

# FULFILLED!

## Magazine

### PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

**RaptureGuy:** If you futurists would read the Bible instead of the latest prophecy books (whose predictions all fail) you'd realize that Christ came in AD70 to His generation, just like He promised.

**DispyDan:** Hah – I do read my Bible and it clearly states that ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED! Ain't happened yet. Thanks all the same, but I'm steering clear of preterist heresy.

**CBVer:** RaptureGuy, I don't know why you're arguing with a dispensationalist. As far as I'm concerned, anyone who believes in a literal rapture—even in AD70—is a dispensationalist.

**RaptureGuy:** On the contrary, it's you corporate body guys that are giving preterism a bad name by spiritualizing everything. It's no wonder we can't gain any ground in theological circles.

**Paul:** *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.* (Eph 4:29)

**James:** *With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.* (James 3:9-10)

**Jesus:** *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.* (John 13:35)

**RaptureGuy:** Sorry guys . . . I wasn't being Christlike.

**DispyDan:** Yeah, me too. Sorry.

**CBVer:** Same for me. It's far too easy to lose control of the tongue in these chat rooms. Forgive us Lord, and help us to be pleasing to you and bring glory rather than shame to your name.



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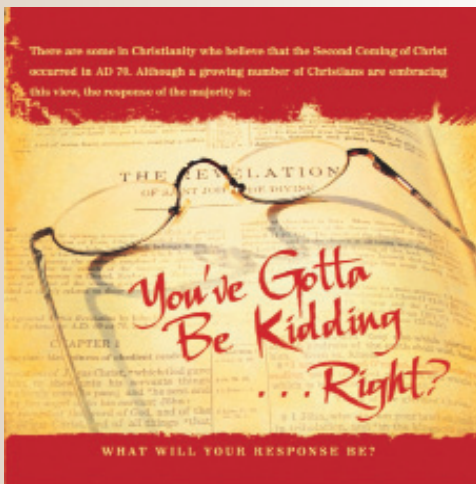
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**4.** **Editor's Note**  
Better late than never.

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

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**6.** **Life in the Kingdom - David Curtis**  
Kingdom Speech.

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What Now?

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Did Jesus pray that the Church *not* be raptured?

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**14.** **Objection Overruled! - Don K. Preston**  
Did the Millennium begin in AD 70?

*Death and life are  
in the power of the  
tongue, and those  
who love it will eat  
its fruit.*

*(Proverbs 18:21 ESV)*

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**Published by**  
*FULFILLED*  
*COMMUNICATIONS*  
*GROUP*

**Subscriptions**  
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## Editor's Note...

**D**UE TO WHAT I'LL call a “perfect storm” of events, this issue is nearly a month overdue. I try to have each issue start mailing from the printer at the beginning of each season. Although we will be well into spring when this issue arrives in your mailbox, at least it will still be spring! Hopefully I'll be back on schedule for the summer issue.

The tentatively titled “Living after the Fact” column we introduced last issue received very positive feedback. We asked readers for their suggestions for a title for the column and, after reviewing the responses, the column will now be titled “Life in the Kingdom.” This issue's article is provided by David Curtis, and touches upon what I believe is a very pertinent issue—our conduct in the online community. While my primary reason for not being involved in online theological/preterist interactions is a lack of time, my secondary reason is the fact that, as David points out, things can be brutal in the online community. Yes, even in the Christian online community. And, sadly, even in the preterist online community. To paraphrase Paul, “If I know all mysteries and all knowledge and can explain the resurrection and millennium, but do not have love, I am nothing.” Yes, we should pursue deeper understanding of theological truths. Yes, we should engage in dialog with others and interact with opposing views. But we are called to speak the truth in love.

In an effort to get this issue to the printer, I'll leave off here for this Editor's Update. As always, we are grateful for your prayerful and financial support.

Blessings,

*Brian*

... we are called to speak the truth in love.

# Mailbag...

I've watched "You've Gotta Be Kidding...Right?" on YouTube. I started from there, it was a real blessing. Keep doing what you do, God bless!

*N.K., Slovenia*

Watched a fantastic teaching on the subject that cleared up so many things for me. Had this publication mentioned at the end of it.

*Robert, Australia*

Thank you so much for publishing "What Am I to Do as a Preterist in a Futurist Church?"! Pastor Moore had such great insight and such a convicting message for me. When I revealed my eschatology at a ladies' Bible study it was like a feeding frenzy at the shark pool. That set the (very defensive) tone for my discussions on the subject for the next couple of years—until now. I've prayed for grace toward my brothers and sisters, but, Pastor Moore really articulated well how correct eschatology is not necessary for salvation. Thanks, Pastor Moore, for writing the article. Thank you, Mr. Martin, for publishing it. Thank you, Yahweh, for inspiring them to do so! In Christ,

*April, VA*

We appreciate Fulfilled! Magazine so very much! Our love and prayers are with you.

*Norm & Jeanie, OR*

We want to thank you for your labor of love for this magazine. Fulfilled! is a must. With our prayers and God's blessings,

*Ronald & Peggy, NC*

Purchased "Behind the Veil of Moses" and commend you on a very fine work. I love its ease of understanding. It should become a Fulfilled 101 text. Thank you for your work. In Christ,

*Greg, WY*

Thank you for Fulfilled! Magazine, good articles of late. Check enclosed to help with costs. Sincerely,

*Mary, TX*

I was excited to get my first copy of this great publication. It was insightful and helpful in my piecing together the Scriptures that show the unity of God's Word. He is not the author of confusion but it fits together once you understand where the pieces fit or even what they are. It is those AHA moments, like Don Preston highlighting the blood of the martyrs being vindicated from Abel onward in Matthew 23 in the words of Jesus to that present-day generation, up to the finality of AD 70. Ed Stevens in his "once for all" applications to the Church, ending of Scripture, and the parousia. Also the humble response of Jim Moore to the unity of believers to be centered around the gospel and not how one views Revelation, etc. I know with what I've read so far that I will read cover to cover each succeeding copy. Peace be with you,

*Curtis, GA*

Just a few words to commend you on the great job done on the winter issue (vol. 9, issue 4). All of the articles were educational and thought provoking. Not to forget—enjoyable. I was also richly blessed by Pastor Moore's article "What Am I to Do in a Futurist Church?" I needed that, because I was wondering about this. Thanks a lot for printing that article . . . and thank you, Pastor Moore for the lesson. In His service,

*Eric, VA*

Thank you very much for sending me Fulfilled! Magazine on a regular basis. Indeed, great help I did acquire on what's going on in preterism. Please, never stop this edifying work! I eagerly am waiting for it quarterly. May God bless the staff!

