

# PRETERISM

## Another Prophetic View

### PRETERISM – PRETERIST ESCHATOLOGY

#### Another Prophetic Point of View

Preterists, (*meaning past*) believe that most of Biblical prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD. Thus the Kingdom of God is already in manifestation through the existing church. They hold that prophecies in Matthew 24, Luke 21, Daniel, Revelation and dozens of other prophetic scripture are already fulfilled and *past*. The resurrection of Christ was the point of transition between the old covenant (temple worship and law) and the church age, age of grace. This became a completely new expression of the kingdom of God. Since the Jews and religious Judaism rejected Christ as Messiah they were judged by God. The prophecies pertaining to Israel and the Jews culminated with destruction of the actual temple in 70 a.d. If the kingdom has come, as the Preterists believe, God's rule and justice must work out through the Christian institutions of this world. The task of the church is believed to exercise dominion in all arenas of society: natural, economic, political and social. The Preterists believe that the church has authority to disassemble Satan's dominion. Her activities in the current age will eventually deliver peace and justice to the world through Christian rule.

#### Regarding the Preterist Doctrine

I encourage anyone who is interested in examining preterism (or another prophetic view) do their own online research using either video presentations on YouTube or written documentation supporting preterism from particular ministry publications. As a *Berean*, prayerfully examine the scriptures for yourself. One can not make a quick determination of any doctrine without thorough study of the Word. Do not simply follow what I or anyone may preach or teach. "*Examine and prove all things.*" I will add below scriptural considerations that support the *future-prophetic view of fulfillment* that is *dispensational and premillennial*. A "Dispensation" addresses the belief that the church had a beginning and will conclude at some future time. Thereafter, God will deal with the world, once again, with the focus on Israel. After the time of final judgment in the *Tribulation Period*. Satan's rule will, without any doubt, then be finished and *The Kingdom Age* will begin with a physical literal reign of a Jesus the Messiah's 1000 year, future kingdom.

For the majority of fundamentalist Christians, the second coming and the end-time scenario is imminent and future. The question of past or future fulfillment will frame how one will read the book of Revelation. Revelation and most Old Testament prophecies are spiritualized or allegorized through the Preterist lens.

#### The Book of Revelation

I know one theologian with advanced doctoral degrees who told me, "Reading Revelation will make you crazy!" Is Revelation a prophetic book that foretells the future or a metaphoric or symbolic allegory? Why is it avoided by so many pastors? If we examine the question of any *future* literal reign of Christ, Preterists have determined that the kingdom is already in place and expressed through the church. The Messianic Kingdom is addressed by most Old Testament prophets. This was the hope and expectation of the Jews in Jesus' time and was also the understanding of Jesus' own disciples. The commonly held fundamentalist view holds that the kingdom age will follow a time of judgment (tribulation) world-wide. This tribulation period will culminate with Christ himself returning in power and great glory (*Matthew 24*) to vanquish the unbelieving and rebellious dwelling on the earth.

In general Preterists are *a-millennialists*. This means that they don't look for a future thousand years of Messianic rule. *Replacement theology* an important tenet of preterism believes that the "Christian church" has replaced natural Israel. Thus, any prophetic promises made to Israel in the First or New Testament now apply to the church. There are many Bible scholars who hold to the Preterist view. One has only to do a search on YouTube to hear those who passionately support Preterism. Those who promote the Preterist doctrine are undoubtedly students of the Word and can cite copious scripture to defend their point of view. There is no doubt that these men who have invested countless hours in study to obtain their conclusions.

### **Judgment and Tribulation after Christ's Death**

The Roman world following the death of Messiah Jesus was certainly a time of excruciating tribulation and judgment for the Jews. In a.d. 70 the temple was destroyed by Roman armies. The Jews were massacred and scattered. However, these facts alone are not sufficient to support the greater questions surrounding many other particular prophecies which could not have been fulfilled then or in the centuries that followed until now.

In short, I find the Preterist doctrine and application to scripture hard to support. I believe they miss what I see as the clearest spiritual message dealing with the "The Kingdom of God" on earth. Here is where one might ask some serious questions: Where is the evidence that God's kingdom is growing and establishing righteousness, morality and peace world-wide? Yes, we see occasional demonstrations of goodness and righteousness in individuals who stand out as being light in a dark world; or being *in the world* but *not of the world*. As for the whole earth being filled with the glory of God *as the waters cover the sea*, we are very far from that. I will address this and other matters in summary later.

