

Answers to Difficult Questions

Below you will find common questions people often ask about Preterism & their commensurate answers.
Click on the question that interests you to find commentary embedded in this document.

From NewJerusalemCommunity.net

Various Authors

Mon, 05 Dec 2005

1. [If the preterist view is true, how come no one has seen it until now?](#)
2. [Did the first century Church believe in a second coming?](#)
3. [Are the Jews that live in Israel today the same as the Jews of the Bible?](#)
4. [Was the book of Revelation written after AD 70?](#)
5. [If Jesus came back in the first century, how come so many of the signs of His return are happening today?](#)

1. If the preterist view is true, how come no one has seen it until now?

Answer

There are a number of early writers who made significant preterist statements. All it takes is going to the writings of the early church fathers and doing a little research to learn the truth of the matter. Not all the the church fathers made preterist statements, but some of them did. Think deeply on these things.

Eusebius records the statement that James (brother of Jesus, writer of the book of James) made just before (c. 63 A.D.) he was pushed off the temple to the pavement below when he was being martyred for his faith in Jerusalem: "Why do ye ask me respecting Jesus the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of great Power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven." (Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 2, Ch.23; cf James 5:8,9)

Eusebius says that the abomination of desolation (i.e. the antichrist, man of sin and beast of Revelation) occurred at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D."... these facts, as well as the whole tenor of the war, and each particular of its progress, when finally the abomination of desolation, according to the prophetic declaration, stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, but which now was approaching its total downfall and final destruction by fire; all this, I say, any one that wishes may see accurately stated in the history written by Josephus." (Eusebius; Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Ch.5). After quoting sections of Matt. 24:19-21; Lk. 19:41ff and Lk. 21:20, 23, 24,

Eusebius says this about the destruction of Jerusalem: "All this occurred" in this manner, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian (70 A.D.), according to the predictions of our Christ...On comparing the declarations of our Savior which the other parts of Josephus work, where he describes the whole war, 'how can one fail to acknowledge' and wonder at the truth divine and extraordinary foreknowledge and prediction of our Savior?" (Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 3. Ch.7)

Eusebius declares that the Great Commission had been accomplished by the time Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 (cf. Matt. 24:14): "Of who (Christ), indeed at this very time, the sound of the holy apostles went throughout all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." (Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Ch. 8; cf. Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6,23)

Athanasius declares "For now that He has come to our realm, and taken up his abode in one body among His peers, henceforth the whole conspiracy of the enemy against mankind is checked, and the corruption of death which before was prevailing against them is done away. For the race of men had gone to ruin had not the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God, come among us to meet the end of death. (Athanasius' On the Incarnation of the Word, Section 9 Verse 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-26)

In reference to the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and their interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9, Athanasius has this to say: "Perhaps with regard to the other prophecies they may be able even to find excuses and to put off what is written to a future time. But what can they say to this, or can they face it at all? Where not only is the Christ referred to, but He that is to be anointed is declared to be not man simply, but Holy of Holies; and Jerusalem is to stand till His coming, and thenceforth, prophet and vision cease in Israel." (Athanasius; On the Incarnation of the Word, Section 39 Verse 3; cf. Dan. 9:24ff).

One doesn't have to look too closely to find some real gems. We just didn't recognize them as preterist statements. Here are some examples of a few of the earliest:

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 153-193-217), in *The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, Book 1 page 329, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, placed the abomination of desolation of Daniel's 70th week prophecy, in the time of Nero. He said: "in the one week; was He Lord. The half of the week Nero and in the half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Gaiba, and Vitallus. And Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed Jerusalem, and desolated the Holy place."

Earlier even than Clement of Alexandria, was Clement of Rome, who wrote to James and told him what Peter had said to the Jews, thusly: "For we; said I, 'have ascertained beyond doubt that God is much rather displeased with the sacrifices which you offer the time of sacrifices having now passed away; and because ye will not acknowledge that the time for offering victims is now past, therefore the temple shall be destroyed, and the abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place; and then the Gospel shall be preached to the Gentiles for a testimony against you....; When I had thus spoken, the whole multitude of the priests were in a rage, because I had foretold to them the overthrow of the temple...;" (Clement, p 94, vol. 8, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*).

Even earlier than Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian (145-220) told of how the coming of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem was a fulfillment of predictions that had been made in Daniel 9:26. He said: "Accordingly the times must be inquired into of the predicted and future nativity of the Christ, and of His passion and of the extermination of the city of Jerusalem, that is, its devastation. For Daniel says, that 'both the holy city and the holy place are exterminated together with the coming Leader, and that the pinnacle is destroyed unto ruin; And so the times of the coming Christ, the leader, must be inquired into, which we shall trace in Daniel; and, after computing them, shall prove Him to be come, even on the ground of the times prescribed, of the consequences which were ever announced as to follow His advent; in order that we may believe all to have been as well fulfilled as foreseen."

"In such wise, therefore, did Daniel predict concerning Him, as to show both when and in what time He was to set the nations free; and how, after the passion of the Christ, that city had to be exterminated." (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, p. 158).

Tertullian was also a preterist in his interpretations of Zechariah 14:4. He said, "But at night He went out to the Mount of Olives; For thus had Zechariah pointed out: 'And His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives;'" (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, p. 417).

Eusebius says that the abomination of desolation (i.e.the antichrist, man of sin and beast of Revelation) occurred at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. "... (Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Ch5).

