the Old Testament.

I think this ideology borders on mental illness. Think about it: how insane would a new, second wife appear if the husband came home one day and found all the marriage photos from the husband's first marriage distributed all over the house? There are the honeymoon photos by the nightstand. Wedding photos on the fireplace mantle. Vacation photos on the dining room wall. How many of you second wives would do that? That behavior would make you clinically crazy. Didn't your husband engage in replacement theology when he divorced his first wife and replaced her with you? I would say the only family members who cling to fulfillment theology, in a marital context, are the discontent and angry spawn of the first marriage: “Someday dad will remarry mom and get rid of this new step-mom.”

This is exactly the behavior of many Jews and Zionists. They don't recognize the new covenant wife. They don't recognize Christians as spiritual Israel, Mount Zion, the new covenant community, the new vineyard tenants, or any other contrast laid out in Scripture, and John Hagee sycophants ignorantly follow in lock-step to this misunderstanding.

Instead of parsing out just this minute portion of replacement theology to defend the Jews, Zionists must be consistent in their total rejection of replacement theology to protect the ‘Jewish Nation.’ But doing this strips Scripture of its authority and message - that Yahweh practiced replacement all throughout Scripture.

Talk about replacement theology; even Paul's name underwent a replacement. Even his mode of receiving

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instruction was replaced, not fulfilled.

Gal 1:11-12 – “*But I make known to you, brothers, the gospel preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”

## Replacement Theology

TJ Smith

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Hmm. Wasn't the previous mode of understanding transmitted via temple education? (Even the former means of understanding was replaced.)

Keeping in mind Paul's explanation of the 'natural first' and then the 'spiritual second,' here are some examples of God-induced replacement theology:

- God used Yeshua's physical resurrection as a type and shadow of our spiritual resurrection
- The temple replaced with the presence of God in believers' hearts
- The 40-year exodus replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> century transition period
- The law replaced by grace
- Ishmael's status replaced by Isaac
- Esau's birthright replaced by Jacob
- The lamb replaced by Christ
- The high priestly office replaced by Christ and us
- Moses replaced by Christ
- The feasts of harvest replaced by Pentecost
- Old Testament shadow of death (Passover) replaced by New Testament Passover
- Those slain in the desert replaced by those brought into the kingdom
- The old covenant law of death replaced by new covenant grace

I know some will argue that this process could be called fulfilled theology, which is a much kinder, gentler, more politically correct name. But Yeshua, acting as a judge in AD 70, did not send the Jews to their room, and He didn't ground them or take away their electronics for a week. Nor did He spank them. He judged them and He killed them. He put them away as He did Ishmael. They were replaced. There was no fulfillment theology there, as that group of people were not re-shaped, ironed and pressed, and made into the people of Yahweh. They were totally replaced.

What about Yeshua acting as judge? Here's what He said:

Matt 23:34-35 – “*Therefore **I send you** prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.*”

This is not Yeshua quoting from Isaiah. This was the Savior speaking as Yahweh. He is expressing His deity as Godhead. He said: “I send you prophets and wise men and scribes,” and then went on to predict what these wicked leaders would do.

So, “fulfillment theology”? Sure, that's possible as a definition, but what really happens throughout Scripture is God shows Himself through a physical example that at some point gets replaced by a spiritual fulfillment. So, yes, fulfillment is the result **after replacement** occurs.

None of these examples I gave you were somehow morphed into something spiritual, by utilizing the pre-existing imperfect physical parts. The spiritual kingdom was not created from existing rubble from the temple. Jesus did not become our sacrifice by Yahweh changing the atomic structure of a lamb, thereby altering its state in order to preserve this flawed “fulfilled theology,” as some might claim.

I use the expression “fulfilled” all the time, but more and more I am convinced that we have been brow-beaten into submission by the mainstream Church and Scofield's influence, attempting to change and abandon what I see as replacement theology. We have retreated and allowed the terms to be re-defined just to get along.

So, yes, fulfillment  
after replacement

“Gee, can’t we all just get along?”

I will clarify that, for the purpose of understanding prophecy as completed, yes, this is best described and understood as “fulfilled.” I am 100% on board with that. When it comes to the new covenant and the work Yeshua did to bring us back to Yahweh and establish the kingdom, absolutely that was fulfilled. But does that negate or demand that we can never interpret anything in Scripture as being “replaced”? Of course not. I’m just trying to get across the point that Yahweh continually did things that replaced the previous work; it did not just fulfill it. In the process of that, it may have also fulfilled it, but that is not clearly demonstrated in every point I’m presenting.

I reject the charge of replacement theology as heretical and see no reason to compromise. It seems Zionists are the ones who have set out to demonize this phrase for only one purpose – to secure the chokehold on the western Church by keeping the separation going between Jews and Gentiles.

This is ironic because Paul, more of a Jew than anyone living today, wrote: *“For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God”* (Rom 2:28-29). Total replacement occurred.

It seems to me that fulfillment theology is 100% valid in that the spiritual Jew has become fulfilled in the body of Christ, and only through belief in Christ can one become a true Jew. That’s how the kingdom was fulfilled: the physical kingdom was replaced with a spiritual one, and the physical Jews were replaced with spiritual Jews.

So, as the classic rock band Argent once sang, “Hold your head up high”! Call it what it is. Replacement theology. Let’s take it back. I remember the band U2 performed “Helter Skelter” in concert, and lead singer Bono would introduce the song by saying, “This is a song Charles Manson stole from The Beatles. Well, we’re stealin’ it back.”

So, in the spirit of hermeneutical contrast/comparison, we are U2 and the Zionists are Charles Manson, and replacement theology is now Helter Skelter.

Go ahead and start sharing from this perspective and study it out yourself. You will probably begin to find more examples of this replacement aspect in Scripture and add them to your arsenal of verses to prove this out.

Let’s start defending it. Stop acquiescing, doing the crab walk, making excuses, being politically correct, or being apologetic. There’s nothing wrong with God replacing an inherently flawed, purposely planned, obsolescent covenantal system.

For Zionists to prove a fulfilled-covenant kingdom instead of a replacement-covenant kingdom, the Zionists would have to find all the verses where God intended to merely re-form, re-shape, re-morph, and re-constitute all the particles of the old system. But that can’t be done. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of Yahweh replacing every physical visual representation of a coming new covenant with a spiritual new creation, not derived from anything existing in the old order. You know, new wine in old wineskins and all that... (in the voice of Lucy from Peanuts).

I am not arguing that all the preterist books and magazines need to change their titles to remove “fulfilled” from the covers. I think you know I’m speaking of other issues within the conversation. Christ fulfilled the entire law and fulfilled all the prophecies, but that’s not what we are battling right now. The naysayers have purposely created this narrative to drive the conversation. This is how I battle it. Sadly, these same accusers would admit that, in every instance mentioned in this article, ‘replacement’ was exactly what happened in the salvific history of God. But they just can’t get beyond themselves to incorporate that into the whole picture. Therefore, they have chosen to blindly throw out the baby with the bathwater, simply to hold on to this fictional hope of Jews forever being God’s holy and true people. I know some of you are probably ticked about now, so go ahead and share your thoughts. We would love to hear them! Email me at:

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Fulfillment is the result  
replacement occurs.

## In This Issue:

### Objection Overruled!

*Responding to Charlie Campbell*

### First Generation AFTER the End

*How did the Church restart?*

### Parting Thoughts

*Is replacement theology heretical?*

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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

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