*Mattias, Ethiopia*

## Kingdom Speech

by David Curtis

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:1-6)*

**I T IS MY OPINION** that the majority of interactions that futurists and unbelievers have with preterists is conducted online. Even as a pastor, most of my ministry is conducted online. We have a small local fellowship of likeminded believers, but via the World Wide Web we are able to minister to a much larger audience. While I use the Web to publish my teachings, I do not participate in any online discussions. I learned very early as a preterist that these chat rooms and online forums can be brutal. Christians interact with other Christians and nonbelievers in ways that are anything but loving. They attack each other, mock each other, and rip each other to shreds while the lost world watches. I don't believe that these individuals would talk to each other this way in person, but seemingly when you are online it is okay to act in a way that is hurtful to others.

If, in fact, most futurists' interaction with preterists is online, we had better clean up our act. People would be more inclined to listen to us if we treated them with the respect they deserve. Much of what transpires in online discussions is a violation of Paul's word to the Ephesians:

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. (Eph 4:29 NASB)*

I believe that all of us are overwhelmingly guilty of not heeding Paul's command here. No matter how hard we try, we all err with our tongues! Otherwise, according to James, we'd be perfect:

*For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. (James 3:2 NASB)*

While we may never achieve perfect control over our tongues, if we applied Ephesians 4:29 conscientiously, it would bring a radical change in all of our relationships, both online and in person.

Words are powerful things, and each of us must decide how we are going to use their power. Words have the potential for great good or great harm. Out of the

over one million English words at our disposal, certain words or combinations of words have an amazing and frightening amount of power to cause enormous and sometimes irreparable damage to others. Because words possess power, we need to be very careful how we use our words! So Paul cautions us on using unwholesome words: “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.” The grammatical construction Paul uses here means “every, each” word that comes from the mouth is to be wholesome, and no uttered word should be harmful. Keep in mind that the context here is unity in the body of Christ. Paul wrote this admonition because we can use words to cause disunity and bring harm to the body of Christ.

The word “unwholesome,” the adjective *sapros*, is used by Greek writers to describe rotten wood, withered flowers, and rancid fish. So *sapros* denotes literally “what is rotten, putrid, or corrupt, useless, or unprofitable.” *Sapros* is used by Matthew to refer to rotten fruit (Matt 7:17-18) and rotten fish (Matt 13:48). Applied to language and relationships, *sapros* points to words that spoil relationships, poison another's influence, or corrupt another's character. The prohibition, in the form of the present imperative, has the force of cessation of activity in progress. Literally, in Greek, it is: “Stop letting rotten words come out of your mouths.”

When it comes to “unwholesome” words, the definition is rather nebulous; what might be unwholesome to you may not be to me. I think we could all probably agree on certain words we would consider unwholesome, but there are many other words that others would consider unwholesome that we may not. For example, John Piper, commenting on unwholesome words, writes: “First would be language that takes the name of the Lord in vain. It is a great contradiction of who we are as Christians if we say, ‘God!’ or ‘My God!’ or ‘God Almighty!’ or ‘Christ!’ or ‘Jesus!’ just because we are mad or surprised or amazed.”<sup>1</sup>

To me, none of those examples are taking the name of the Lord in vain. Our God's name is not “God,” it is

*I learned very early that these chat room forums can be brutal. Christians interact with other Christians and nonbelievers in ways that are anything but loving.*

David B. Curtis



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“Yahweh.” In Hebrew thought, name denotes “character.” Therefore, Exodus 20:7 could be translated “*You shall not take the ‘character’ of Yahweh your God in vain.*” This could literally be translated “*You shall not falsely represent the character of Yahweh.*” When followers of Yahweh live and act ungodly, we take His name in vain. While I don’t agree that Piper’s examples are instances of taking the Lord’s name in vain, I do feel that those terms should not be used as common expletives or exclamations.

Piper goes on to say, “The second kind of language that Paul would call rotten would be language that trivializes terrible realities—like hell and damnation and holiness. What’s wrong with saying, ‘What the hell!’ or ‘Hell, no!’ or ‘Go to hell!’ or ‘Damn it!’ or ‘Damn right!’ or ‘Holy cow!’ or ‘Holy mackerel!’? Among other things, these expressions trivialize things of terrible seriousness.”

While you may agree or disagree with him, I would disagree. Nevertheless, I do think that telling someone to “go to hell” would be unwholesome speech. I think that any word spoken in a mean-spirited way and intended to hurt can be unwholesome. I certainly would not classify “holy cow” as unwholesome words. If you think something is unwholesome, don’t use it. However, remember that this is your personal conviction and not something you should hold me accountable to. Conversely, I am not to allow my freedom to become a stumbling block to others.

What about profanity? Who decides what is profane? Is it okay to say “dung”? What about “s\*\*t”? Again, if words are used to hurt, they are unwholesome. If you think something is unwholesome, don’t use it. But be careful in judging others by your standards.

Words are powerful things. We all grew up saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” But that’s a lie! Words CAN hurt. You may follow it up with, “I didn’t mean it,” but the words still hurt. You may say, “I shouldn’t have said it,” but the words still cause emotional pain. Whether it is gossip, sarcasm, slander, criticism, harsh jokes, careless remarks, or complaints, words can hurt! Although we all realize this when others are saying things that hurt us, we don’t often think of the damage done by our own words. We need to be constantly praying the following prayer of David:

*Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3 NASB)*

The substance of David’s evening prayer was that Yahweh would direct his words and his actions aright. He wanted Yahweh to set a guard at his lips to prevent wrong speech.

The tongue not only has the potential to cause great damage, it also can control and influence for good: “*But only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment.*” The word “edification” is from the Greek *oikodome*, which we see in the following verse:

*... in whom the whole building (oikodome), being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord . . . (Eph 2:21 NASB)*

Here it is translated *building*. *Oikodome* refers to a building or to the act of building. Here it is referring to building up the body of believers—the Body of Christ. We are to use our words for good to build others up.

Think about the great speeches or even the great phrases of history: Patrick Henry’s resounding “Give me liberty or give me death!”; Nathan Hale’s vibrant “I regret that I have but one life to give for my country.” Consider FDR’s famous commentary on the bombing of Pearl Harbor: “This is a day that will live in infamy!” And who can forget JFK’s inaugural speech and the words “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country”? Or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s stirring words from the Washington Mall, “I have a dream!” All of those words changed the course of history. They challenged our very souls and spirits, and as a result, we and our country will never be the same.

Words can do the same for people and their perception of themselves. They can be used for good. Words can be used to inspire, uplift, motivate, instruct, and empathize. Here are some ways we can use words to build up:

## 1. ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAISE

Paul wrote:

*Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (1 Thess 5:11 NASB)*

Too often, we are prone to criticize others. Instead, we should be looking for reasons to praise them. Encourage others in areas where they are doing well. This goes for your children and your spouse as well.