As one can easily see, the preterist position was taught by various writers clear back to the time of the apostles. They originally understood rightly that the time of fulfillment was to be imminent until the middle of the second century when they began to abandon that and suggest the delay/postponement ideas. When the remaining fulfillment's associated with Christ's parousia did not occur in the physical-literal way they had expected, they assumed they had not been fulfilled at all. The same problem persists today, and can be solved by following correct Biblical interpretation methods. We need to get back to the study of Biblical Judaism.

[Go back to the top](#)

2. Did the first century Church believe in a second coming?

Answer:

Yes, but they did not believe He would return thousands of years later to fulfill the rest of God's promises.

If Jesus failed to fulfill all His predictions the first time in the same generation he could not be the Messiah. Notice how various well known Jewish writer express this.

The Jew refused to accept the excuse that the major prophecies concerning the Messiah will only be fulfilled in a "second coming." He expects the Messiah to complete his mission in his first attempt. [The Real Messiah Reprinted from Jewish Youth, June 1973 page 15.]

The Jewish rabbis have taunted Christians throughout church history saying Jesus can't be their Messiah, since the Messiah would accomplish redemption, and judgment, in one generation with no gaps, delays, parentheses of postponements. The full establishment of the Kingdom could not be delayed. (The Real Messiah. Reprinted from Jewish Youth, June 1973. page 15).

Since Jesus did not fulfill the most important Messianic prophecies, they expected him to return to complete this task in a "second coming." At first, Christians expected that this second coming would come very shortly...in their lifetime. When their prayer was not answered they began to hope that it would come a thousand years after Jesus' death. This was the millennium or thousand years kingdom. Finally after a thousand years passed and Jesus still had not returned, they postponed his second coming to an indefinite time. We therefore see that the early Christians were forced to radically alter the Jewish concept of the Messiah in order to explain Jesus failure. This compounded with the pagan influence in the early church, gave birth to a Messianic concept totally alien to Judaism. [Pinchas Stolper, ed. pages 32, 33]

You will discover that when ever any really strong question such as why Jesus hasn't fulfilled all Messianic prophecies is asked of the Christians, the standard answer is that it refers to the second

coming. It therefore becomes extremely important to ascertain the validity of this claim. The success of the Christian claim or its failure rests to a very large extent on the theory of the second coming. It is clearly an answer born of desperation. [Samuel Levin. You Take Jesus, I will Take God. Los Angeles 1980. Page 15]

Reader these Jews never had the concept of a second coming to fulfill the rest of the things he was unable to fulfill the first time in the Old Testament. (see Isa. 35:4-6, 40:10-11, 61:1-2, 62:11, 63:1-6, 66:6-16; Zech. 14; and Mal.4:1-6) The language used closely connects the coming of the Lord with both salvation and vengeance (judgment). Nowhere does the OT teach a "second coming."

In fact the only place in the NT which even comes close to teaching a second advent is Heb. 9:28 where it says Christ will appear a second time. This was using the symbolism of the High Priest at Yom Kippur when he took the blood into the holy place and then reappeared back outside the Temple to announce that atonement had been accomplished.

This is the fulfillment of the types and shadows in Leviticus 9:1-24 where it says: Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people, Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.

Notice here that Israel's sins were not forgiven until Aaron the High Priest came out of the tabernacle to bless the people verses 22,23. Every Jewish Christian understood this simple concept. Hebrews 9:24 says, "For Christ has not entered the holy place made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us." This is a picture of our High Priest Christ Jesus going into the tabernacle to offer up the sins of the people.

And as the High Priest Aaron had to come out of the tabernacle and appear to the people blessing them, by letting them know that their sins had been forgiven of another year. So did Christ have to return out of the tabernacle a second time apart from sin, for salvation. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

Every Jewish Christian understood simply that the second reappearance of Christ our High Priest would be during the same age...unto salvation.

Inspired men wrote the New Testament between the cross and resurrection of Jesus and His return in glory with complete salvation. (Hebrews 9: 27-27) The inspired writers of the New Testament knew they hadn't received all that was to be theirs at the cross, and their writing reflected that truth....."Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:5

This in no way says that the cross is any less important. Salvation i.e., "deliverance" was inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus. It was ratified or confirmed through His Cross (not at the Cross), and consummated in His Parousia. Think about it - if salvation was all in all secured at or on the Cross, then what need would there be for salvation to still be revealed with the further return of Christ???

The cross began the work of salvation it did not complete it. Now let's listen to Paul as he persuades saints to the closeness of the Lord's coming and the fullness of salvation for which they all wait! "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." (Romans 13:11) This was written after the cross, and resurrection.

Weren't Paul and his converts already saved at the cross? Yes they were, Christ had entered into the holy places into the presence of God for their sins. (Hebrews 9:24-26) But their salvation was not complete or in its fullness until the High Priest Jesus came out of the holy place verse 28.

The language used in the Old Testament and New Testament closely connects the coming of the Lord in the same generation. The saints knew consummate salvation and the second coming of Christ were inexorably dependent events.

Then where did the postponement invention of the Second Advent start?

Notice what this writer has to say on the subject.

The thought of a postponement of the Parousia appears all through 2 Clement but here it is expressly mentioned for the first time. Thus about the middle of the second century a decisive turning point occurs one which can be compared in significance to all other great turning points, including the Reformation. Obviously we cannot fix this turning point precisely at the year 150 for it took a while until the thought caught hold every where.

But, a development does begin with the Shepherd of Hermas which could not be stopped- a development at the end of which we stand today. As soon as the thought of a postponement of the Parousia was uttered once and indeed not only incidentally but thoroughly presented in an entire writing it developed its own life and power.

