

Dear Dispensationalist Friend...

My Testimony of How I Got Here From There

By Todd D. Dennis

Proverbs 13:12 "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life."

Dear (Dispensationalist Friend),

Thank you for sending me materials regarding the refutation of the Preterist view. I always love to be given the opportunity to answer charges against this theology, as the arguments are, almost without exception, easily answered. Oftentimes, they are even shown to be based upon misrepresentations of the view. Such is the case with the majority of the materials you sent.

I have confronted one of the authors personally (during our e-mail debate in '96) for his pattern of selecting little-used and/or centuries-old views to misrepresent Preterist theology today. One example of this is his statement that we believe fulfillment of New Testament prophecies is to be found in the Maccabean period, which pre-dated the birth of Christ. There is still a small section of Preteristic thought which believes such, but they do not speak for the rest. Usually, though, they are partial Preterists, not Preterists.

It is easy to misrepresent (or convolute) the views of Preterists, due to the fact that there are many differing viewpoints within the general spectrum of such thought. This is true, of course, of every doctrinal perspective.

What is interesting to me is that every denomination has **some form of Preterism** as a part of their beliefs, so far as I have seen. Partial Preterism (which differs from Preterism in that it accepts varying portions of eschatological fulfillment) incorporates a wide spectrum of theology, stretching from partial Preteristic Catholicism to Baptist theology that includes a healthy dash of the partial Preterist view. All Preteristic believers ("Partial" and "Full" Preterists) generally agree that the Roman-Jewish war of 66-73 was the stage for the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies and sections (at least) of the Olivet Discourse.

Misrepresentation, such as that mentioned above, is why I have an entire section of The Preterist Archive ([Critical Article Archive](#)) devoted to these and other articles critical of the view. I have also included responses to the charges leveled. The idea is to allow airing of all sides of the discussion, without the usual one-sided religious rhetoric. Sincere students benefit from not having to rely solely on the words of an opponent **who inaccurately speaks for their opposition** (this is the tactic of building 'straw men' to knock down). I have had many people say that the debates in the [Critical Article Archive](#) were very helpful in their studies, and even the source of the doctrinal conversion of some. Even more often, though, have been the testimonies of people (like me) who came to the position independent of any other writings, including those of Preterists or Josephus, save the Word of God.

If you don't mind, I would like to use my personal testimony of the last six years to present the scope of Preterist theology, and answer the few charges leveled in the received materials that weren't predicated upon positions we don't hold.

I arrived at T. Baptist College ready to fully embrace the Dispensational Premillennial view. What happened, though, was that the teachers taught me **out** of that position. Though they were the best and sincerest of people (and wonderful teachers), the more they taught, the less Biblical and common sense it made to me. I had no idea what **was** true, but I was beginning to see that I needed to find out if there were any **Biblical alternatives to the Dispensational view**.

By the time I left school, I was the friendly nemesis of some, because I asked too many difficult questions. The College Administrator came to my defense, though, and encouraged me to continue being tenacious in my studies (of which I jokingly reminded him when we engaged in an e-mail discussion on the Preterist view in 1997).

Then came the pastorate in the state of North Dakota. In the beginning of my Master's degree studies, in 1994, the pastor of what became my sending church personally asked me to take over a Dispensational Premillennial church there. I was overjoyed to finally, after 10 years as an active Christian (and four years of Christian leadership), to have the time and freedom to see God explain all of my unanswered questions... particularly those the teachers at college had not been able to answer. It was then that I covenanted with God (perhaps foolishly, **not conceiving** where I would be taken) to not read any books except the Bible, until He grounded me upon some particular view. I would only read an author (secular history included) if God placed it across my path in a way that was relevant to the lessons He was giving.

I spent the next two years intensively studying nothing but the Word of God, day and night. During that time, I was being **changed from within** like never before in my life. God had (I supposed at the time) honored my prayers, as well as my hunger and thirst for Truth. It occurred to me that He was leading me by bringing me closer to Himself first, predicating all other doctrinal understanding on our personal relationship. It was then that He revealed to me that He was **my personal Tutor**, answering whatever questions put before Him when I asked, sought, and knocked. This blessing, alone, made the doctrinal journey worth all of the time and effort.

The following is a condensed version of the doctrinal studies through which He put me during the first two years of study. It wasn't until after that period that I learned the generally accepted name for the doctrine I was then embracing. I didn't even know if there was anyone else who believed the same way as I did. After creating The Doctrinal Depot in '95, I was told (by Gil Gaudraeu) that one who believes as such is called a Preterist. Later, I found that my unfamiliarity with this doctrine was due to my lack of knowledge regarding [church history](#), as the early to middle aged "Church" was unanimous in acceptance of the Preterist view of the Olivet Discourse.

Initially, my questions naturally revolved around the nation of Israel. In one way or another, Israel seemed to be involved with everything in the Bible. Having had, in school, particular difficulties seeing the Dispensational **[difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven](#)**, this is where my studies began.

When it became clear that the Kingdoms were identical (it is the same "heavenly kingdom" of God - the confusion is because it is called the Kingdom **of heaven** solely in Matthew), I was shown that there were great errors with the Dispensational view, in regards to Israel and this kingdom, so that is where I went next.

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

Establishing the singularity of the kingdoms of God and heaven led to questions about the fate of the physical nation of Israel. I wanted to determine the nature of the kingdom of heaven, as opposed to that of Israel. Where they both to exist at the same time, as taught by Dispensationalism? I didn't know. As I studied Israel, the main themes that stuck out were those regarding the utter destruction of the physical nation, and then the seeming re-establishment thereof.

WHO ISRAEL ISN'T

It was then that God brought across my path a theological position I had never heard before - **Christian Identity**. This was before it had taken off in the States, particularly among the Patriot Movement. **Christian Identity** (CI) taught that the "true Israel" of God are the Anglo-Saxon peoples. Their doctrine teaches that the nation of Israel in Palestine today is made up of people from Eastern Asia, which have **no connection** to Israel or Abraham, except through religion.

CI did a great job in dismantling the idea that modern-day Israel was the chosen people of God, using the numerous New Testament passages about the destruction of Israel and the gathering of the elect (which would later come in handy). Then they backed up their claims with statements directly from the numerous academic sources (including Israeli press), which acknowledged that there is no such thing as a Jewish race, but that it is only a religion or nationality of choice.

Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem (1971)

"It is a common assumption, and one that sometimes seems ineradicable even in the face of evidence to the contrary, that the Jews of today constitute a race, a homogeneous entity easily recognizable. From the preceding discussion of the origin and early history of the Jews, it should be clear that in the course of their formation as a people and a nation they had already assimilated a variety of racial strains from people moving into the general area they occupied. This had taken place by interbreeding and then by conversion to Judaism of a considerable number of communities. . . .

"Thus, the diversity of the racial and genetic attributes of various Jewish colonies of today renders any unified racial classification of them a contradiction in terms. Despite this, many people readily accept the notion that they are a distinct race. This is probably reinforced by the fact that some Jews are recognizably different in appearance from the surrounding population. That many cannot be easily identified is overlooked and the stereotype for some is extended to all - a not uncommon phenomenon" (Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem, 1971, vol. 3, p. 50).

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1973)

"The Jews As A Race: The findings of physical anthropology show that, contrary to the popular view, there is no Jewish race." (vol. 12, page 1054)

At any rate, I took this nugget of thought to the Bible, and it became clear that the **Israel in the Middle East are not the Israel of the Bible**.