## 2. APPRECIATION AND GRATEFULNESS

This is related to encouragement and praise, and it must come from the heart (not as flattery or manipulation). If you are thinking rightly about your mate or children or co-workers, express

*Continued on page 12*

## An Open Letter to the Preterist Community

by TJ Smith

**M**Y NAME IS TJ SMITH and I live in Fredericksburg, Texas. I am 52, and a professional performer who travels and performs a comedy/singing impersonations show (hey, it takes all kinds, right?). My wife and I are both full preterists, and involved in narrating audio books and leading worship at our Church. I have been a full preterist since around 2001, when my best friend introduced me to the concept one night while we were drinking coffee at the local IHOP. My response was the typical, fly-off-the-handle reply of “If Jesus already came, why are we still here!? What about my hope of glory!?” and a half dozen other responses that are typically elicited when confronted with this biblical truth.

Like most full preterists I have known, I immediately wanted to write a book to explain this eye-opening revelation to the world. I’m glad I didn’t, as there are so many excellent books available written by both recent and ancient authors who are much better at communicating on paper than anything I ever could have written . . . wroted, coulded written—oh well, you get the point.

After 13 years of investigating, studying, and purchasing every book I could find about end-times, I feel as though I can confidently take a breather and defend my position to any futurist. I recently had a short conversation with Joseph Vincent on Facebook and found him to be very “plugged in” and on the “front lines” of promoting truth of Yeshua’s massive victory. What I came away with from that conversation was a question of “what now?”

What do we, as a community of believers, do now that we have established that there really is another way to interpret Scripture. Not that this is a new doctrine, but it is still very new to first-timers, and just as shocking and earth-shattering as it was to me and probably most of you when we first heard it. I realize that daily people are joining the “cloud” of witnesses that professes and shares this theology, but I wonder, as a community, should we be thinking a little more “corporately” of how to (without meaning to sound too hip or secular) “market,” “package,” or “brand” preterism?

Here’s what I mean: After 14 years I still don’t like the label “preterist.” I simply can’t get used to it. It almost has a feeling of “something other than Christian.” Our daughter still has a hard time understanding why this view must be referred to as preterism. I see her point and totally get it. She’s never read the word in the Bible or heard it preached in a Church, so to her it’s almost

cult-sounding. If we as a community could find a less confusing word or one that doesn’t sound so foreign, I think we would have one less hurdle to face with our futurist brothers and sisters.

Since my wife and I lead worship at our Church, we make our point by never singing about the devil and never singing about what WE are going to do for God. Phrases like “We are marching on and taking the Land,” “We are going to defeat the devil and stand,” “We are taking back the possessions the devil stole,” yada yada yada. That whole attitude is non-existent at our place of worship. We sing about Yahweh, to Yahweh. This is our passive-aggressive way to “brand” our beliefs. We also lead a home study group. Once again, we never encourage “Satan-speak” (“pray for my son Billy, the devil has him”). We gloss over comments like that and pray for Billy, but never address the devil nor cast him out. We also are going through the Book of Galatians using David Curtis’ audio sermons. Our group trusts us, therefore they trust David’s teachings and they are being introduced to preterism without knowing it.

My thoughts on this whole “marketing” concept come from my entertainment past, so, if you will indulge me, I’ll attempt to illustrate what I’m driving at using marketing jargon. It’s essential for artists to create a “brand” that people can relate to and with which they feel comfortable. Here’s an example of what I mean: By now, most of us have heard the name David Curtis even if we haven’t listened to his messages. I’ve noticed that David does something in his broadcasts that I consider “branding.” Every Sunday morning he begins with “(small chuckle) Good morning! Welcome to Berean Bible Church!” Even though this is a small “brand,” it still is consistent, positive, reliable, and is branding his “product” (teachings) in a way that makes you feel welcomed, warm and relaxed. He never varies from this greeting and I don’t think he should. This is a part of marketing and branding a product. Something done with intent, purpose, and the end goal of making what you are promoting both attractive and desirable. This concept will work for our belief system if we can formulate a united, across-the-board “company line” as they say. Although I have my doubts about the probability of this happening, I know it’s definitely possible. Getting everyone involved and adopting certain “phrases,” “catch words,” and “point words” (more marketing jargon) might be something that’s simply out of our reach right now. Currently, it seems that we are splintering off into sub-groups (Individual

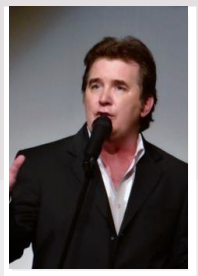


## What Now?

**TJ Smith**

TJ Smith is a professional entertainer and commentary contributor to the *Fulfilled Covenant Bible*. TJ and his wife also lead worship at their church

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body resurrection, Corporate Body resurrection, etc.) in the same way the Disciples of Christ splintered from Church of Christ, the Southern Baptists left the mainline Baptists, and First Methodists splintered from the United Methodists. Preterists are becoming as fragmented as the mainstream Church. The only difference is they all believe Jesus is still coming back and that we are all heretics!

I don't claim to have the answers—I'm like John Lennon . . . I just ask the questions.

I would like to hear what you think. What can we do corporately to reshape preterism into a palatable, inoffensive (or is it unoffensive; nonoffensive?), nonthreatening viewpoint that sounds like a breath of fresh air rather than a cult? A viewpoint that makes the futurist feel comforted and even more hopeful than a future, literal, physical, bodily, every-eye-shall-see-Him return of the Savior? Maybe this is something Don Preston and others could tackle as part of their conferences. I am willing to get behind any of the leadership (whoever that is perceived to be) who are willing to create some “think

tank” and discuss what to do, or if we even need to do anything all. Perhaps I am way off base here. Perhaps I am the only preterist who is thinking these thoughts.

But could it be time to organize and formulate a better way to present preterism to the mainstream believer? Perhaps that would entail certain words to avoid, certain words to use, or ideas, concepts, and introductions. Maybe we can develop certain conversation points that with which futurists could easily agree when engaging them in discussions. The reality might be that there are no two or three primary ways that work—after all, each person is different. I have found that NOT saying I'm a Preterist is a good place to start. How about you? What ways have you found successful in opening dialog with others? What hasn't worked? If you are willing to share your thoughts on any of these topics, I'm willing to catalog and organize them to see if there is perhaps a consensus. If there is enough response I'll share the findings in a future issue of the magazine. You may contact me at:

TJSmithMusic@yahoo.com



[Editor's note: I am all for creating a united front in the Preterist community. However, as I expressed to TJ, I simply do not have the time to invest in coordinating such an endeavor. Therefore, please address your correspondence to TJ regarding the topics he has raised. I hope that a majority of us are willing to focus on our fundamental points of agreement and form a unified presentation of preterism to futurists, rather than dividing over our disagreements on the details.

While “preterism” is the proper theological term for our belief, I agree that it is rather awkward. Just as the layperson may more readily adopt the term “God-man” to describe Christ rather than the theological “hypostatic union,” perhaps a term more endearing than preterism (Covenant Eschatology, Fulfilled Eschatology?) is needed for the layperson.]

## Online Preterist Magazine

Many of the content contributors to *Fulfilled!* Magazine, along with a growing number of other writers, can be found online at *The Fulfilled Connection Magazine* (not affiliated with *Fulfilled!* Magazine or *Fulfilled Communications Group*).