At first people looked at it as only a brief postponement, as the Shepherd of Hermas clearly expressed. But soon as the end of the world did not occur it was conceived of as a longer and longer period until finally this is today's situation nothing but the thought of a postponement exists in people's consciousness. [Kurt Aland. A History of Christianity. (2 vols) Vol 1 page 87-102].

This is where the mistake was first made and it has affected Christianity ever since. His statement is just one of many which harken back in Christian history.

Unfortunately this misunderstanding occurred before the Church really developed, and were incorporated into their teachings.

When the remaining fulfillments associated with Christ's Parousia did not occur in the physical literal sense as they had expected, they assumed that Christ had not returned at all. So they began adjusting their concept of the TIME of fulfillment instead of considering the possibility that their concepts of the NATURE of fulfillment were the only things needing adjustment.

The Jews never had the concept of a second coming, over a thousand years and since it was the Jews who first taught the notion of a Messiah via the Jewish prophets it seems quite reasonable to respect their inspired writing more than our traditions or anyone else's uninspired opinion today.

We must immerse ourselves in the culture history religion and Jewish language of the Jews of Jesus day if we hope to go any further and deeper in our understanding of the Bible.

Christianity is not some totally new religion. It is the fulfillment of the promises made to the Jews on behalf of the Gentiles as well. (Romans 15:8-9) Salvation is of the Jews. It was directed to the Jews first and would be fulfilled in that very generation (Matthew 24:34).

[Go back to the top](#)

3. Are the Jews that live in Israel today the same as the Jews of the Bible?

"Have you heard the news reports? Jews are returning to Israel. This is one of the predicted signs that Jesus is coming soon!" Not really. The Jews in Israel today are not the biblical Jews in our bible by any stretch of the imagination. That is certainly no argument. There is no Jewish Race today, let alone this being a sign that we are near the end of the Church age. Here is a quote from Encyclopedia Britannica (1973), vol. 12, page 1054, where it actually states. The findings of physical anthropology show that, contrary to the popular view, there is no Jewish race. Anthropometric measurement of Jewish groups in many parts of the world indicates that they differ greatly from one another with respect to all the important physical characteristics.

The reason behind this, of course is mixed bloodlines through the mixed marriages bringing about the most mixed racial origins of these people today. On top of that, the majority of so-called Jews in the world today are not Jews at all. (Even with the mixed blood), because their ancestry is that of the Khazars whose ancestors go far back to the Turks and Huns, and who as a nation in A.D. 740 adopted the Jewish religion and became known as Jews.

Just as a side note here, let me say that those premillennialists today who hold to the viewpoint that so-called Israel's being set up as a nation in Palestine is Biblical fulfillment are doing so contrary to the fact surrounding the evidence in historical documentation. Even if someone really wanted to prove he was a biblical Jew from the blood line of Abraham he could not because all the records and genealogy were destroyed in A.D. 70

Evangelist John L Bray who has spent many years around the world in many libraries gives us further historical documentation on this. He states in his book Matthew 24 Fulfilled page 210:

The prediction of judgment upon Israel was for THAT generation. That generation of opposed of Christ had said, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). And it was. That judgment came about in A.D. 67-70, and the nation was decimated. Some say that the Jews today are guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This is not true any more that are Gentiles who reject Him now. The nation that was officially guilty of the death of Christ received its judgment. God's judgment is not upon Jews today because of what others did many years ago. We need to understand this.

In settlers of Khazaria were Turks and Huns. In A.D. 740 King Buulan of Khazaria decided to adopt the Judaistic religion for his country. A number of Jews were already living there. So he converted to Judaism, along with all his officials, and his whole nation ended up being known as a nation of Jews. In 907 Russia came in and dominated the situation, and the Khazars were scattered, many of them going down into Poland and Lithuania, where at the dawn of our modern civilization the largest concentration of Jews were found. Today, the largest percentage of so-called Jews in the world have as their background this group of people. This is fully documented in detail in my book, Israel in Bible Prophecy.

Naturally, these people are not a "race" of Jews, and yet it is thought by some that they constitute the major portion of the 14,000,000 so-called Jews in the world today. Their features are different

than the Sephardim Jews; their language backgrounds are different (the Ashkenazim speaking Yiddish, and the Sephardim with their Hebrew and many of them who speak Spanish on account of their own mixed-up background in Spain). In Israel they have their separate organizations, and the nation there is divided between these two mixed-up bloodlines of people. In the 12th century the Ashkenazim Jews made up only 6.7% of the Jews, but around 1965 they numbered 11,000,000 or about 86% of all the Jews in the world. Think of the implications of this!

In a recent book, *Palestine is Coming*, by Kermit Zarley, it was stated that "British Minister of State Lord Moyne supported his government's White Paper of 1939 by publicly opposing further Jewish immigration. He argued the Jews were not demonstrably the true descendants of the ancient Hebrews and therefore without legitimate claim to the Holy Land. He meant that Jews were hardly a pure race, being a much more heterogeneous group that popularly conceived. For this, he was assassinated by the Stern Group on November 6, 1944" (Kermit Zarley, p.131).

"A common error and persistent modern myth is the designation of the Jews as a 'race.' This is scientifically fallacious, from the standpoint of both physical and historical tradition. Investigations by anthropologists have shown the Jews are by no means uniform in physical character and that they nearly always reflect the physical and mental characteristics of the people among whom they live" (Collier's Encyclopedia, 1977, vol. 13, p. 573).