We have to judge the Preterist view in light of both scripture and current realities. How can believers, who remain in our natural, fallen state with hearts still governed by self-centered lusts, be capable of bringing this kingdom to pass? The Preterist's presumption is that a glorious and wisely governed *Ekklesia* will transform the nations in righteousness. Actually, this is not a scriptural viewpoint. If we read the epistles we find sufficient proof that the power of Satan is still in unbridled operation. Paul in 1 Timothy 4 and in 2 Timothy 3 tells us that the end times will see evil increase greatly and *perilous times* dominate the world scene. The apostolic message and the *Apostolic Fathers* taught that the human race in the latter days will be lured away following deceiving, seductive spirits and twisted religious doctrine. The current age grows darker and more ungodly. The church apparently has diminishing impact on the world. Despite spirited preaching

and teaching about the church arising in power wide rebellion and apostasy are on the increase.

I stand with the prevailing conservative view that the future millennial kingdom yet awaits. I believe in a future rule of righteousness when Jesus will govern the nations with his throne in Jerusalem. Remember that Jesus at his earthly trial before Pilate, stated clearly that - - "NOW my kingdom is NOT OF THIS WORLD." Preterists would argue the contrary.

The Preterists hold that after 70 ad the Kingdom of God was established in this world and has been in force thereafter. Bible teachers like Hank Hannegraaf support "Preterist" teachings that argue the Kingdom age began about 70 ad. It was at this time that Rome under Titus Vespasian, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple ending temple sacrifices. Thus, any scripture such as Matthew 24 that speaks of the temple, abomination, or fleeing to refuge had to have the second temple of Herod in mind. For the Preterist, It was at that time that God's judgment was meted upon an unrighteous and apostate Jewish priesthood thus wresting traditional religious practice and their Kingdom inheritance from Israel and the Jews. The Preterist view is *is the non dispensational* interpretation. A dispensational view is that the church age has an appointed conclusion and after this God will once again deal with saving a remnant of Israel. Among the principle tenets of Preterism is that there is no promised *future coming of the Lord* nor any validity to teaching a rapture (removal) of the body of Christ called the church *ekklesia*.

### **Preterists Denounce a Rapture Doctrine**

Preterists condemn as false teachers the likes of Tim LaHae, Hal Lindsay, John Hagee, or Jack VanImpe who are said to misread and misunderstand the prophetic Scriptures, the Gospels and Epistles. So, if you are among those who look for the *'blessed hope'* in the imminent appearing of Christ to be called up to be with him, we must set this teaching aside; If you are among those who say that God's time for the Jews has not been abandoned, we must set this belief aside. If we believe in the future appearing visibly and gloriously to cleave the Mt. of Olives, we must set this teaching aside.

### **Preterists and Revelation**

The strength and foundation of Preterist *eschatology (the study of future things)* requires an early dating of the writing of the Book of Revelation. Preterists hold the view of Revelation being written before the destruction of the temple, or about 60 a.d. This dating allows that any mention of "tribulation" or anti Christ can be attributed to the rule of the Caesars, especially Nero. Most of the content of Revelation can be allotted to events and places existing at that time. The evil times, e.g. Paul's letter to Timothy, would also describe the days of Nero but I assure you that it can grow far worse than that.

### **The Seventy Weeks of Daniel Chapter 9**

Daniel's ninth chapter (*vss.24-27*) addresses the prophecy of the 70 weeks which is one of the Bible's most relevant end times prophetic documents. It addresses events, both fulfilled and unfulfilled that affect the Jews only. The seventy weeks prophecy measures in years the exact day when the Messiah is revealed to Israel, the day he made his entry into Jerusalem seated on a donkey. The seventieth week is a stumbling block for Preterists owing to the "gap" between the 69th and seventieth week.

## **Dispensational View: The Jews will have a future opportunity to receive the true Messiah Yeshua**

According to the dispensational reading of the Bible, the church age is a parenthetical time period separating the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel. It is the *age of grace* Jesus spoke of in Isaiah 61. Its fulfillment ends the church age, an unspecified duration of time. The time of the Gentiles will have been concluded and the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel chap.9) then resumes after the signing of the peace treaty of the antichrist world ruler with Israel. The Biblical time line reverts back to the nation of Israel and the future restoration and redemption of the Jewish nation. Preterists contend that any "gap" in the prophetic timeline is inconsistent with working of prophecy in the past and is thus an unacceptable view.