# TFCMag.com

**The Fulfilled Connection Magazine**

## Do Not Take Them Out NOW (John 17:15)

by Ed Stevens

**A** MEMBER OF THE Yahoo discussion list that I moderate asked the following question: “John 17:15 is used by critics to negate the idea of a literal rapture of all the living saints at the Parousia. In this verse, Jesus asked the Father NOT to take the disciples out of the world. What did Jesus mean by that statement?”

The reason rapture critics misunderstand John 17:15 is because they do not adequately take into consideration either the *context*, i.e., what Jesus said before and after this verse, or *the occasion* when He said this.

Let us deal with the *occasion* first. When and where did Jesus speak these words? These words were prayed to the Father during the Last Supper in the upper room, just before Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and went to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives (John 18:1). This was the evening in which Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and condemned. So these words were spoken just before the final events of His life in the flesh on earth, after which He ascended to heaven.

Now let’s study *the context*, which includes the previous four chapters (John 13-16). Jesus knew that the time of His departure out of this world to the Father (that is, His Ascension) was getting near (John 13:1). He knew that He had come forth from the Father and was soon going back to the Father (John 13:3). Then notice what He said to the disciples during the Last Supper: “I am with you a little while longer” (John 13:33), and “Where I go, you cannot follow Me **NOW**, but you shall follow **later**” (John 13:36; bold emphasis mine). Jesus then makes it abundantly clear that He is talking about His Ascension: “**In My Father’s house are many dwelling places . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also**” (John 14:2-3; bold emphasis mine).

Question: Were all twelve disciples dead by the time Jesus returned? Or, is He saying that those who are still alive would be “received to Himself” at His coming, just like the dead ones would be also? Jesus does not distinguish between the dead ones and the living ones. All twelve of them (including the replacement for Judas Iscariot) would be “received to Himself” at His coming (John 14:2-3), regardless of whether they were dead or alive at the time of His return. Compare this with Matthew 19:27-29 and Luke 22:28-30, where

Jesus promised the twelve disciples that they would “sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” at His return. Jesus does not distinguish between the living and the dead in those two texts either. The implication is that both the living and dead disciples would be “received to Himself” and “sit on twelve thrones” at the time of His return. Jesus promised this to them. They were expecting it. Did they get it? Or were they still on earth afterwards completely unaware of His “coming again to receive them to Himself”?

Both Peter and Philip wanted to go with Christ when He ascended, so that they could see the Father (John 13:37 and 14:8), but Jesus said “not now, but later.” Jesus repeatedly said throughout this context that He was going to the Father in heaven at the Ascension, and would “come again” at His Parousia to receive them to Himself (John 13:1, 3, 33, 36; 14:2-4, 12, 28-29).

Jesus told them what would happen to them during the transition period between His Ascension and His Parousia. He would send the Holy Spirit to them to enable them to complete the Great Commission (John 14-16). Jesus warned them about how much they would suffer while He was gone to the Father (John 16:1-4). Then He mentioned His Ascension again, “Now I am going to Him who sent Me” (John 16:5). Notice that He repeatedly mentioned the fact that *the disciples would not go with Him at this time*, because they had a job to accomplish first (the Great Commission, cf. John 14:12-15, 26; 15:8, **16**, 27; 16:13; 17:11-15; and **17:18-20**).

At least twice in this context, Jesus directly alluded to their Great Commission task: (1) **John 15:16** – “I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.” Notice the past tense here (“chose” and “appointed”); (2) **John 17:18** – “I also have sent them into the world.” Notice the past tense here as well (“sent”). The word “sent” is APOSTELLO, from which we get apostles (sent out ones). What had the apostles been “sent out into the world” to do? What had Jesus “chosen and appointed” them to do? Obviously to preach the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission!

The implication is living and dead disciples would be “received to Himself” and “sit on twelve thrones” at His return.

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## Studies in Redemptive History

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If they had been taken to heaven with Him at His ascension, the Great Commission would never have been accomplished. So Christ promised that after He ascended to the Father, He would send the Paraclete (Holy Spirit) to them to help them accomplish the Great Commission (John 14:16-17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-14).

Jesus then spoke to the disciples about His upcoming appearances to them during the transition period between the Ascension and His Return (“I will come to you” and “disclose Myself to you” and “come and make our abode with you” and “you will see Me” John 14:18-23; 16:16-27). Those visionary and revelatory appearances during the transition period (such as His appearance to Stephen at his stoning, and to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Acts 7:55; 9:4) were not His “coming again to receive them to Himself” (i.e., the Parousia). Instead, those appearances were for the purpose of revealing things to the apostles and encouraging them, and were coordinated with the work of the Paraclete to help them finish the Great Commission (John 16:20-22, 33). The book of Acts shows how those revelatory appearances actually occurred during the transition period, while also stating that His Return was still future (Acts 3:19-23; 17:31).

Jesus made it clear throughout this context (John 13-17) that when He returned (“come again” in John 14:3), the disciples would be taken out of the world **at that time** (i.e., “follow me later” John 13:36; and “come again and receive you to myself” John 14:3), but not until they had finished the Great Commission. Jesus said that He came forth from the Father, came into the world, and was now leaving the world and going back to the Father (John 16:28). That is the context leading up to chapter 17.

Now in chapter 17, Jesus said to the Father that He had completed His earthly mission (John 17:4), and asked the Father to take Him out of the world and return Him to heaven to once again share the glory that He had with the Father before the world was created (John 17:5). Jesus then asked the Father NOT to take the disciples out of

the world **at this time** (John 17:15), because they had a task to accomplish first (John 17:6-23). But once that task was complete, Jesus asked the Father to take them out of the world **at that time**, so that they could “be with Me where I am” at the time of His return (John 17:24). This is in perfect harmony with what Jesus had told the disciples earlier in their conversation during the Last Supper (“follow me later” John 13:36; and “come again and receive you to myself, so that **where I am, there you may be also**” John 14:3). Notice the same phrase (“**where I am**”) is found in both John 14:3 and 17:24.

So now we see what John 17:15 means in its context: Jesus did not want the Father to take the disciples out of the world **at this time** (at His ascension). They had a job to do first (the Great Commission), and Jesus wanted them to stay there and finish it. However, once the Great Commission was completed, they would “follow Him later” (John 13:36) at His return (John 14:2-3), so that they might be with Him “**where He is**” at that time (i.e., in heaven). Jesus was going back to heaven at the Ascension, leaving the disciples on earth to finish their task, but would “come again and receive them to Himself, so that they could be with Him where He is” (John 14:2-3).

This text (John 17:15) is not difficult to understand when we take into account everything Jesus actually said to his disciples in the whole context of the Last Supper (John 13-17). Jesus did not say that the disciples would **NEVER** be taken out of the world. Instead, He simply said “**NOT NOW**.” The disciples had a task to perform first, and Jesus had to prepare places for them in heaven first. **THEN** He would return and receive them to Himself.