Being a Jew has nothing to do with race as such. Sammy Davis, Jr. became a Jew. Elizabeth Taylor became a Jew when she married Eddie Fisher. In June of 1991 Tom Arnold and Roseanne Barr, the T.V. entertainer, renewed publicly their wedding vows, and he was celebration his conversion to Judaism. Jews can be of different races. It is like someone who is a Catholic or a Protestant; they can be of any race or color. In Israel they have a peculiar law which says what their government says is a Jew. I quote this from Funk and wagnall's New Encyclopedia, vol. 14, p 214: "In 1970 the Israeli Knesset adopted legislation defining a Jew as one born of a Jewish mother or a convert." It matters not who the father is, nor to what race he belongs. And a convert can be from and race. So you see, we are not talking about a "race" of people when we talk about the Jewish people.

[Go back to Top](#)

4. Wasn't John's Revelation written in AD 95 or 96?

Dating the Book of Revelation

When was the book of Revelation written? Was it before AD 70 or later?

Doug Reed

The following information depends heavily on Kenneth Gentry's fine work on the dating of Revelation. A more in depth study can be found in Gentry's books "The Beast of Revelation" and "Before Jerusalem Fell."

The debate over the dating of the book of Revelation is a very heated one. I don't believe the futurist/preterist debate can be decided on this issue alone. However, it is still an important concern. In this article I will try to present some of the evidence for the early date and take a look at some of the evidence for the late date.

The book of Revelation is called by some the most biblical book in the Bible. The reason is that it contains hundreds of direct and indirect references to the Old Testament. It is apocalyptic literature. This is a style of writing that we see throughout the Bible. It was especially prevalent around the time of Christ.

Apocalyptic literature was written in kind of a code that only the “enlightened” could understand. In other words, the uninformed person reading it would wonder what on earth it was talking about. This is certainly true for the book of Revelation. However, those understanding the code language would have no trouble grasping the book’s meaning.

The code for Revelation is very simply the Old Testament. The average Hebrew of the day would have no trouble recognizing the imagery in this book. However, the average Roman looking at Revelation would dismiss it as the ravings of a mad man. Perhaps that is what John intended, since he was in exile when he wrote it. Therefore, the key to understanding Revelation is not a good grasp of current events, but a good grasp of the Old Testament.

Every generation since the first century has tried to fit Revelation into the current events of their day. What we are seeing today is nothing new. Every generation thought that Revelation had to be talking about them, but every generation was wrong except for one.

The book of Revelation does not give the date it was written, however, its numerous time statements tell us that what it prophesied was just about to happen. John went to great lengths to say this.

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place... (Rv.1:1)
- ...for the time is near. (Rv.1:3)
- ... He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him...(Rv.1:7) (Are the folks that pierced Him around today?)
- I am coming quickly...(Rv.3:11)
- Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. (Rv.3:10)
- ...things which must shortly take place. (Rv.22:6)
- ...I am coming quickly. (Rv.22:7)
- ...Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. (Rv.22:10)
- Behold, I am coming quickly...(Rv.22:12)
- Yes, I am coming quickly. (Rv.22:20)

In the first chapter of Revelation we see the Lord coming in the clouds. As we have discussed in other articles, this is Old Testament lingo for coming in judgment. Does this fit the events of the first century? Exactly. Jesus and John the Baptist warned of the judgment that was to come upon that generation. They NEVER warned of judgment to come on a future generation.

“...that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate....” Matthew 23:35 through Matthew 23:38 (NKJV)

But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’ Luke 23:28 through Luke 23:30 (NKJV)

Jesus never said to weep for anyone but themselves and their own children. He pronounced judgment upon that generation not a future one. He said that generation shall bear the guilt for the blood of all the righteous shed upon the earth. How can we think He was talking about our day?

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Matthew 3:7 through Matthew 3:10 (NKJV)

Likewise, John the Baptist speaks of a wrath coming upon that generation. Why would he warn them to flee from a wrath to come 2000 years later? Why would he say that the ax is laid to the root of the trees then? Again, when we see Israel compared to trees or a tree in the New Testament it is always in the context of judgment never any sort of reestablishment or regathering.

Moreover, we see that the judgment Jesus describes in Matt 24 did happen. History attests to this fact. The fact that judgment indeed came upon that generation is one strong proof that revelation was written before A.D. 70. There is simply no other generation that matches the theme of the book and the clear statements of Jesus and many others.

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. Revelation 11:1 through Revelation 11:2 (NKJV)

This passage is strong internal proof of the early date of Revelation. Very simply the temple was still standing when John had his vision. The temple was destroyed completely in A.D. 70.

This passage also states that the city will be tread underfoot for 42 months. The Roman/Jewish war lasted about exactly forty-two months. Nero commissioned Vespasian in March or April of 67 A.D. and the temple fell in August or September of A.D. 70. It is a pretty good fit. It is also astounding that according to Josephus the temple was burned on the same day and month that the Babylonians did it some years back. Furthermore, 42 months was the length of Jesus’ ministry (3 ½ years). Therefore, God allowed the nations to trample the holy land one month for every month they rejected the Lord.