### **Summary: What do Preterists Believe?**

1. End times prophecy has already been fulfilled
2. Jesus' return has already happened (spiritually) to set up his kingdom
3. There is no literal resurrection of the dead
4. We are no longer looking forward to a future end-time scenario
5. The perilous times and great tribulation occurred during the Roman empire
6. The book of Revelation was written early, around 61 a.d.
7. The anti-christ of Revelation was Nero or subsequent emperor
8. The temple destruction terminated Judaism and sealed judgment on the Jews
9. The church "ekklessia" is now the Israel of God (Replacement Theology)
10. The Daniel (ch9) prophecies have been concluded without any gap in the 70 weeks
11. The Book of Revelation should be read as insight on a metaphorical level
12. Epistles need to be interpreted as a message given to that/those specific recipient,s
13. There is to be no future kingdom as we are already in the kingdom age
14. The "millennial reign" of Christ has occurred already (Amillennial interpretation)
15. Satan has been dethroned as Jesus declared, "All authority... is given to me."

### **Themes Inconsistent With the ad 70 Dating of Revelation**

1. "Behold He comes in the clouds and every eye shall behold him" This speaks to the physical and glorious return of Messiah. *This has never happened.*
2. "A seven year peace covenant confirmed" He confirms a covenant with many. (Dan 9:27) *This has never happened.*
3. The destruction of the city of Babylon; (Rev. 18:21) *This has never happened.*
4. The Euphrates River drying up to allow the Kings of the East to pass over; (Rev.16:12) *This has never happened.*
5. The two witnesses who testify and are killed, resurrected. *This has never happened.*
6. The whole world being able to see their bodies; (Rev.11) *There was no technology that would allow this to happen.*
7. A mark that is required for buying or selling; (Rev. 13:16) *This has never happened.*
8. Destruction by great seventy pound hailstones (Rev. 16:21) *This has never happened.*
9. Rescue of Israel at the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17) *This has never happened.*

10. Death of 1/4 all of the world's population, earth's vegetation, life in the seas, etc.  
*This has never happened.*
11. Re gathering of Israel into her own land; *The destruction and the diaspora scattered Israel no regathering until the 20th century.*
12. The "False Prophet" demonstrates supernatural signs and wonders.  
*This has never happened*
13. The Euphrates river dries up allowing armies to cross over.  
*This has never happened.*
14. The third temple is built in Jerusalem and returns to functioning priests and sacrifices.  
*This has not yet happened.*
15. The salvation of 144000 Jewish witnesses who evangelize the world.  
*This has never happened.*
16. The "man of sin" sitting in the temple in Jerusalem.  
*This has never happened.*
17. An image of the False Messiah who can speak and send out fire to destroy.  
*This has never happened*
18. Great hailstones weighing 200 lbs fall along with an earth changing earthquake in Jerusalem. *This has never happened.*
19. Jesus returns to the earth with power and destroys all the works of the devil and purge the earth of sin (Dan.9:24) *This has never happened.*
20. Earth will be renewed after nearly being destroyed. *This has never happened.*
21. The literal return to the Mt. of Olives to be seen by human eyes just as he was seen departing. *This has never happened.*
22. Peace ensues and wars cease! *This has never happened*

#### **Dating the Book of Revelation as 90 to 95 ad.**

The majority opinion by conservative Bible scholars is that Revelation was written by John at the end of the reign of Emperor Domitian whose reign ended in 96 a.d. It was under Domitian that Christians were sought out for persecution throughout the farther reaches of the Roman empire. A number of early church writers including Iranaeus mention this detail, connecting John's writing to the reign of Domitian. He was sentenced by Domitian to Patmos. Therefore, any association with the last trumpet mentioned in the Book of Revelation that ties it to Paul's reference to the trumpet would then be incorrect since Revelation had not been written when Paul addressed the issue of the resurrection and the trumpet of God (1Thess.4:16 and 1Cor.15:52)

#### **Final Thoughts about the Preterist View of Eschatology**



I believe that scripture teaches that the present Church age (dispensation) we are living in as I write this is still the "age of Grace." The age of Judgment is an entirely different time and can not coincide with grace. We are not to engage our detractors, nor take up arms against those who speak evil of us. *"As he is so are we in this world."* We are told to love our enemies even those who spitefully abuse us. In Isaiah 61 the verses read by Jesus apply to the church age. He ended the reading in the middle of the text, omitting the discussion of vengeance and wrath. Judgment is deferred but it has not been deleted from the Word of God. The time of wrath must be separated from the age of grace. Preterism seems to blend these together. Jesus said, *"Now my kingdom is not of this world. If it were my people would fight.!"* *The king is coming and it is he who shall tread down his enemies. It is he who will be proclaimed 'King of Kings and Lord of lords,' It is He who will tread down the winepress of iniquity and destroy all that is evil with the brightness of his coming.!! Amen*