In Conclusion: Our critics have lifted this verse (John 17:15) out of its context and twisted it to mean whatever they need it to mean in order to fit their spiritualized anti-rapture view. However, as we have seen, the text is quite easily understood when it is interpreted in harmony with its whole context (John 13-17), as we have done here.

After I wrote the above and posted it on my Yahoo discussion list, one of the critics of the rapture challenged it. In response, I wrote a 10-page paper defending the rapture interpretation of this entire context. If you would like to read his challenge and my response, simply email me (preterist1@preterist.org) and ask for the PDF entitled, “John 17.15 Resp to Critics.” ☩

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## Kingdom Speech

by David Curtis

...continued from page 7

it verbally. Tell them how much you appreciate all that they are doing. They won't know it if you don't put it into words.

### 3. KIND WORDS

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul wrote, "*Love is . . . kind.*" You should especially be kind when someone has done something stupid or has failed. It is tempting to ridicule the person but, at that moment, godly words of kindness are needed.

### 4. GENTLE WORDS

The fruit of the Spirit includes gentleness (Gal 5:23). The Greek word for gentleness does not imply weakness, but rather strength under control. The gentle person is under the control of the Spirit, who is pictured as a gentle dove. Gentleness means thinking about how the other person feels and how your words will make him feel.

Why should we watch our words, not let unwholesome speech come out of our mouths, and say things that build others up? "*So that it will give grace to those who hear.*" In this verse, the word translated "so" is the Greek word *hina*, and is part of a purpose clause. The word translated "grace" is the Greek word *charis*.

If you are at odds with anyone, perhaps because he or she has wronged you, you may be inclined to think, "This person doesn't deserve words that build him up! He deserves to be put down!" Do you not comprehend that grace is undeserved favor? Grace extends to others what Yahweh has extended to you. We are to be like Yeshua, and He was gracious:

*And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"* (Luke 4:22 NASB)

What is the means of grace in Ephesians 4:29? Our words toward other believers. Yahweh uses our speech to give grace. Are you aware that you can be a means of grace in another believer's life? That is a very sobering thought. I can actually impart God's grace to a fellow believer!

Now you might be thinking, "How is this possible?"

Have you ever been in the pit of despair, overcome by your circumstances? I have. And in those times, Yahweh used His Word, and prayer, to strengthen me. He also uses "fellow believers." When I recall times of trial, I remember the comfort that I received from my friends, who gave me encouraging words, words of support, and words of comfort. My friends helped me recall the teaching of Scripture and Yahweh's faithfulness. My friends ministered grace to me. They were used of God as a means of grace. Ministering to one another in time of need is an important means by which the Lord mediates His grace to us:

*Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.* (Eccl 4:9-10 NASB)

When you live independent of the corporate community, when you don't spend time with other believers, you cut off a means of God's grace. How sad it is for the person who has no one to minister grace to them in their time of need.

There is a story in the Jewish Talmud about a king who sent two jesters on an errand, instructing them, "Foolish Simon, go and bring me back the best thing in the world. And you, Silly John, go and find for me the worst thing in the world."

Both clowns were back in short order, each carrying a package. Simon bowed low and grinned. "Behold, Sire, the best thing in the world." His package contained a tongue.

John snickered and quickly unwrapped his bundle. "The worst thing in the world, Sire." Another tongue!<sup>2</sup>

Believers, we have great power to influence others with the words we speak. May our influence be to build them up and not tear them down. ✚

1. <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/make-your-mouth-a-means-of-grace>
2. Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations*, Assurance Publishers, # 6387, p. 1422.



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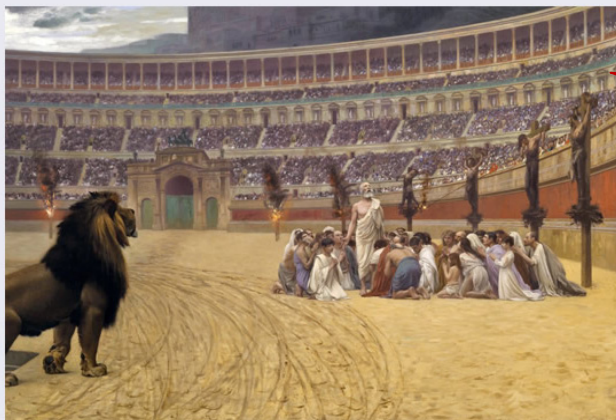
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# Final Decade Before the End

*Jewish and Christian History Just Before the Jewish Revolt*

Edward E. Stevens



Foreword by *Michael Alan Nichols*

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## The Millennial Martyrs

by Don K. Preston

**Objection To Preterism:** “The Millennium is synonymous with the thousand-year reign of Christ. Therefore, the beginning of the Millennium is determined by when Christ’s thousand-year reign began. Christ promised His disciples that they would rule and reign with Him in the regeneration/resurrection (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:29-30). This reign was still in the future when Revelation was written (Rev 3:21). Therefore, Christ’s reign and the Millennium must have begun at His AD 70 Parousia.”

### The Timing of the Millennium

**T**HE TOPIC OF THE Millennium is “hot” in preterist circles these days—as it has always been in the history of Christianity. Contra the Augustinian view that the Millennium began during the ministry of Jesus, there are those who now claim that the Millennium began in AD 70, with the coming of the Lord in vindication of the martyrs (per Matt 23:29f), and that therefore, we are currently living in the Millennium today. This view was stated by James Jordan (Reformed amillennialist) in our formal debate (2003, a book of that debate is available on my websites). Duncan McKenzie also affirms this view in his two-volume study of the Second Coming. McKenzie believes we are near the end of the Millennium, and that Romans 11:25f will be fulfilled in the not too distant future. (Duncan McKenzie, *The AntiChrist and the Second Coming*, Vol. 1, Xulon Press, 2009, 453, n. 14).

The full preterist paradigm claims that the Millennium began during Christ’s earthly ministry and terminated in AD 70. An objection to this paradigm is stated thusly:

“The Millennium is synonymous with Christ’s thousand-year reign. Therefore, the beginning of the Millennium is determined by when Christ’s thousand-year reign began. Christ promised His disciples that they would rule and reign with Him in the regeneration/resurrection (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:29-30). This reign was still in the future when Revelation was written (Rev 3:21). Therefore, Christ’s reign and the Millennium must have begun at His AD 70 Parousia.”

There are several major, fatal fallacies in this objection. This brief article will only touch on a few of those problems.