Some say that the temple in Revelation is a spiritual temple, but how could a spiritual temple be trampled under foot? Others say that the temple in Ezekiel was never built, so this must be the temple that will be built again someday. However, we must think carefully before we make such an assumption. The vision Ezekiel received was a glorious vision blessed by God. If a temple was rebuilt today and the Old Testament sacrifices reinstated, do you think God would approve? No, He did not approve in A.D. 70 and He would not approve today. In fact, the whole temple system was later called the synagogue of Satan. Why? Because Jesus, the once and for all sacrifice, has come. Any other sacrifice is an abomination—an insult to God. And any temple would be the same for the same reason. God’s holy temple is already here. That temple is the church. God is not going to go back to dwelling in buildings. To think so is absurd and an insult to the cross.

Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Ezekiel’s glorious vision could be about something God would call an abomination in our day. If Ezekiel’s vision was about a post cross temple, it simply would not be portrayed in a good way. It would be considered accursed. It is much more likely that his vision portrayed a type of the glorious New Covenant realities, for any temple in the Old Testament

was exactly that—a type of the glory that would come in Christ. To think God would ever again bless the shadow when the substance is here is illogical.

Let us look at a passage that gives more internal evidence for the early date of Revelation.

“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. Revelation 17:9 through Revelation 17:10 (NKJV)

This passage mentions seven kings. Five have fallen. One was alive at the time John wrote Revelation. The seventh had not yet come, yet when he did, he would only rule for a short time. This passage is difficult or impossible to fit with any time but a pre A.D. 70 date.

At that time five Roman rulers had come Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Gains (also called Caligula), and Claudius. Nero was the king who was. Galba came after Nero but only reigned seven months. This is a perfect fit.

If this passage was written in A.D. 96, it simply cannot fit. Who were the five kings that had already fallen? There were many more than five rulers of Rome by that time.

Yet another internal evidence that the book of Revelation was written before 70 AD, is found in John's letters to the seven churches. At the beginning of the book John writes to the seven churches in Asia. There is only a very small window of time when there were only seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. Paul actually started nine churches in this region. However, the churches at Colosse and Hierapolis are not mentioned in Revelation. The reason is that these two cities, along with Laodicea, suffered a great earthquake in approximately A.D. 61. Laodicea was rebuilt soon after the earthquake, but Colosse and Hierapolis were not. (Remember earthquakes were a sign in passages such as Matt. 24!) So, we see that the early date fits perfectly. If Revelation was written later, there would have been many more than seven churches in the region.

In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 John mentions persecution coming from the Jews. Remember, at first all persecution against the early church came from the Jews. It was only under Nero that Rome came against the church. Ignatius records that before 70 A.D. persecution from the Jews was especially strong in Smyrna and Philadelphia. This fits exactly with John's statements to these churches.

The Jewish persecutions along with biblical Judaism ended abruptly in A.D. 70. Therefore, John's statements to Smyrna and Philadelphia simply would not apply after the A.D. 70 date.

It is widely thought that the external evidence greatly favors the late date for the book of Revelation. (External evidence is what early church fathers etc. said that implies the date the book was written.) However, this is just not true. In fact, the external evidence is at least as great for the early date as it is for the late date. Following are some of the external evidences for the early date.

Tertullian (160- 220 A.D.) states that John's exile came at the same time as Paul and Peter's death. This would place the exile in the time of Nero which would mean a pre-A.D. 70 date for Revelation.

Shepherd of Hermas: There is strong internal evidence in this fellow's writings that he was the Hermas mentioned in Romans 16:14. This would place his writings around 90- 100 AD. The Shepherd of Hermas quotes the book of Revelation freely in his writings. Therefore the book of Revelation would have to have been written, widely distributed, and widely known before A.D. 90.

Muratorian Canon (170- 200 A.D.) This is the oldest Latin church document of Rome. It dates to the era of Irenaeus. It speaks of John finishing the letters to the seven churches in A.D. 67- 68.

Epiphanius of salamis (A.D. 315-403) He is known for his writings on the banishment of John. He places the exile of John under the reign of Nero.

As a side note, some say that exile is something that would be more likely under Domitian than Nero. However, church tradition states that the Romans first tried to boil John in oil. However, he did not die and came out unharmed. It was after that that they sent him into exile. Boiling in oil has Nero written all over it. He would have people tortured in this manner then have them used for human candles.

Finally, let us look at some of the external evidence that seems to support the late date for Revelation. It is really not nearly as strong as futurists would have us believe.

There strongest witness by far is a fellow named Irenaeus who wrote the following around A.D. 180.

“We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of the Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign.”

That is it. This is the greatest proof for the early date of Revelation! However, even this translation is disputed by many scholars. Irenaeus wrote in an obscure and difficult style. In many places it is difficult or impossible to know exactly what he was saying. Moreover, many scholars think that Irenaeus could have been saying that John not the apocalypse was seen near the time of the end of Domitian’s reign. The text can be translated this way.

Eusebius quotes Irenaeus’ statement and seems to imply that Irenaeus meant that John was seen near the end of Domitian’s reign not the apocalypse.

Moreover, Irenaeus speaks of “ancient copies” of the book of Revelation in the text. Since Irenaeus lived shortly after the reign of Domitian, this phrase seems inappropriate. How could something become ancient so quickly.

Finally, Irenaeus goes on to say that Christ Himself lived past the age of 50! He says that there were eyewitnesses to this fact. This calls into question Irenaeus’ credibility. Also, if these are the same eyewitnesses that saw John near the end of Domitian’s reign, their accuracy is called into question as well.

The next great witness to the early date of Revelation is Origen (185- 254). He said this:

“The King of the Romans, as tradition teaches, condemned John, who bore testimony, on account of the word of truth, the isle of Patmos. John, moreover, teaches us things respecting his testimony, without saying who condemned him when he utters things in the Apocalypse. He seems to have seen the Apocalypse... in the island.”