Christian Identity did a good job of showing who wasn't Israel. The more I studied CI, though, the more it became clear that their further conclusions were 'dead' wrong. In calling the Anglo-Saxons and Germanic peoples Israel, they were placing restrictions upon the inclusivity of Christ's redemption that are not to be found in the Bible. Galatians 3, alone, shows that there is no temporal measure, as all the promises were to Christ (v.16). The more familiar I became with it, the plainer it was that **there are major problems with Christian Identity doctrine**. Interestingly enough, most of the errors are shared with Dispensationalism, in regards to temporalizing eternal things, turning glory into shame.

Not having embraced CI was fine by me, for a few reasons: First, I was raised with the ethic that God is not the respecter of persons - black, white, male, female, Jew, Greek, etc.. (this is one of the early questions raised in Indianapolis - how a temporal race could comprise "God's chosen people," when Christians of all races are God's chosen people.) Secondly, many of the people involved with Christian Identity were rude, prideful, and arrogant. This, in my opinion, betrayed their lack of Biblical understanding. The biggest joy in moving beyond CI, though, was that God had made it abundantly clear that there was a great deal of further understanding to be given... if I didn't turn back from the plow.

WHO ISRAEL IS

As a result of determining **who wasn't Israel**, I focused all my attentions on **who was Israel**. I became convinced (along with the majority of Protestant Denominations, I later found) that the Bible taught that the true identity of Israel was the Church (Gal 6:16; see [The Church is Israel Now](#)). Better put, Israel is the body of Christ - the bride. Romans 9:6-9 states it most succinctly, declaring that "they which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of promise are counted for the seed."

To this, the majority of early Christian writers agree. Dallas Seminary dispensationalist Alan Patrick Boyd stated the following:

"The majority of the writers/writings in this period [A.D. 70-165] completely identify Israel with the Church." (Boyd, "Dispensational Premillennial Analysis," p. 47.)

Boyd specifically cites Papias, 1 Clement, 2 Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, and the Didache, though a case could be made that no other early Christian was as emphatic on this point as Justin Martyr. His second century work, *A Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew* must be the finest treatment ever given this subject, all things considered. For more information on this topic, please refer to [excerpts from the writings of Justin Martyr- On the Identification of Israel \(A.D.150\)](#).

The short, superficial reason why today's temporal Israel are not the people of God is that they had, long ago, been destroyed for their transgression of the Old Covenant, and were removed off the land, and their Amos 3:2 relationship, in accordance with the terms of the contract at Sinai:

Ex. 19:5,6 "Now therefore, *if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant*, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation".

This was said to Israel at Sinai. Of course, they promptly and continually broke it. They failed to live up to the terms of their end of the contract. God kept His end, though, and destroyed them off the earth for their rebellion, as He said He would (and as the numerous prophets confirmed to their faces).

Deut. 6:14,15 "Ye shall not go after other gods of the people which are round about you... lest the anger of the Lord be kindled against thee, and *destroy thee from off the face of the earth*" (land).

Duet. 8:1-18 "Otherwise it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods and serve them, I testify against you this day that *ye shall surely perish*. As the nations which the Lord destroyed before your face, **so shall ye perish**, because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God."

Deut. 28:47,48 "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee;... and He shall put a *yoke of iron* upon thy neck *until He have destroyed thee.*"

This was fulfilled in the Roman annihilation of Israel, iron being the symbol of the Roman empire (Dan. 2:40; 7:7). Following that (vv. 50-67) is an exact and vividly descriptive prophecy (given through Moses), of the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The horrors of which were to be unsurpassed in all history; which prophecy ends with this prediction (vv. 63-67):

"And it shall come to pass that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you *to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land* whither thou goest to possess it. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth unto the other...* And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest," etc.

In this same chapter Moses says concerning "all these curses" that "they shall be upon thee, for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed *forever*" (v. 46). - More information on this subject is listed below

We find out in the New Testament (Romans 9 and others), that Israel's rebellion was **preordained** to show how the law was only the schoolmaster to show the need for, and the perfection of, Christ. In other words, it was **always** God's plan to destroy the temporal nation. This is not the Dispensational view, though. There is the argument that goes like this:

"When Jesus Christ came to earth two thousand years ago He presented to both the Jews and Gentiles a genuine, bona fide offer of the Kingdom of heaven on earth if they would accept Him as their Messiah-King." - *Apocalypse*, [Grant Jeffrey](#), p. 33-34.

We know that this assertion is false, because in the book of John, they tried to make Him a king, and He withdrew. On top of this, Christ declared that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), to which Paul heartily agrees in I Cor. 15:50 and II Tim. 4:18.

The scariest part about Jeffrey's statement above, and the fatal flaw of the Dispensational position, is the argumentation that follows. Being stuck in a rut of logic that will not allow him to escape the absurdity of his argument, Jeffrey is driven to the statement below, which picks up directly after the above quote:

"If they (the Jews) had chosen to accept Jesus and crown Him as their Messiah on Palm Sunday, A.D. 32, He would have entered the Eastern Gate and announce the restitution of all things, the cancellation of all debts and the proclamation of liberty to the captives. It was a genuine possibility that Israel could have accepted Him as Messiah and He would have ushered in the millennial Kingdom. **Somehow, Jesus would have been crucified at some later point** to fulfill the prophecy and provide salvation of all those who repent of their sins." - *Apocalypse*, [Grant Jeffrey](#), p. 33-34.

Christ having to be crucified after His glorious reign is not a Biblical doctrine, needless to say. Yet Grant Jeffrey is the second-highest grossing Christian author (so I hear), behind Hal Lindsey. That makes me question the doctrinal savvy of contemporary Dispensationalism.

So... Israel was destroyed as a nation because of their inability to abide by the terms of the Sinaitic Covenant. What is a wonderful show of the mercy of the New Covenant (which requires no national allegiance), is that **anyone** could enter into **this other** contract with God - and this time, all the terms

and penalties were placed upon Christ. Christ, and He alone, was counted worthy of keeping the contract (Gen. 3:16), but it wasn't the old contract, it was the new contract - which was signed in His blood. This general call to re-enter the promised land is to what Moses referred when addressing Israel, which land could only be entered through The Door, Jesus Christ:

"If *from thence* thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art *in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee, if thou turn to the Lord thy God and shalt be obedient unto His voice.*"

That is why Peter, when speaking to the church in I Peter 2:9, declares that the Christians were the inheritors of the following promises, which were never given to the temporal nation due to their disobedience.

"Now therefore, *if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant*" - (which Christ did) - "then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure* unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*" (Ex. 19:5,6).

One great purpose of this temporal destruction is revealed to be a temporal metaphor of the refining fire for the pure (elect remnant) of Israel, who, under the New Covenant, joined the body of Christ just like all other believers. So God is truly not a respecter of persons, but Christ is the judge. You have to go through Christ, as the promises were not made to all of Israel, but to the heir, Who is Christ (Matthew 21:38; Gal. 3:16, etc.). To this the Old Testament amply agrees (Hosea 11:1 fulfilled in Matthew 2:18, showing that Israel is Christ), as well as the abundant writings of Christianity's first great (post-apostolic) debater, Justin Martyr.