### Who Were These to Whom the Promise was Made?

The underlying assumption governing the objection is that the saints sitting on the thrones equates with the initiation of the millennial kingdom. The promise of sitting on thrones is in the future tense; therefore, the Millennium/Kingdom would not begin until AD 70

when Christ would come in His kingdom. This raises the following questions:

1. If the kingdom and rule of the saints did not exist until AD 70, then into what kingdom had the pre-AD 70 saints been translated: “*He has translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son*” (Col 1:13)? Further, what kingdom was it that Jesus bestowed on the apostles in Luke 22:28-29? And was not the Supper to be taken “in my (Jesus’) kingdom”? The argument here is very simple:

The Lord’s Supper would be taken in the kingdom (Luke 22).

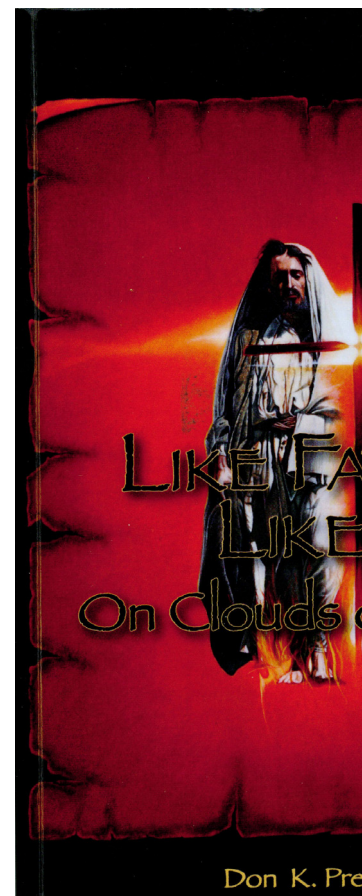
The early church—prior to AD 70—partook of the Supper.

Therefore, the kingdom, and thus the kingdom rule of Christ and the saints, existed prior to AD 70 (I am affirming here the initiation of the kingdom, and the anticipation of the consummation of the kingdom even in regard to the Supper. Jesus said He would partake of the Supper when it was fulfilled—in the kingdom (see Luke 21:28-32).

Now, since this was the kingdom Supper of Christ, and clearly existed prior to AD 70, it is untenable to say the kingdom would not exist until AD 70. What we have at work here is an “already-but-not-yet” motif.

2. Those who would possess the kingdom were “saints.” But, again, saints in/of what? They are not just “hanging out,” as it were. They are not “kingless” or “kingdom-less.” They belong to the Lamb in His kingdom.

As just suggested, this is not to say or suggest that the kingdom had been perfected, manifested, and vindicated. No, that is the point! Just as the saints were in the kingdom, and were “*sons of God*” (1 John 3:1) they were



# Did the Millennial begin in AD 70?

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nevertheless awaiting “*the manifestation of the sons of God*” (Rom 8:18f, cf. Rev 3:9) and their vindication and glorification. They were not waiting for the kingdom to come into existence, *per se*; they were awaiting their manifestation and vindication as sons of God. More on this below.

## They Shall Be Priests of God and of Christ, and Shall Rule with Him a Thousand Years

Another element of millennial confusion is that Revelation 20 identifies these saints as not only ruling with Christ on thrones, but also states, “*they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*” While it is common to read into the claim that the saints were not on thrones prior to AD 70 (a false claim), it is interesting that few discuss the issue of the priesthood of these saints.

The priesthood and the millennial enthronement of the saints with Christ is patently synchronous in Revelation 20:6. There is no priesthood apart from the ruling, no enthronement divorced from the priestly service. In other words, if the pre-AD 70 saints were serving as priests in the kingdom, then the objection under consideration is *prima facie* falsified.

The indisputable reality is that the pre-AD 70 saints were already priests. Take note of just a few texts:

*By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God, that is, the fruit of our lips* (Heb 13:15). The entire book of Hebrews is filled with the language of the priesthood liturgy, affirming that Christ was the High Priest over the “true” temple, and that His followers were likewise serving in the New Covenant priesthood.

*You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 2:5). Words could hardly be clearer. The saints in Asia—the very geographic area and churches to whom John wrote—were a priesthood unto God. (Peter included himself in that priesthood, and, as an

inspired apostle, he was asserting his authority over the diaspora (1 Peter 1:1).

*He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father* (Rev 1:6; some translations render this *He has made us to be a kingdom of priests*). Notice how the language here is echoed in 20:6. John likewise posited the existence of the kingdom as a present reality in 1:9, “*I am your brother in the kingdom and the tribulation.*”

We thus find in Revelation 1 virtually every element of the Millennium. We have the kingdom, the priesthood, the tribulation, and the service to God and His Christ. John clearly was not waiting for the Tribulation, the priesthood, or the kingdom. He was waiting for the consummation.

So, if Revelation 20 depicts the martyrs serving as priests, ruling with Christ in the kingdom during the Millennium, then, since John expresses those very elements as present realities when he wrote, this demonstrates that the Millennium was already ongoing.

So, my argument in regard to the priesthood and enthronement would be:

The Millennial enthronement of the saints would be synchronous with the priesthood of the saints in the kingdom of Christ (Rev 20:6).

Prior to John writing Revelation the saints were serving as priests in the kingdom of Christ.

Therefore, the millennial enthronement of the saints had already occurred when John wrote Revelation.

## Martyrs and the End of the Millennium— Revelation 6 & 20

There is a correlation between Revelation 6 and Revelation 20 which relates to the beginning of the Millennium. In my estimation, this correlation is fatal to the idea that the enthronement, and thus the beginning of the Millennium, did not take place until AD 70.

Revelation 6:9-11 and Revelation 20:1f are directly parallel in regard to the white robes given to the martyrs; this is equivalent to the enthronement of the martyrs in chapter 20. This is widely recognized among Revelation commentators:

Greg Beale connects Revelation 6 with chapter 20. (*New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, Paternoster, 1999, 1018).

David Aune says Revelation 6 and Revelation 20 are

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# The Millennium

by Don K. Preston

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parallel (“a doublet”). (David Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Revelation, Vol. 52c; Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998, 1087f).

Kenneth Gentry, commenting on Revelation 20, says, “The martyrs’ deaths, not only demand vindication, but explain and justify the judgments to follow.” (Kenneth Gentry, *Three Views of The Millennium and Beyond*, Stanley Gundry, Ed.; Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999, 251. Gentry has dramatically changed some of his views on Revelation 20, but we cannot discuss those here).

Craig Blasing, commenting on Revelation 20, likewise says, “Revelation chapter 6 introduced the expectation that some justice would be executed by God on their behalf, and they wait for that justice even as they are joined in waiting by subsequent martyrs. What John sees in Revelation 20 is the just vindication of believers slain for their faith, the fulfillment of them, or of the promises made by Christ himself.” (Craig Blasing, *Three Views of The Millennium and Beyond*, Stanley Gundry, Ed.; Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999, 222).