Quite frankly, this proves absolutely nothing.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) said that John moved to Ephesus after the death of the “Tyrant” who exiled him to Patmos. Some assume the tyrant was Domitian. However, the name tyrant was much more associated with Nero than Domitian. Moreover, Nero fits the bill of a tyrant far better than Domitian.

Clement also writes that revelation through the apostles ceased under Nero.

Finally, Clement also says that after his banishment, John once chased a young man, who was wavering in his faith, for a great distance on horseback. Does this sound like the deeds of a 90 years plus man?

Eusebius (260-340) is also quoted as proof for a late date of Revelation. However, though Eusebius does speak of a late date for Revelation, the proof he gives is only to quote Irenaeus. However, this same fellow denies that John wrote the book of Revelation. He also contradicts himself by saying that Paul and Peter were executed at the time of John’s exile. Enough said.

[Go back to top](#)

Mon, 05 Dec 2005

Common Futurist Errors

Is the rebirth of Israel a super sign that the end is near? Are earthquakes increasing? What about the mark of the beast? In this section we answer these questions and more.

[Administration](#)

The following is a look at many common futurist beliefs. How do these stand up to the preterist view, history, and the facts?

"Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Revelation 13:18

The number 666 in the book of Revelation reveals the identity of a future anti-Christ. Click on the links below for some examples.



<http://www.becomingone.org/666/>

<http://www.greaterthings.com/Word-Number/666/>

The rebirth of Israel in 1948 is a super sign that proves the second coming is near.

[Click here for the preterist view](#)

The number of earthquakes on the earth has increased dramatically in the last 50 years. This is a sign that the end is near. Hal Lindsey said:

"Earthquakes continue to increase in frequency and intensity, just as the Bible predicts for the last days before the return of Christ. History shows that the number of killer quakes remained fairly constant until the 1950s - averaging between two to four per decade. In the 1950s, there were nine. In the 1960s, there were 13. In the 1970s, there were 51. In the 1980s, there were 86. From 1990 through 1996, there have been more than 150."

[Click here for the facts](#)

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (Matt 24:9-10)

We are told that persecution against Christians is the worst it has ever been. Certainly, this is a sign that the end is near.

[Click here for the facts](#)

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. (Matt 24:6)

The 20th century was the bloodiest century ever. This means Jesus had to be talking about our time.

[Click here for the facts](#)

Mark of the Beast?

One of the best known features of Revelation among the general Christian populace today is also one of its most misunderstood. There is a widespread awareness of and interest in this intriguing passage of Revelation 13:18, "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

In order to gain a proper conception of this verse, a little historical and cultural background will be necessary. In ancient days alphabets served a two-fold purpose. Their first and foremost design was, of course, their service as letters from which words were composed in written communication. But in the second place, letters were also assigned numerical values and thus served as numerals.

This can be seen in that the word very simply and could have been spelled out, and also in that any particular mathematical value could fit a number of words or name. As we begin our trip back down into history we must bear in mind that John clearly says "the number of the beast" is "the number of a man" Rev.13:18

Since the book of Revelation is written in a Hebrew (Aramaic context by a Jew with numerous allusions to the Old Testament we should expect the solution to deciphering the meaning of 666 to be Hebraic. The reason clearly is that, while John writes in Greek, he thinks in Hebrew, and the thought has naturally affected the vehicle of expression. A compelling case can be made the the referent of 666 is non other than the infamous tyrant Nero Caesar.

When Nero Caesar's name is transliterated into Hebrew, we get "Neron Kesar (nrwn qsr: Hebrew has no letters to represent vowels) It has been documented by archaeological finds that a first century Hebrew spelling of Nero's name provides us with precisely the value of 666. Jastrow's lexicon of the Talmud contains the very spelling. When we take the letters of Nero's name and spell them in Hebrew we get the following numeric values: n=50, r = 200, w - 6, n = 50, q = 100, s =60, r = 200 = 666. Every Jewish reader, of course, saw that the Beast was a symbol of Nero. The Apostle writing as a Hebrew, was evidently thinking as Hebrew....Accordingly, the Jews Christian would have tried the name as he thought of the name-that is in Hebrew letters And the moment that he did this the secret stood revealed. No Jew ever thought of Nero except as 'Neron Kesar.' Theses who read John's account of the Beast probably had come to this conclusion even before they made their calculation. Nero was the slayer of his own mother.

Subsequent Christian history supports the view that Nero was the Beast. "All the earliest Christian writers on the Apocalypse, from Irenaeus down to Victorinus of Pettau and Commodian in the fourth, and Andreas in the fifth, and St Beatus in the eighth century, connect Nero, or some Roman Emperor, with the Apocalyptic Beast. There is a curious variation on 666. Some manuscripts read 616. Why would a copyist make such a number change?"

Perhaps the change was intentional, seeing that the Greek from Neron Caesar written in Hebrew character (nrwn qsr) is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin from Nero Caesar (nrw qsr) is equivalent to 616. Keep in mind that there were no copy machines in the first century. If you wanted a copy of a book, you had to copy it by hand. No matter how carefully a scribe worked, mistakes were inevitable.