Dispensational great Charles Ryrie, in the magazine *Dispensationalism Today*, declared that "If Dispensationalism has all the answers, then it is the most helpful tool in Biblical interpretation. If not, it ought to be discarded as worthless" (1965,21). In the case of the identification of Israel, it is my opinion that Dispensationalism is clearly and patently false. If that is a correct assessment, this recent system is shown to be foundationally false, due to the fundamental importance of the identification of Israel in the Dispensational model.

For a book which clearly lays out the case for the nature of Israel, please read [**The Hope of Israel**](#), by Philip Mauro.

I was clearly no longer a Dispensationalist, though I had no idea what I was, or where I would land... so I kept studying.

That Israel "after the flesh" (I Cor. 10:18) was not the true Israel of God, and the body of Christ was, gave me great leads to pursue. Theologically, it led me straight to the significance of the cross. I needed to figure out, more specifically, the significance of the passing from the Old Covenant to the New, and what other impact this had. My first question, though, was **when** this transfer took place from the temporal to the spiritual nation.

USING WHY TO FIND OUT WHEN

Israel made a covenant they couldn't keep, and then were utterly destroyed at the appointed time (the "Day of the Lord" - I Thess 5:2). There was a greater purpose behind all of this, and that is the redemption promised in Gen. 3:15. Hebrews 3,4, and Galatians 3 (among other passages), teach that the law was defunct, and could save nobody. From here, we are in mutual agreement about the need

for Christ, and the purpose of Christ, and the redeeming qualities and nature of Christ. The unique substitutionary sacrifice is the cornerstone of my doctrine, as it is with yours... so our issues are not about the **nature** of redemption. What is different, though, is the Preterist **timing** of redemption.

Though Dispensationalists believe that redemption was given at the resurrection (or Pentecost), most Preterists believe that redemption was not given until the return of Christ. This is substantiated in numerous verses, including the following:

I Cor. 15:23 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ *shall all* be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's *at His coming*."

Acts 3:19 "That your sins **may be** blotted out, **when** the times of refreshing **shall come** from the presence of the Lord; and **he shall send** Jesus Christ.. whom the heaven must receive **until** the times of restitution of all things (cf. Luke 21:22,32), which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (cf. Rev. 10:7)."

Hebrews 8:1; 9:24,28 "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. So as Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him **shall he appear the second time** without sin **unto salvation**."

The Olivet Discourse places this giving of redemption (therefore the second coming of Christ) as being at the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans:

Luke 21:21 "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation in nigh. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that *all things which are written* may be fulfilled. 28 But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because **your redemption draweth nigh**. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till *all be fulfilled*."

What ties this into the matters at hand is that nearly every passage in the Old Testament which speaks of the reestablishment of Israel, does so in the context of salvation or redemption. Isaiah 35, for instance, which says "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose," declares that this same desert shall "rejoice with joy and singing" as "they.. see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (v.2). Verse three then correlates this to the New Testament, as it says "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees." Hebrews 12:12 quotes this verse in fulfillment regarding our relationship with God through Christ! Jeremiah 6:21-25 takes this verse and shows the other side, which is the desolation that was coming upon the nation of Israel at the hands of the Roman army, using the same language as the Olivet Discourse.

Isaiah 35 then continues by describing the beauties of salvation in Christ (paraphrased), "The blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the lame shall walk" which is, of course, Christ's phrase to describe, to the disciples of John, His Messianic role (Matt. 11:5). Preterism glorifies Christ in all of these OT word pictures, seeing them for the metaphors of His nature that they are. Others may wish to limit the meaning of these passages through a "literal" hermeneutic, but I think that the entire history of Christian interpretation would show the error therein.

The passing from the Old Covenant to the New underscores the significance of the transference of Israel from the temporal to the spiritual realms. The reason these two are correlated is that, according to Hebrews 9:8,9, the temporal holy of holies had to be destroyed first, so that the fulfillment (spiritual temple- the church) would supersede the shadow (temporal).

Hebrews 8:1; 9:24,28 "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. So as Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him **shall he appear the second time** without sin **unto salvation.**"

A fascinating, possible fulfillment of this, is the account of various historians regarding the signs and wonders surrounding the days of the Roman-Jewish war. There was, actually, the appearing of angels in the skies above all of Palestine. Eusebius, quoting the Latin Josephus text, stated that these angels appeared as armies in conflict, encircling every city in the nation. The following is taken from another historian, Tacitus:

And at the feast which is called Pentecost, when the priests entered the temple at night, as was their custom, to perform the services, they said that at first they perceived a movement and a noise, and afterward a voice as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us go hence.' (Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 13)

Paul, in Galatians 4:20-31, states this, explaining that the Old Covenant was to become subservient to the New Covenant. Paul even refers this passing as being from the temporal Jerusalem to the "Jerusalem which is above." Presumably, this is the same city in Hebrews 11 whose "builder and maker is God," (v. 10), which was "an heavenly... city" (v. 16). It is also that "heavenly Jerusalem" and Zion of Hebrews 12:22. The transfer of the capital to the spiritual realm substantiates the passing of the elements of the Old Covenant (including the nation, temple, people, sacrifices, etc.) from the flesh to the spirit, through Christ.

Transference from Old Covenant to New

Seeing a theme of transference develop, this is where I headed next. It was with an examination of the Old Testament shadows and types that I began to receive hot leads into the timing of this fulfillment. Knowing that God ordained Old Testamentary events to shadow coming New Testament realities (Gal. 4:24; II Cor. 4:18; I Cor. 15:43), I began looking more intensely into the Old Testament, which I still knew only slightly better than I had before my studies began. While looking for all the shadows and types that fit into the theme of transference, I found that there are a number of famous instances of transference in the Old Testament. Two of the most important are when Israel went from Egypt to Palestine (the exodus), and when the kingdom was transferred from Saul to David.

It was with the latter of the two that my first breakthrough came, so far as the timing of the transference from the Old to the New (in covenant, nation, people, typology, etc.). In I Sam 15, Samuel tells Saul that because of his rebellion, the Lord has rejected him as a King. Verse 28 reads, "The Lord hath **rent the kingdom** of Israel from thee this day, and hath **given it to a neighbor** of thine, that is better than thou." So there were the two part - the **taking** and the **giving**.

God, through Samuel, was referring, of course, to David as being "better." Knowing that David represents Christ and the New Covenant (which is "better," according to Hebrews), I knew right where to look – at the words of Christ. It just so happens that Christ says the very same words as Samuel did, but Christ was saying them to the nation of Israel. Matthew 21 holds the parable of the householder. In it, the husbandmen, out of desire for the inheritance (that belonged to the Son), kill the master's servants, including the Son Himself. Verse 43 reads, "Therefore say I unto you, the **kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation** bringing forth the fruits thereof." So, the transference theme clearly includes the nation of Israel in the New Testament. The

significance of this is the greatest transference theme - the passing from the Old Covenant to the New, which is otherwise called the passing from the old, to the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21 - the Old Covenant had passed away - II Peter 3).

The question remains as to how the kingdom was to be transferred. We are told, in Matthew 23, that the physical nation is going to be destroyed to fulfill this prophecy. In fact, the Lord condemns NT Israel as harshly as is possible, emphasizing that the "axe is laid to the root of the trees" (Matt. 3:7-10).

What was more exciting, though, was the fact that Christ specifies the **timing** of this transference in verse 36, "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon **this generation**." Upon seeing this, I immediately went to the other passages which spoke of a time-frame of fulfillment, and found that they all spoke of the judgment coming "soon."