I could not agree more strongly with these comments. I suggest, therefore, if one acknowledges that the giving of the robes in chapter 6 is the same as the enthronement of chapter 20, there is no way to say that the enthronement and giving of the robes—that is, the beginning of the Millennium—did not occur until AD 70. Here is why:

If one claims Revelation 20:1-4, the enthronement of the martyrs, occurred in AD 70, then of necessity that was the time of the *parousia*. Jesus was emphatic that the avenging of the martyrs would be at His *parousia* in the judgment of Jerusalem (Matt 23:29-37, 24:29-34). But, take note: Revelation 6 and the giving of the robes is synonymous and synchronous with the enthronement of Revelation 20, yet in 6:9f, the martyrs are given their robes (their enthronement), and then *they wait for the Day of the Lord!* In other words, the enrobement/enthronement was an initial vindication, but was *preparatory for the Day of the Lord*—the time of full vindication. The enthronement was not the coming of the Lord in AD 70. This is undeniable. Likewise, the natural flow of Revelation 20 leads us from the enthronement, the millennial time of waiting for full vindication, to the Great White Throne judgment, the time of the coming of the Lord of AD 70 and the destruction of the martyrs’ persecutors.

Notice the parallels between Revelation 6 and 20:

- Past suffering (6:9) = (20:4)
- Giving of robes (6:11) = Enthronement (20:4 -5)
- Time of waiting for vindication (6:11) = the Millennium (20:4 -5)
- The Day of the Lord for final vindication, judgment of the persecutors (6:12f) = (20: 7-15) The Great White Throne Judgment, the destruction of the persecuting power, Satan

Now, if chapter 20 is parallel to chapter 6, then the *initial* vindication of the martyrs, indicated by the giving of the robes/thrones, simply cannot be AD 70, the time of *full* vindication. The robes and thrones belong to the initiation of the Millennium to be sure, but, those robes/thrones were given to them while they *waited for their vindication* at the Lord’s coming in judgment of their persecutors, which occurred in AD 70. That AD 70 judgment thus comes *after* the giving of the robes/thrones at the climax of the Millennium, not as the initiation of the Millennium.

This is further confirmed when we examine the motif of “*to him that overcomes*” found in the letters to the seven churches.

## “To Him Who Overcomes”

The Objection states that since the promise of being given the thrones in Revelation 3:21 is in the future tense, this negates the possibility that the kingdom rule of the saints was already in existence when Revelation was written. I believe this is wrong.

In each of the letters to the seven churches, Jesus promised that if they would overcome—“*be thou faithful unto death*”—they would be rewarded—“*and I will give you a crown of life*” (2:10).

A breakdown of those promises is important for our examination of the Objection:

1. Revelation 2:7: “*To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the Tree of Life.*”
2. Revelation 2:11: “*He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.*”
3. Revelation 2:17: “*To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, a white stone, a new name.*”
4. Revelation 2:26: “*To him who overcomes . . . I will give power over the nations.*”
5. Revelation 3:5: “*He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life.*”
6. Revelation 3:12: “*He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the Temple of God . . . I will write on him a name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem.*”
7. Revelation 3:21: “*He who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on My throne.*”

Something critical to be noted is that each of these promises is concerned with the end of the Millennium and Second Coming condition. Would anyone doubt that the Tree of Life is an end-of-the-Millennium reality/Promise? Likewise, those who lived and reigned throughout the Millennium would not be hurt by the second death. Note also that the New Jerusalem comes after the Millennium.



(Stunningly, and contra all historical and creedal testimony, Gentry now denies this: “Despite initial appearances, Revelation 21-22 does not speak of the consummate new creation order.” *Navigating the Book of Revelation*, Fountain Inn, SC., GoodBirth Ministries, 2010, 177).

However, please note that these things were already in existence, awaiting manifestation/consummation, *prior* to AD 70!

Did Jesus not promise that those who believe in Him will never die (John 8:51)? Was the “New Name” not already being carried by his followers (Acts 11:26)? Were the names of His followers not in the Book of Life (Luke 10:18f)? Were His followers not already citizens of the New Jerusalem, that was about to come down (Gal 4; Heb 12-13; Rev 21)? Also, consider the following:

1. The saints were already in the kingdom (Col 1:13, nascent though it was).
2. From Ephesians 1-2 and Colossians 1:13 we also know that the pre-AD 70 saints were seated with Christ, on the throne, in the heavenly places, and in the kingdom.
3. As seen above, they were already “kings and priests.”
4. When John wrote, the martyrs had already been given white robes (6:9f).
5. In Revelation 22:3, Jesus sits down on the throne with the Father, *in the postmillennial world*. However, in 3:21 Christ said *He had already sat down with the Father!* Is this a contradiction? No. Jesus had already sat down on the throne, with all authority and the rod of iron (Rev 2:28, 3:21). But note that He was still waiting to receive the kingdom in Revelation 11:17f!

So, in all of these examples (and there are more) the “already-but-not-yet” motif must be honored. All of this suggests that Revelation 3:21 must be viewed as another example of the “already-but-not-yet” motif. And that means that the future tense in Revelation 3:21 does not

exclude the fact that the saints had already begun to rule with Christ. It simply means that they were awaiting the “*manifestation of the sons of God.*”

As we have shown, Revelation 6 and 20 are parallel. This means that the giving of the white robes and the sitting on the thrones are synchronous, and all but synonymous, events. If therefore, the receiving of the thrones initiates the Millennium/Kingdom, as we contend, then clearly the receiving of the robes likewise initiates the Millennium. But, *this will not work for the objection.* (It does, however, work very well for those who hold to a pre-AD 70 initiation of the Millennium).

The giving of the white raiment “*To him that overcomes*” in 3:5 is synchronous with the receiving of the thrones in 3:21. So, if you posit the enthronement exclusively in AD 70 (at the inception of the Millennium) then of necessity *that demands that AD 70 was not the vindication of the martyrs, but rather the time when they were given the white robes and told to wait for vindication* (Rev 6:9f)!

To be given the white robes was to be told to *await vindication—at the day of the Lord!* The parousia occurs *after* the receiving of the robes, and is the time of the vindication. Thus, if Revelation 3:5; 3:21; 6:9f; 20:1f speak of the same time and the same event, you cannot posit AD 70 as the time for the receiving of the thrones (and robes) without thereby saying that AD 70 was NOT the coming of the Lord in vindication of the martyrs.

It is indisputably true that the martyrs in chapter 6:9f *had already been given their white robes.* So, to reiterate, since Revelation 6 and Revelation 20 are parallel, *then they were already on the thrones, ruling with Christ, awaiting their full vindication/glorification/manifestation at the parousia and the judgment of their persecutors.* I would express the argument like this:

The receiving of the white robes and the enthronement of the martyrs was synchronous and synonymous.

*Continued on page 18*

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# The Millennium

by Don K. Preston

...continued from page 17

The enthronement would initiate the Millennium.

Therefore, the receiving of the white robes would initiate the Millennium.

I would follow that with this:

The receiving of the white robes (and the enthronement) would initiate the Millennium.

But, the martyrs had already been given the white robes (Revelation 6).

Therefore, the martyrs had already been enthroned and the Millennium had already been initiated when John wrote Revelation.