Some mistakes occurred when a scribe was making a copy of a known copy. He might have thought the copy was mistaken and that it was up to him to correct it. A Greek or Latin copyist might have thought that 666 was an error because Nero Caesar did not add up to 666 when transliterated into Latin. He then changed 666 to 616 to conform to the Latin rendering since it was generally accepted the Nero was the Beast. In either case, a Hebrew transliteration nets 666, while a Latin spelling nets 616. Nero was the "man and 666 was his number. The Beast is a political figure. The Beat was Nero Caesar.

No where does John use the word Antichrist in Revelation to describe the Beast. In addition, Paul's "man of lawlessness" was clearly his contemporary, present in the world at the time of Paul's writing. The Thessalonians "know what was restraining him." (2 Thessalonians 2: 6) The "man of lawlessness" is not identified either by Paul or John as the Beast or Antichrist. Putting all of this together, we can conclude that the modern construction of the Antichrist doctrine is unbiblical.

The first readers of Revelation were told to "calculate the number of the Beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (Rev. 13:18) Since the Book of Revelation was written to a first-century audience, sometime in late A.D. 64, we should expect the first-century readers to be able to calculate the number with relative ease. They would have had few candidates from which to choose. The Roman emperor world have been their most likely choice

Nero was called the beast because of his bestial nature. Nero often acted in "horrible viciousness as regards to men and women. He was a sodomist who is said to have castrated a boy named Sporus and married him. He enjoyed homosexual rape and torture. He killed his parents, brother, wife, aunt, and many others close to him. He even so prostituted his own chastity that after defiling almost every part of his body, he at last devised a kind odd game, in which covered with the skin of some wild animal he was let loose from a cage and attacked the private parts of men and women who were bound to stakes.

Revelation 13:7 speaks of the power given to the beast to make war with the saints. Nero was the first of the imperial authorities to persecute Christianity. Tacitus records the scene in Rome when the persecution of Christians broke out: "And their death was aggravated with mockeries, insomuch that, wrapped in the hides of wild beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or fastened to crosses to be set on fire, that when the darkness fell they might be burned to illuminate the night." Revelation 13:5 says that the beast would continue 42 months.

The Neronic persecution was instituted in 64 AD and lasted until his death in June 68 AD, which is three and a half years, or 42 months. Nero fits the bill for the role of the beast. The beast is to die by a sword according to Revelation 13. The beast's number is 666; in Hebrew, Nero's name adds up to 666. The beast is an awful character; Nero had a beastly character. The beast made war with the

saints for 42 months; Nero persecuted Christians for three and a half years. The beast dies by the sword; Nero killed himself with a dagger.

The beast is red; Nero had a red beard, which was very unusual in those times. Evidently the beast of Revelation is Nero. Remember, John told his readers, those first century Christians who lived in Asia Minor—that these things were to "shortly come to pass." We, twentieth-century Christians are not to be looking for some terrible beast to arise and bring great tribulation to believers, this has already happened during the time of Nero and the first-century Christians.

[Go back to beginning of "Futurist Errors"](#)

1948 Israel?

The reestablishment of the state of Israel in 1948 is considered to be the most important sign that the second coming is near. One of the great problems with this dispensational view is that there is no rebirth of Israel or rebuilt temple mentioned anywhere in the New Testament. Nor is the supposed regathering of the Jews to their homeland. This is puzzling, because if the rebirth of Israel is the "super sign," you would think it would be very prominent in prophetic passages such as Matt. 24 and Revelation. It simply is not.

There is only one passage that dispensationalists point to that they say speaks of the rebirth of Israel and that is in Matt. 24.

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door."

The thought is that the fig tree represents a reborn Israel. However, other passages in the New Testament cast doubt upon this interpretation. In Matthew 24's parallel passage in Luke 21 Jesus says to "look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near (Luke 21:29-30)." Are we talking about the rebirth of many nations here? It is far more logical to assume that Jesus was merely using the fig tree(s) as an object lesson.

Moreover, other passages that could associate Israel with a fig tree always speak of judgment and never of any sort of rebirth.

"Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again.' Immediately the fig tree withered away.

And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?'

So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.'" Matthew 21:18-21

Most scholars believe this particular fig tree did represent Old Covenant Israel. It was about to pass away and never bear fruit again. Jesus was not just mad because he wanted some figs and could not get any. Moreover, never again means never again.

Furthermore, when Jesus said that if they had faith and did not doubt, they would not only do what was done to the fig tree, but they could also say to this mountain “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” and it would be done. Was Jesus given them permission to tear up actual mountains and cast them into the sea? No, He was talking about something spiritual.

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Hebrews 12:18-24

If they had faith, they would see the Old Covenant which was represented by Mount Sinai torn up and cast away. And indeed it was.

Let us consider another parable with a fig tree.

“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” And He began telling this parable: “A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?’ And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.’” (Luke 9:3-9)

Obviously, the fig tree is not a nation about to be reborn, but one that was about to be judged, and indeed it was. It is interesting that Jesus probably told this parable in the third year of His ministry.

Next we must look at the covenantal implications of the rebirth of Israel. God's promise to give the Jews the land of Israel as their inheritance was an Old Covenant promise. This begs the question is the Old Covenant still in effect? If we say it passed away with the coming of the New Covenant, then so did the promise of the land.

However, if we say that it is still in effect for the Jews, we still run into problems. In the scriptures the promise that the Jews would hold the land of Israel was conditional. Deuteronomy 28 tells us "If you are not careful to do all the words of this law ... you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it, And the LORD will scatter you among all the peoples, from one end of the earth to the other. ..." If the people who now live in Israel are not keeping the Law of Moses (and they can't be because *The Mosaic Law* ceased to be observed in AD. 70, and it has never been observed in full since.), how can we say that God has given them the land back?