In confirmation that the word "generation" was in reference to the time-frame of fulfillment we have two points. First, there is the testimony of the 4th Century Christian scholar, [Chrysostom](#), who stated the unanimous interpretation of all Christians on this point:

"Was their house left desolate? Did all the vengeance come upon that generation? It is quite plain that it was so, and **no man gainsays it**." (Chrysostom, A.D. 347 -Homilies).

History confirms that, in fact, the entire nation and city and sanctuary **were destroyed within a generation** of these words having been spoken. So there it was. The transference from the Old to the New (nation, covenant, etc.) was to be in the first century.

The confidence that the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in the first century was all but unanimous in the first half of church history. In fact, I have yet to find ONE Christian in the first millennium of Christianity that taught otherwise! Origen states the following:

"I challenge anyone to prove my statement untrue if I say that the entire Jewish nation was destroyed less than one whole generation later on account of these sufferings which they inflicted on Jesus. For it was, I believe, forty-two years from the time when they crucified Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem." (Origen, Contra Celsum, 198-199)

NOTE:

People like to misrepresent Preterism by saying that it is not a historical doctrinal position. This is clearly not the case. ALL of Christianity was Preterist, **before the destruction** of Jerusalem as well as afterward (at the war's approach, the apostle James was martyred for not recanting his position that Jesus Christ was **about to come to destroy the nation of Israel** - quoted below). It is not the Preterism of today, though, for a number of reasons. One is that early Christians would mix and match doctrines together, with no concern for their consistency with Scripture. For instance, they would mix Preterism with their Premillennialism and their Postmillennialism, etc. There is little denying, though, that the Preterist view of the Olivet Discourse is the oldest eschatological doctrine of the church.

What happened? Well, eventually, the natural pendulum of doctrinal understanding took Christianity in and out of Catholicism, then in and out of Postmillennialism, then in to Premillennialism. It is my opinion that God has raised Preterism as the instrument for the next pendulum swing. It has to happen sooner or later, as people will only wait so long for the Second Coming of Christ before they abandon it. Imagine how upset people will be when the latest round of return dates are passed.

Only now is eschatology being given a thorough look by Christianity. Eschatology has never been the focus until now, and there has never been a council on the subject of eschatology in the history of the Christian church. The hysteria around the turn of the millennium makes today the perfect day for God to reveal otherwise, **re-exposing** a unanimously held, then partially forsaken, historical doctrine.

Besides, many of the people who lay the charge of novelty against Preterism believe in systems that cannot be traced back any farther than the 19th Century. So, historically speaking, Preteristic doctrine is superior.

Matthew 23:38 continues this prophecy of impending doom for Israel by Christ declaring, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate." This ties Christ's New Testament prophecies to those of the Old, as this makes a direct allusion to Daniel 9, where the chief end of that prophecy was that "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city **and the sanctuary**" (v.26). This was shown at the close of the Daniel prophecy, which reads, "and he shall **cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease**, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (v. 27).

Matthew 23:38 also makes the connection to Deuteronomy 28-29, where God tells Israel that they will be rejected due to their rebellion (just as Saul was). In fact, the specifics of Deut. 28 are astounding when compared to a history of the Roman-Jewish war, as it predicted all of the things that **did happen**. That is like people today looking in the newspaper to see the fulfillment of prophecy. I think they have the right idea, I would just ask them to **look first within the time frame that Christ gave**, to see if these things did happen (which, of course, they did - at least temporally). If done, one can see that the first (and only) time it happened all together was during the seven year Roman-Jewish War.

The "city and the sanctuary" were destroyed at the 3-1/2 year milestone (which is stunning, as 3-1/2 years is mentioned in Daniel and Revelation as being the time of the desolation). The interpreter of the Josephus text, Sir William Whiston, wrote (in 1737) regarding this amazing occurrence as such,

"This is a very remarkable day indeed, the seventeenth of Tammuz, [Tammuz,] A.D. 70, when, according to Daniel's prediction, 606 years before, the Romans "In half a week caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease," Dan. ix. 27; for from the month of February, A.D. 66, about which time Vespasian entered on this war, to this very time, was just three years and a half."

Another amazing fact revealed in Josephus is that the city was taken specifically on September 8, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, or the year of Christ 70 (Ant. b. vi. c. 10). The temple was burnt **August 10, A. D. 70**, which was, interestingly enough, **the exact same day and month** on which it had been burnt by the king of Babylon (Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 11. s. 8). Josephus was thoroughly satisfied that the destruction of Jerusalem was the judgment of God:

"had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a **generation** of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments; for **by their madness** it was that all the people came to be destroyed" (VI,V,6).

All told, there are few pre-Dispensational theologians who disputed the connection between the judgment of God and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D.70. Take, for example, this quote from one of today's leading American authorities on the writings of Josephus:

"It has been a standard feature of Christian preaching **through the ages** that the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 was really God's decisive punishment of the Jewish people for their rejection of Jesus, who died around the year 30." (Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*)

Regarding Josephus quickly... I mildly resent the charge by Futurists that Preterists have any type of reliance upon the works of Josephus. I have read it once, and consider it a great substantiation of the words of Christ - but beyond that, it has no more authority than the other extra-biblical writings of that era.

I have not even looked at the text since the first months of my study (aside from material like the above). Nearly 100% of my study time is in the Bible exclusively, so Bob Ross' charge that Preterists rely on Josephus is absurd. We just happen to be the only ones promoting this work, which has been called (by non-Preterists) the most important historical document of Christianity (as he also provides the earliest historical substantiation of the life of Christ!).

Only because most teachers and pastors hide it (for obvious reasons), have most Christians never heard of Josephus' impressive works. In A.D. 325, **Eusebius Pamphilius**, Christianity's first great historian, wrote the following:

"If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian (Josephus) concerning the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvelously strange." - Book III, Chapter VII.

George Holford wrote a book on this premise, in his [**Destruction of Jerusalem \(1805\)**](#)

Which brings us to Matthew 24. In it, Christ confirms to the nation, in continuation of the theme of Malachi, that it will soon be utterly destroyed. In fact, Christ tells them that all of the curses laid out in Deut. 28 are going to come to pass, practically listing them one by one. He places the same time-stamp on this part of the prophecy as He had in Matthew 23:36. Matthew 24:34 reads, "Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon **this generation**." Again, not only did the Christians of the day take Christ for His Word, but the early church believed this as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Possibly the most convincing proof, though, is that **it all actually happened within the space of 40 years**.

So... Israel is destroyed, as Christ said they would be in Matthew 22:6-8: "the remnant took his servants..., and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and **burned up their city**." It was then that the wedding feast of the lamb was ready, and the New Covenant inaugurated, as the end of the book of Revelation reveals (within the time frame of "quickly" and "shortly" and "about to come to pass" and "at hand").

After the total destruction, not one person lived in Jerusalem, which was laid in heaps. Not one stone of the temple laid upon another (because the Romans were trying to find the gold templeware that had flown through the stone floor cracks, having been melted in the fire). The next question was – was temporal Israel going to be physically re-established as a nation?

"The Children of the flesh are not the children of God" - Rom. 9:6-9

To this question I had a great deal of information to consider. Having been convinced that the Dispensational Israel model is untenable, I had no difficulty in answering this question. The reason

for this is that the majority of contemporary Christian denominations believe that New Covenant Israel is a spiritual nation, with no physical boundaries. Nearly all Reformed Denominations (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Wesleyan, Reconstructionist, Reformed Church USA, etc., etc.) are either actively or foundationally partial Preterist in this regard. So are the Churches of Christ..., some of which are fully Preterist.