It is wrong to impose a rigidly exclusive futurist view of the future tenses in 3:21. If the future receiving of the throne in Revelation 3:21 demands that the saints were not in the kingdom, ruling and reigning with Christ before the parousia, then logically, that would demand that the martyrs had not received their white robes when John wrote, and would not receive them until the parousia. That is clearly false per Revelation 6.

## Did the Regeneration Exist Before AD 70

A key element of the objection, perhaps implicit, but often stated by those who lodge the objection, is that Jesus promised the twelve apostles that “*in the regeneration, when the son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory*” they would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It is then noted that Matthew 25:31f depicts Jesus sitting on the throne of His glory at His parousia. Thus, it is reasoned that the regeneration did not arrive until the parousia. While this sounds plausible *initially*, it is nevertheless flawed. Take note of the following:

Lexically, the word for “regeneration” (*palingenesis*), and “restoration” (Acts 3:21f - *apokatastasis*) are synonyms. (See my *Like Father Like Son, On Clouds of Glory* book for a full discussion.)

Consider John the Baptizer, as Elijah, in relation to the regeneration/restoration. (Space forbids discussion of another integrally related word (*diorthosis*), translated as “reformation” in Hebrews 9:10. See my *Like Father Like Son* book for a full discussion.)

According to Jesus, Elijah the prophet was to come “*before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord*” and his mission was to “*restore all things*” (Matt 17:10f.).

Jesus was emphatic that “*Elijah has already come!*” (Matt 17:12), and the disciples knew He was speaking of John the Baptizer.

So, John was Elijah and came to initiate the “*restoration of all things*” (the regeneration!) *prior to the Day of the Lord*. (Thus, Rev 20:1f cannot be the parousia for the purpose of *initiating* the restoration/regeneration).

To continue:

John appeared before AD 70 to begin the work of the restoration/the regeneration.

The time of the restoration of all things is the Millennium.

Therefore, the Millennium—the regeneration—began with the work of John *before* AD 70.

Let’s take a closer look:

Elijah was to come before the Great Day of the Lord and restore all things (Mal 4:5-6; Matt 17:11).

According to Jesus, John was Elijah and came to “*restore all things*” (Matt 17:11).

The restoration of all things (the regeneration!) would be consummated at the coming of the Lord (Acts 3:21f).

But, John, as Elijah, said the Day of the Lord was near: the wrath was “*about to come*,” “*the axe was already at the root*,” and the “*winnowing fork is already in his hand*” (Matt 3:7-12).

Therefore, the Great Day of the Lord, when the restoration of all things (the regeneration!) would be consummated, was near in the first century—that is, the *end* of the Millennium was near in the first century—*prior* to AD 70.

Consider also the last days’ work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was to be poured out in Israel’s last days (Joel 2:28f; Acts 2:17) before the Day of the Lord (“the day” of Mal 4:5-6). This inseparably ties together the work of John as Elijah and Jesus’ promise to the disciples in Acts 1. In Scripture, the outpouring of the Spirit and the establishment of the kingdom at the Great Day of the Lord (the consummation of the regeneration!) are inseparably linked.

Jesus told the disciples they would receive the Spirit—the Spirit that was to carry on the work of restoration!—“*not many days hence*” (Acts 1:7f). So, the Spirit, whom the disciples were to shortly receive, was for the restoration of the kingdom. Therefore, the restoration work of the Spirit, continuing the work of John, was given just a few days after Jesus’ promise—well before AD 70.

Now, unless the restoration work of John, and the restoration work of the Spirit (which is nothing less than Revelation 3:21) are totally unrelated to the regeneration, then, since both John as Elijah and the outpouring of the Spirit occurred prior to AD 70 (which is ostensibly Revelation 20:1f), this is *prima facie* proof that the Millennium began before AD 70. And there is more.

When did the apostles sit on the thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, as promised in Matthew 19:28? Well, it would be when Jesus came and sat on “*the throne of his glory*” to be sure (Matt 19:28; 25:31f). For those who accept

the Olivet Discourse as a united whole, this means Matthew 25:31f was fulfilled in AD 70. (The biblical evidence is clear, however, that He had ascended to the Father and had received the kingdom, prior to AD 70 [Acts 2:29f; cf. Rev 2:27; 3:21]. He was waiting to come and put down the last enemy—death—at the end of the Millennium, fully manifesting His kingdom glory)! The Millennium reign of Christ was the time when He was “consolidating” the kingdom, awaiting the time of His return to judge those who rejected His kingship (Luke 19).

Jesus, who had received all authority in heaven and earth (Matt 28:18f), had given the apostles the authority to “bind and loose” (Matt 16:19f). He had bestowed the kingdom on them (Luke 22:28f). They offered the gospel to Israel first, but, when/as Israel rejected that word, they became guilty before God and without excuse (Rom 10:17ff). The apostles thus spoke the words of life and death (2 Cor 2:14f).

Not only that, they preached the gospel of “the regeneration.” (Note: The regeneration was the “new birth” of John 3, but we can’t discuss that here). Paul exulted that some of those who heard were being saved “by the washing of the regeneration” (Titus 3:4-5). *How were they being saved by the washing of the regeneration if the regeneration was not present?* The regeneration—just like the restoration—had begun and was awaiting perfection at the parousia. The parousia was not to initiate the regeneration, but to perfect, consummate, and manifest it. This is Revelation 3:21, which, as we saw above was a present reality when Revelation was written.

Matthew 25:31f is the depiction of the judgment of those who either accepted the words of the apostles or rejected them. With Jesus, they were now judging the twelve tribes to whom they had offered that gospel (Matt 24:14)! And this is Revelation 20:11f with the opening of the Books and the judging of the dead and the nations. Of course, what is so significant is that Revelation 20:10f occurs at the end of the Millennium, in order to bring in the New Creation. So . . .

The judgment of Matthew 25 is the judgment of Revelation 20, when the apostles, with Jesus, sat on the throne (s) judging the twelve tribes.

The judgment of Matthew 25:31f was in AD 70.

But, the judgment of Revelation 20 occurred at the end of the Millennium.

Therefore, the judgment of Matthew 25, when Jesus sat on the throne of His glory judging the twelve tribes with the apostles, occurred at the end of the Millennium, in AD 70.

It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of the relationship between Matthew 25:31 and Revelation 20:11f. Unless one can definitively prove that these are different judgments, and/or that Revelation 20 is not a postmillennial judgment, the fact that Matthew 25 was fulfilled in AD 70 is *prima facie* proof that the end of the Millennium occurred in AD 70.

There is a wealth of additional material that could be presented to address the objection. However, I am confident that this is sufficient to say, “Objection Overruled”! †

# HOW SHALL WE THEN LIVE?

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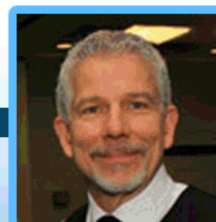
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## Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

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

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

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

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



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