### **How Will the Millennium Look Compared to Today's World?**

I am compelled to ask the question, how should this Millennial Kingdom look? It will bear no resemblance to present society! In the promised kingdom to come, and we continue to pray for it, God's divine peace and justice will be in evidence throughout the world! Today, does nature itself reflect Edenic serenity? Or are we still ravaged by disease, evil men and nature? A view that the argument that this present **church age** has entered into any kind of enlightened, overcoming influence on Planet Earth is all but impossible to believe!

Yes, we believers in this church age are indeed promised a token, a *downpayment*, of kingdom authority and status as adopted sons of the Most High. Christians know that through we bear witness to the "Kingdom of Heaven" within us, with righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit. But can we say that the perfect has come? It is impossible to deny that the expression of evil has grown worse and worse in the world. If we are objective we can see the institutional church remains mostly adrift in darkness. Institutional churches strain to exercise their own authority and status quo.

I can only conclude that Preterists are stretching Bible interpretation more for the sake of intellectual argument than in measuring the evidence of the world we are facing at the start of the 21st Century. The Apostle Paul has noted that the natural man, through natural (soulish) wisdom and scholarship can not know God. Preterists, belligerently, uphold a theology of; no Israel, no rapture, and evidently, no future physical second coming and rule of Jesus the Messiah upon the throne of David.

### **Proof Texts to Deal With In Denying the Rapture Doctrine**

I remain convinced of the soon-return for the bride as taught in the allegory of the Jewish Bride by Zola Levitt and other spirit-filled believers;

By the typology of Noah and Lot spoken of by Jesus;

*By the return of Israel as a nation once again and Jerusalem becoming its capital.*

*By the dream of Nebuchadnezzar; (Daniel Chapter 2)*

*By the detailed signs described in reading the Olivet discourse of Jesus;*

*By the typology of 6 days creation with a Sabbath rest; six days of creation, six thousand years to establish the righteous kingdom.*

*By the witness of the two tribulation witnesses who are killed, seen dead and by the entire world; who then resurrect and ascend.*

*By the parenthetical prophecy of Isaiah 61, quoted by Jesus in Luke 4;*

*By the growing evil and corruption, the growing darkness in this present age; (1Timothy 4 and 2Timothy 3:1-3)*

*By the separation (judgment) of the sheep and goat nations in Math. 25 and the subsequent Kingdom of God commencing at that time;*

*By the present Kingdom of God (Kingdom of the heavens) invisible as Jesus told Pilate; “- now my kingdom is not of this world.”*

*By the physical coming of the Lord in power and great glory with thousands and ten thousands to exact judgment on the whole world.*

I am further persuaded by revelations and first hand accounts of numerous, contemporary saints who "died," and miraculously returned from heaven to testify that Jesus personal admonition-- *'My coming again is at hand; I am coming soon; Tell my people I am coming again very soon'; There are many with such testimonies by those that I know personally, Paul Crisan, Roxanne Brandt, and other persons I know who died and returned from heaven with messages that Jesus gave to them regarding things shortly to come;*  
I also do not discount end time warning dreams and visions that I and others have had. These I believe are god authored visions and messages warning of coming judgment.

### **Here Are Some Particular Points to Challenge the Preterist View of Scripture:**

The re-gathering of Israel in 1948, as a mile marker in prophetic fulfillment

"The perfect" has not come, prophecies have not all manifested

We believers are not as yet manifested Christ's *resurrection* likeness

The battles spoken of in Ezekiel, Chapters 38 & 39

The “second coming” bodily return of Christ (not a non physical 'spiritual return' as held by some sects.)

Zechariah's prophecy (Ch.14) of the returning Messiah, " - They shall look upon him whom they had pierced” see his wounded hands, etc. and mourn for their error.

The Messiah Jesus stated to the Jewish rulers that they " -would not receive me but another you will receive- -" This referring to 'the Antichrist deceiver.

Jesus told the Jewish leaders, “You will not see me again until you shall say, blessed is He who comes in the name of The Lord.”

In the millennium the lion will lie down with the lamb.

These are some of the end time prophecies of Israel remaining to be fulfilled.

This link among many provides a good study with scriptural support for the Rapture:

[The Church Against the Rapture: Article by Jack Kelly](#)