The Dispensational model of a permanently distinct physical nation is recent, to say the least, and unique. It was only last century that this position was popularized. Many say it came from the ecstatic vision of a young woman, but that is beside the point. Either the Bible teaches it, or It doesn't.

As a result of these studies, it became clear that the only way to create a future for Israel is to temporalize (others might say "literalize") the passages which speak of the heavenly Jerusalem and Zion, etc. Seeing that the faulty "literal method" is the only way to do this, it was easy to see the realm of the true Jerusalem. If one is not presupposing a future physical Israel, they will have a hard time studying into that position.

Knowing that the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) is not a temporal people in a temporal kingdom (John 18:36; I Cor. 15:50, "Kingdom of Heaven", II Tim. 4:18), there was only a matter of looking elsewhere to find Israel - the spiritually eternal realm. Again, on this point the **majority** of Christian denominations agree - **There is no temporal Israel, and never will be again.** No surprise, though, as God goes from good to better or best, not from good to better to good again.

To put it in more theological terms, God was finally able to take the kingdom from the temporal, giving it to the spiritual - from the Old Covenant to the New. Now the laws of God are written on our hearts instead of tables of stone, etc. All of the elements of the Old Covenant were melted with fire, including everything temporal/physical. There is not one temporal element to Christian obedience and worship.. It is all in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

As for confirming again the timing of this transference from the Old Covenant, I needed to get more specific than Christ's "this generation" had been." Was it at the cross, as many believe? Was it at Pentecost? Or was it after? Heb. 8:13 shows that after the cross and Pentecost the Old Covenant was only "ready to vanish away." The II Peter 3:10-13 text explains the timing of this as being that of the destruction of the physical elements of the Old Covenant (Heb. 9:8,9 confirms this). correlating the passing of the Covenants as being the passing of the heavens and earth. The dozens of other texts that make it clear that there was a correlation of these prophecies with the destruction of Jerusalem confirm the words of Christ, and of the NT writers who littered their letters with words such as "shortly," "soon," "about to," including Revelation 1:1's "things which must shortly come to pass."

On the correlation of Israel's Covenant penalty with the destruction of Jerusalem, all Preterists throughout history have agreed. This century, though, has brought further criticism and development of Preteristic theology, which still **has never been systematized.** We are, just now, in the process of doing this. There has never been the focus or need until now. On details of Preterism, there is always much study and discussion to be done, but I think that giving a quick Biblical synopsis and the historical case for the great credibility of the view is all that is needed. On the grounds of the unanimous historical acceptance alone, the view is made worthy of further study.

(FULL) PRETERISM

My personal study to get to this point had led me through Premillennial Dispensationalism, Christian Identity, Amillennialism, and then Post-Millennial partial Preterism. It was there that I remained for the next year. The reason for this is that I was somewhat afraid of where I would go next. If I thought

that anything else was fulfilled in the Roman-Jewish War, I would be giving up very important future events to the past. What about the Second Coming of Christ, etc.?

The reason I was a scared partial Preterist, is that Matthew 24:34 says "all these things" were to be fulfilled. That includes vv. 29-31, where the Second Coming of Christ is mentioned. Luke's parallel verse says, "This generation shall not pass, till ALL be fulfilled." Confirming that all means ALL, v. 22 states (regarding the Roman-Jewish war, according to all the early Christians) "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." (cf. Isaiah 34:1-8).

Luke 21:22 was, for me, a most amazing statement with which I struggled for months. Trying to take the passage step by step, contemplating all that it included. This was before I understood the significance of the **timing** and **nature** of the New Covenant's establishment. Well, as I began to study this **all things**, I was led to the book of Acts, where Peter says the following,

Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence (parousia – coming) of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of **all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.**"

Revelation 10:7 makes virtually the same point, declaring that **all things** which had been spoken were to be fulfilled during the sounding of the "**last trump**" (al a I Cor. 15:52)!

The Acts text cited above is important for two reasons: First, it teaches that redemption had not yet been given, and wouldn't be until the return of Christ (I Cor. 15:21-23). To this, dozens of NT passages agree (See them in **New Testament Realized Eschatology**). Second, it teaches that when Christ did come, He would bring the fulfillment of all things (Acts 3:19; I Peter 1:3-13), just as Luke 21:22 said regarding the Olivet Discourse which, again, every early Christian (according to **Chrysostom** and **Origen**) stated as being the Roman-Jewish war.

That all things of the Old Covenant would be annihilated, and the things of the New Covenant would be inaugurated is worthy of the many dramatic NT expressions, such as the following:

I Cor. 7:31 "the fashion of this world **passeth away.**"

1 Cor. 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the **ends of the world are come.**" [to whom the ends of the ages have arrived].

Heb 9:26 "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but **now** once in **the end of the world** hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

This dramatism is especially understandable, considering that the Greek words for world here are *aion*, which simply means an *age*. This subject of the "**end of the world**" is treated more below.

So, clearly, Christ teaches in Luke 21:22,32 that **all prophecy** would be fulfilled within the space of that generation. I quickly found that there is **not one NT text** that places the reach of prophecy *beyond that generation*. It is the Futurist presupposition of what "shortly," "soon," and "about to" mean that allows one to read 2000 years into certain texts. Even still, there is not one NT text that states a large time frame clearly. There is not one.

ATTEMPTED REFUTATIONS

But, I was still unconvinced. Not wanting to let go of a future second coming of Christ (primarily), I examined every plausible refutation of this one pivotal point. During the period of these studies, I answered questions about the timing of the Second Coming of Christ like this: "Matthew 24:29-31 places it within the time frame of that generation, but I can't see how yet. When I can, I will let you know."

Most critical arguments I found were liberal, such as the position that **Christ was not God**, or that the **Scriptures are uninspired**, or that **the Apostles were wrong**. These arguments come from Christians and non-Christians alike, specifically due to his comments about the second coming (parousia, pronounced "pair-oh-see'-a"):

H.J. Schoeps

"It is undeniable that **Paul**, with **the whole** of primitive Christianity, **erred** about the imminently expected parousia." (H.J. Schoeps, *The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, p. 46)

Albert Schweitzer (1961)

"The whole history of 'Christianity' down to the present day, that is to say, the real inner history of it, is based upon the delay of the Parousia, the non-occurrence of the Parousia, the abandonment of eschatology, the process and completion of the 'de-eschatologising' of religion which has been connected therewith. It should be noted that the non-fulfillment of Matt. 10:23 is the first postponement of the Parousia." (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 360)

Bertrand Russell (1927)

"I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospels, taking the gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, He certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time. There are a great many texts that prove that. He says, for instance, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." Then He says, "There are some standing here which shall not taste death till the Son of Man comes into His kingdom"; and **there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living**. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching.. In that respect, clearly He was not so wise as some other people have been, and He was certainly not superlatively wise." (Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian*, 1927, p.3)