Even if you say that God's covenant with Abraham to give the Jews the physical land of Israel is still in effect, look what the Bible says are God's conditions for remembering His promise.

"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt— then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. Leviticus 26:40-42.

Did the Jews meet this condition before the 1948 regathering? No! This essentially makes God a liar!

[Go back to beginning of "Futurist Errors"](#)

Earthquakes Increasing?

The statistics Lindsey quotes are bogus. Moreover, no one seems to be able to establish where he got his numbers. The fact is earthquakes are not increasing.

Data from the National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC) of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) shows that the number of big earthquakes in the second half of the twentieth century were substantially less than the number of big earthquakes in the first half of the century. A DECREASE NOT AN INCREASE!

We offer this web site as documentation.

<http://www.neic.cr.usgs.gov/neis/eqlists/7up.html>

Some people say that the number of earthquakes of all sizes is increasing and then quote statistics to prove their point. However, the NEIC says that this is because our ability to perceive and record earthquakes has increased dramatically.

This quote is from their web site:

"We continue to be asked by many people throughout the world if earthquakes are on the increase. Although it may seem that we are having more earthquakes, earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or greater have remained fairly constant.

A partial explanation may lie in the fact that in the last twenty years, we have definitely had an increase in the number of earthquakes we have been able to locate each year. This is because of the tremendous increase in the number of seismograph stations in the world and the many improvements in global communications. In 1931, there were about 350 stations operating in the world; today, there are more than 8,000 stations and the data now comes in rapidly from these stations by electronic mail, internet and satellite. This increase in the number of stations and the more timely receipt of data has allowed us and other seismological centers to locate earthquakes more rapidly and to locate many small earthquakes which were undetected in earlier years. The NEIC now locates about 20,000 earthquakes each year or approximately 50 per day. Also, because of the improvements in communications and the increased interest in the environment and natural disasters, the public now learns about more earthquakes."

Seismologists are unanimous in saying that the number of earthquakes has remained constant throughout history.

Wilbur Rinehart: “There has been no significant increase in the numbers of earthquakes in this century or any other century.”

Keiiti Aki: “I feel very strongly that the seismicity has been stationary for thousands of years.”

Waverly Person: “Our records do not show any significant increase in great earthquakes.”

[Go back to “Futurist Errors”](#)

Persecutions?

Futurists are very quick to point out the application of this verse for our day. They say persecution against Christians is the worse it has ever been! While persecutions against Christianity are very severe in certain parts of the world, is it true that persecution is more intense that it has ever been? The following statistic taken from the World Evangelism Center which is a Dispensationalist organization at Regent University says otherwise.

Average Christian martyrs worldwide per year in 1970 377,000

Average Christian martyrs worldwide per year in 2002 160,000

What changed? There can be only one answer. It was the fall of the Soviet Union and the waning of Communism worldwide. This event gave great hope to the world. We are even now experiencing the impact of these events. Do we realize that in the past few decades the number of Democracies worldwide has doubled?

Here is a recent article on how technology has been a factor in the spread of democracy. This article also goes very much against the common thought that technology will be used to enslave humanity. In many cases quite the opposite is true. It is becoming a tool for freedom.

[Go back to the top](#)

Wars?

Much of the following information comes from Richard Abanes’ book “End Time Visions.”

Author Tim LaHaye claims that in the 20th century more than 180 million people were killed in wars. He states that this is more than have been killed in all the wars in history. It seems that no one challenges LaHaye on this assertion. We think he must be right because of WWI and WWII. (Never mind that LaHaye says God’s prophetic time clock started to tick in 1948!) However, history proves LaHaye’s statement to be absolutely ludicrous. A 1974 study of warfare showed that approximately three billion people have been killed in over 14,000 wars since 3600 B.C.

Even the idea that the 20th century was the bloodiest century ever is debatable. Things happened on a grander scale in the twentieth century mostly because there were so many more people on the earth in the 20th century than in any other century. Even then there have been wars in past centuries that have rivaled the magnitude of modern wars.

See this link for world population growth charts.

<http://desip.igc.org/populationmaps.html>

Consider the seventeenth century. The thirty years war (1618-1648) involved ten nations and claimed the lives of two to three million soldiers. In Germany alone thirty to forty percent of the German civilian population died during this conflict. That is seven to eight million people. Germany did not suffer nearly so greatly in WWII. Then in 1644 was the Manchu-Chinese war in which twenty-five million people lost their lives. Remember world population was four to five times as great in the twentieth century than in the seventeenth century. A larger percentage of people lost their lives due to warfare in the seventeenth century than in the twentieth. In fact, if you study the population charts, you will see that world population actually decreased in the first half of the 17th century. We see no such decrease in the 20th century.

The nineteenth century was equally as bloody. Its worst wars were the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) which took five to six million lives and the Taiping Rebellion which cost thirty million people their lives.

J. David Singer and Melvin Small in their book “The Wages of War 1816- 1965” said:

“Is war on the increase, as many scholars as well as laymen of our generation have been inclined to believe? The answer would seem to be a very unambiguous negative. Whether we look at the number of wars, or their severity or magnitude, there is no significant trend upward or down over the past 150 years.”

Moreover, there is Jesus’ use of the phrase “rumors of wars” in Matt. 24. In our day of instant media coverage, would a rumor of a war even be possible? This is something about which the end times prophets refuse to comment.

[Back to top of Difficult Questions”](#)