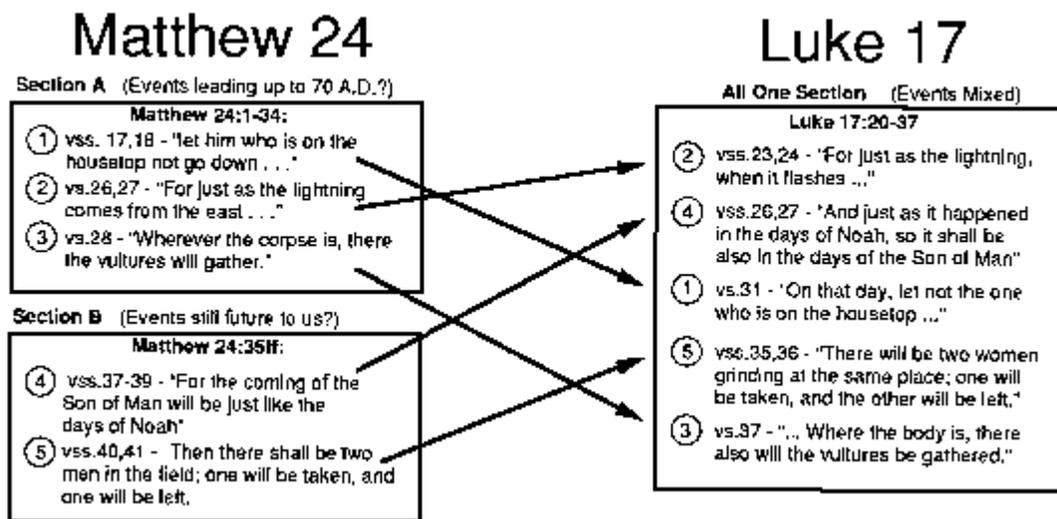
Ultimately, Christianity's Futurism is responsible for allowing this argumentation to go unanswered. Perhaps, if Preterism becomes popular, we can be given a new audience with the agnostics.

Other arguments revolved around the **inspiration and authority of the creeds**. This was of little consequence, though, as the Bible either teaches it or refutes it – I didn't need secondary sources like creeds or Josephus, etc. There are hundreds of creeds in greater Christendom, nearly all of which are unique. Where they confirm the Bible, they are great, but they have little authority of their own (aside from a look at the doctrine of the period or the people).

The best critical arguments I was able to find came from how anti-Preterists have discounted the position. The two arguments worthy of examination were the "Transition Text Theory" of Matthew 24, and the "Dual-Fulfillment Theory" of Matthew 24 (which was Spurgeon's position).

TRANSITION TEXT THEORY

This argument is primarily used by the partial Preterist. The argument against the fulfillment of all things is the claim that Matthew 24 contains both prophecies of the Roman-Jewish War and the end of the world at the Second Coming of Christ. Using Matthew 24:36 as a transition verse, ("But of **that day...**") they stated that everything before v. 34 ("this generation shall not pass") was AD70, and everything after is the end of the world. This position holds no water, though, as Luke 17's version of the same text mixes those verses before and after their supposed transition. Consider the following chart, and the testimonies from two all-time Preteristic greats:



Thomas Newton (1754)

"It is to me a wonder how any man can refer part of the foregoing discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, and part to the end of the world, or any other distant event, when it is said so positively here in the conclusion, "All these things shall be fulfilled in this generation." It seemeth as if our Saviour had been aware of some such misapplication of his words, by adding yet greater force and emphasis to his affirmation, v 35 - "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away""
([Newton](#), p. 426)

Milton Terry (1898)

"When, however, the one school of interpreters attempt to point out the dividing line, there are as many differences of opinion as there are interpreters. In Matt. 24 and 25, for example, the transition from the one subject to the other is placed by [Bengel](#) and others at 24:29; by E.J. Meyer at verse 35; by [Doddrige](#) at verse 36; by Kuinoel at verse 33; by Eichorn at 25:14, and by Wetstein at 25:31."
(*Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 217)

SECONDARY ESCHATOLOGY (DOUBLE FULFILLMENT THEORY)

The second best critical argument was based on the premise that the Olivet Discourse is intended to be interpreted as having a double fulfillment. It is taught by many (including Spurgeon) that the passage is **primarily** about the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, but has a **secondary** fulfillment at the end of the world. This position would state that Nero was a 'type' of the coming Antichrist, etc.

The problem with this persuasion was that those who held it could never provide one shred of evidence, Biblical or otherwise, to defend the hermeneutic. On top of this, they needed to provide texts which taught an eschatology for the universe (Cosmological Eschatology). All that can be found focus on the passing of the Old Covenant, and the establishment of the New Covenant (Covenantal Eschatology). Partial Preterists say there are verses which teach cosmological eschatology, Preterists say there aren't... but that all New Testament eschatology is Covenantal in nature.

According to Hebrews 8:13, they were in the "last days" of the Old Covenant, which was then (A.D.60s) "ready to vanish away." We know that the Old Covenant did not pass away until after the book of Hebrews was written (8:13), so the New Testament's "last days" are not those of the New Covenant (Max King asks that if the Old Covenant hadn't ceased yet ceased at the time of Heb 8:13, then is it possible that the New Covenant, which was supposedly inaugurated at the Resurrection, could have ceased before the Old?), nor are they the last days of the physical universe, which literalist method of interpretation many held.

At any rate, there is no Biblical or hermeneutical justification for the arbitrary "Double Fulfillment Theory." So agrees Anglican Archbishop [F.W. Farrar](#), who is considered, by many, to be one of Christianity's most brilliant theologians **and** historians.

[F.W. Farrar](#) (1886)

"It was to this event, **the most awful in history** - 'one of the most awful eras in God's economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations' - that we must apply those prophecies of Christ's coming in which every one of the Apostles and Evangelists fixed these three most definite limitations - the one, that before that generation passed away all these things would be fulfilled; another, that some standing there should not taste death till they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom; and third, that the Apostles should not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. It is strange that these distinct limitations should not be regarded as a decisive proof that **the Fall of Jerusalem was, in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man which was primarily contemplated by the earliest voices of prophecy**" (Vol. 2, p. 489)

Some passages which confuse people into thinking that the Bible speaks of the end of the universe are those which use the Greek word *aion*. Confer with Matthew 13 and the parable of the wheat and tares. "The harvest is the **end of the world**" often confuses people (often Post-Millennialists) into believing that this is a passage of cosmological significance. The fact of the matter is that the harvest was simply (if such can be said of it) the end of the Old Covenant **age** (By the way, while in Matthew 13, notice v. 30 - Who is gathered first? "**the tares**" not the wheat! So long, secret rapture of the saints...). In short, the Bible speaks of the "time of the end," and not "the end of time."

[II Peter 3](#) is another chapter erroneously used to teach the end of the universe. The problem is that the pivotal word, *elements*, has no relation to the "periodic table of elements," or such. These are the *rudiments* of the Old Covenant. They are the *stoicheia* of the Old Covenant, revealed in the following passages:

Galatians 4:3 "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the **elements of the world**"

Colossians 2:20 "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the **rudiments of the world**, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Galatians 4:9 "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggardly **elements**, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

The key to understanding II Peter 3 came when I was shown that the establishment of the new covenant was the passing to the new heavens and earth. Compare the following passages, keeping the passing of the covenants and the kingdoms in mind:

II Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and the *elements* shall melt with fervent heat, the earth (land) also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Hebrews 12:26-29 "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the **earth only**, but **also heaven**. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those **things that are shaken**, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we **receiving a kingdom** which cannot be moved.."

The passing of the heavens and earth is a long-used Biblical metaphor for a change of covenants. The very framework of man's relationship with God changed when Christ shed His blood - likewise, it changed for Old Covenant Israel "after the flesh" when their nation was overrun by Roman armies and zealots within the walls of the city.

One side of the coin is that the kingdom was taken away from the unjust stewards - the temple, God's very representation of heaven on earth was taken away. The glory within that temple left prior to its abominating desolation. On the other hand, to those chosen (or who are moved to choose) was given eternal life, entrance into the holy of holies, standing with God. It is not, in my opinion, a stretch to interpret the cataclysmic temporal and spiritual events as such.

The key is to test Scripture with Scripture. The great reformer **John Owen**, as well as many other theologians, did just that. Looking at how the change of a heaven and earth after the flood (II Peter 3:5) didn't require the destruction of the planet, they seized upon how they were metaphors for the New Covenant - opposed to the temporal heaven and earth, which were the realm of the Old Covenant.

John Lightfoot (1859) concludes:

"With the same reference it is, that the times and state of things immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem are called 'a new creation,' new heavens,' and 'a new earth.' When should that be? Read the whole chapter; and you will find the Jews rejected and cut off; and from that time is that new creation of the evangelical world among the Gentiles.

Compare 2 Cor. 5:17 and Rev. 21:1,2; where, the old Jerusalem being cut off and destroyed, a new one succeeds; and new heavens and a new earth are created.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

2 Peter 3:13: 'We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth.' The heaven and the earth of the Jewish church and commonwealth must be all on fire, and the Mosaic elements burnt up; but we, according to the promise made to us by Isaiah the prophet, when all these are consumed, look for the new creation of the evangelical state" (vol. 3, p.453)

"That the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish state is described as if the whole frame of the world were to be dissolved. Nor is it strange, when God destroyed his habitation and city, places once so dear to him, with so direful and sad an overthrow; his own people, whom he accounted of as much

or more than the whole world beside, by so dreadful and amazing plagues. Matt. 24:29,30, 'The sun shall be darkened &c. Then shall appear the 'sign of the Son of man,' &c; which yet are said to fall out within that generation, ver. 34. **2 Pet. 3:10, 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,'** &c. Compare with this Deut. 32:22, Heb. 12:26: and observe that **by elements are understood the Mosaic elements**, Gal 4:9, Coloss. 2:20: and you will not doubt that St. Peter speaks only of the conflagration of Jerusalem, the destruction of the nation, and the abolishing the dispensation of Moses" (vol. 3, p. 452).

Even [Spurgeon](#) acknowledged that the New Covenant was a new heavens and earth:

"Did you ever regret the absence of the burnt-offering, or the red heifer, of any one of the sacrifices and rites of the Jews? No, because, though these were like the old heavens and earth to the Jewish believers, they have passed away, and **we now live under a new heavens and a new earth**, so far as the dispensation of divine teaching is concerned. The substance is come, and the shadow has gone: and we do not remember it." ([C.H. Spurgeon](#), MP vol. 38, p. 354).

For more information on this point, please read [Dr. John Owen on the New Heavens and Earth](#).

All prophecy was fulfilled in the first century, because there is nothing left in the Bible that isn't tied directly to then! All Bible prophecy used to teach future prophecy regarded the passing from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant that took place in the 1st Century. That redemption should be so significant should be no surprise, for this new covenant is the very reason Christ humbled himself, took the form of man, and offered His blood upon the cross for Israel (Heb 8:8-12; cf. Jer.31:31-34 - **a promise to Israel given to the Church**).

Everything intended in Genesis 3:15 was accomplished in the first century - begun with the cross, completed with the coming of Christ and the attendant desolation of Israel. Again, the temple needed to be destroyed (Heb. 9:8-10), bringing in the redemption promised since that time. Paul even stated that the work on the cross didn't accomplish Gen. 3:15, as the judgment upon the serpent was coming "shortly" (Rom. 16:20). This was written mere months before the commencement of the war.

This is like the presidential elections, where one is elected in November, but takes office in January. The interim period is the transitional period. That is precisely what the "last days" were... transition "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:20) For more verses which show the scope of the "last days" of the Old Covenant, please read my (enclosed) article on [New Testament Realized Eschatology](#).

OTHER REASONS FOR REJECTING THE [DOUBLE FULFILLMENT THEORY](#)

There are other arguments against the various double-fulfillment theories. For instance, Christ states in emphatic terms that **all things** spoken by the prophets would find their fulfillment in those days of vengeance (Luke 21:22,32).

Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

This is corroborated by the testimony of other writers, such as Peter (Acts 3:21) and John (Rev. 10:7).

Also, the pattern of revelation is from the temporal to the spiritual (I Cor. 15:46; II Cor. 4:18), not the temporal, the temporal, and then the spiritual, as double-fulfillment teaches. Or, as is the case with the

Dispensational model in the millennial reign ceremonials, the temporal to the spiritual to the temporal again.

Also, Christ was to be the fullness of all shadows (Col. 2:17), and not another shadow of coming things. Again, as **Spurgeon** wrote, "Did you ever regret the absence of the burnt-offering, or the red heifer, of any one of the sacrifices and rites of the Jews? No, because, though these were like the old heavens and earth to the Jewish believers, they have passed away, and **we now live under a new heavens and a new earth**, so far as the dispensation of divine teaching is concerned. **The substance is come, and the shadow has gone**: and we do not remember it." (**C.H. Spurgeon**, MP vol. 38, p. 354).

Also, there is **only one coming of Christ with power and great glory** (Matt. 24:29-31; 16:27,28). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him **shall he appear the second** time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28)." This is like Christ's statement, "When these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). There is only a second coming, not a third – which is what some partial Preterists teach...

Based upon all of the above reasons, as well as a host of other indicators (not the least of which was release from the false expectation of a coming Armageddon, not to mention release from the idea that the Devil could do anything to me), I finally had no reason to believe in a future return of Christ. **I had seen that the Second Coming had already happened, and finally saw that there is no scripturally-based reason to expect it to happen again!** Since that time, God has blessed me with great understanding as to more of the 'whys,' 'whens,' and 'hows' of the whole matter. I had finally studied myself into an understanding of the fulfillment of prophecy by not trying to create the end of the world out of texts that regarded the end of the age.

My studies, since that time, have consisted of testing hypotheses against the various presuppositions of Preterism and vice versa. An example is testing what effect the past Second Coming of Christ has on every other area of theology, etc. This is significant, as the NT word for "coming" implies much more than just a direction. The word **Parousia** literally means 'presence.' In fact, the word is still used in Greece today. According to **John Bray**, one can find it on electrical switch-boxes, **Parousia** representing the English word "on" - the 'presence' of electricity. There is an ocean of study in determining the practical nature of the eternal presence of Christ, and the nature of the inheritances given (I Peter 1:3-14).

God has continued showing other deeper substantiation of the Preteristic view, such as the intricacies of Christ's role as High Priest, and the timing and nature of the 40 years of wilderness wandering. The latter was an impressive study to me, as it showed the "last days" of the Old Covenant quite clearly through the Exodus events - God using the temporal to bespeak the spiritual reality that goes otherwise unseen.

OLD COVENANT: COVENANT OF DEATH		
First Passover	50 days later – the Law was given (Ex. 19:1) 3,000 die for worshipping the golden calf (Ex. 32:28)	
Slavery In EGYPT	40 YEARS TRANSITION Miraculous Evidences of God's Presence and Power	Promised Land Crossing Jordan Salvation Complete
Crossing The Red Sea - Deliverance	SHADOW	

NEW COVENANT: COVENANT OF LIFE		
First Spiritual Passover	50 days later – the Spirit was given 3,000 baptized, receive life (Acts 2:41)	
Slavery To SPIRITUAL EGYPT (elements)	40 YEARS TRANSITION Miraculous Evidences of God's Presence and Power	Christ's Kingdom End of Old Cov. Age - Salvation Complete
Christ's Death - Deliverance	FULFILLMENT	

PRACTICAL APPLICATION - PRETERISM'S STRENGTH

It is my opinion that God has finally ordained a period for eschatological revival in Christianity. Revival is an especially good word, considering the early Christian Preteristic consensus. Whether or not we live to see a reformation the scope and size of that of the 16th Century remains to be seen (that task will necessarily be left to the first generation of children raised in a non-Dispensationalist Christian word). Preterism's focus on the glory of Christ as He was *revealed* in that day is **worthy** and **capable** of bringing about a worldwide reformation.

The positive side of the view's revolutionary aspects is that it creates a powerful doctrinal position which *demand*s personal sacrifice. Besides the depth of understanding it gives one regarding the whole Bible (with an equal if not special interest in the Old Testament) and the history of Israel, it provides many other benefits to the believer, such as being anathematized by other Christians.

An important part of sizing up any doctrinal position is following it to its conclusions. A look at the conclusions of Dispensationalism reveals the general Laodicean mentality of those who must see the world around them deteriorating, in order to 'prove' their position to themselves. The applicable quote is the infamous utterance by J. Vernon McGee, "why polish the brass on a sinking ship?" A closer look at the conclusions of Preterism, however, reveals a beautiful and spiritual temple built upon the cornerstone of Jesus Christ, advancing the gospel's influence through the power and glory of the eternal kingdom.

First and last, we have the unwavering support given from the Bible. Preterism owns all of the emphatic declarations about the time-frame of fulfillment. We have incredibly clear passages regarding the nearness of fulfillment, such as the following:

Matthew 3:7-10 "The wrath (mello - **about**) to come. Axe is laid to the root...Whose fan is **in his hand**."

Matthew 10:23 "Ye shall **not have gone through the cities of Israel**, till the Son of man be come."

Matthew 16:27,28 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some **standing here**, which **shall not taste of death, till they see** the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 24:30,34 "they (the tribes of the land) shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Verily I say unto you, **this generation shall not pass**, till all these

things be fulfilled."

Luke 21:32 "This generation **shall not pass**, till all be fulfilled."

Acts 2:16,17 "But **this is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass **in the last days**"

Romans 13:11,12 "And that, **knowing the time...** The **night is far spent, the day is at hand**"

Romans 16:20 "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet **shortly.**"

I Cor. 15:51 "We shall **not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, In a moment... at the **last trump**"

Phil. 4:5 "The Lord is **at hand.**"

I Thess. 4:16,17 "For the Lord himself shall descend.. with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.. Then we which are **alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds."

I Thess. 5:23 "And I pray the very God of peace.. your whole spirit and soul **and body be preserved** blameless **unto the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I Tim 6:14 "That **thou** keep this commandment.. **until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**"

Heb 9:26 "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but **now** once in the **end of the world** hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Heb. 10:37 "For yet a **little while**, and he that shall come will come, and **will not tarry.**"

James 5:8 "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord **draweth nigh.**"

James 5:9 "Behold, the judge standeth before the door."

I Peter 4:7 "But the end of all things is **at hand**: be ye therefore **sober, and watch.**"

I John 2:18 "Little children, **it is the last time:**.. whereby we know that it is **the last time.**"

Revelation 1:1 "The Revelation.. to shew unto his servants things which **must shortly come to pass.**"

Revelation 1:3 "The time is **at hand.**"

Revelation 1:7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also **which pierced him.**"

Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I come **quickly.**"

Revelation 22:6 "These sayings are faithful and true:.. things which **must shortly** be done."

Revelation 22:10 "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the **time is at hand.**"

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I come **quickly...**"

Revelation 22:20 "He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly.** Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

The superior Preterist defense for the inspiration of the Scriptures is a nice gift returned to the Word of God for the clarity afforded. As stated above, only Preterism can effectively answer the following liberal charge:

"It is undeniable that **Paul**, with **the whole of primitive Christianity**, **erred** about the imminently expected parousia." (H.J. Schoeps, *The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, p. 46).

Looking from the "orthodox" Futurist perspective, Christ failed to emerge when He said He would: before some standing there died (Matt. 16:27,28) and before that generation passed away (Matt. 24:29-34). This is the very argument many liberals use to deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, the authority of the Apostles, and even the Deity of Christ. Only through the Preterist perspective can their objections be satisfactorily answered.

Liberals attack the Bible on the ground of fulfillment, Futurists obscure the Bible (by reading multiple fulfillments into it, etc.) on the ground of fulfillment - The fact still remains that the Holy Spirit places the fulfillment of all prophecies within the space of 40 years of Christ's ministry.

Another reason Preterism passes the test is that both sacred and secular history substantiate the claims about Christ's intent in the Olivet Discourse. Men have, throughout the Christian centuries, written

about how the Roman-Jewish war proved the veracity of Christ's words, and the fearful nature of God's bad side (See [Holford's Destruction of Jerusalem](#)).

Though the Bible is all the authority we need, the following tidbit is a sample of what secular history has to say about the coming of Christ. The Roman Historian Tacitus wrote the following, regarding the signs surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem:

"In the sky appeared a vision of armies in conflict, of glittering armour. A sudden lightening flash from the clouds lit up the Temple. The doors of the holy place abruptly opened, a superhuman voice was heard to declare that the gods were leaving it, and in the same instant came the rushing tumult of their departure" (Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 13 - First Century Roman Historian).

[Eusebius](#), the church historian, wrote the following in the 4th Century, regarding the events of the desolation:

"Thus were the miserable people won over at this time by the impostors and false prophets; but they did not heed nor give credit to the visions and signs that foretold the approaching desolation. On the contrary, as if struck by lightning, and as if possessing neither eyes nor understanding, they slighted the proclamations of God. At one time a star, in form like a sword, stood over the city, and a comet, which lasted for a whole year; and again before the revolt and before the disturbances that led to the war, when the people were gathered for the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth of the month Xanthicus, at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone about the altar and the temple that it seemed to be bright day; and this continued for half an hour. This seemed to the unskillful a good sign, but was interpreted by the sacred scribes as portending those events which very soon took place. And at the same feast a cow, led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. And the eastern gate of the inner temple, which was of bronze and very massive, and which at evening was closed with difficulty by twenty men, and rested upon iron-bound beams, and had bars sunk deep in the ground, was seen at the sixth hour of the night to open of itself. And not many days after the feast, on the twenty-first of the month Artemisium, a certain marvelous vision was seen which passes belief. The prodigy might seem fabulous were it not related by those who saw it, and were not the calamities which followed deserving of such signs. For before the setting of the sun chariots and armed troops were seen throughout the whole region in mid-air, wheeling through the clouds and encircling the cities. And at the feast which is called Pentecost, when the priests entered the temple at night, as was their custom, to perform the services, they said that at first they perceived a movement and a noise, and afterward a voice as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us go hence.'

But what follows is still more terrible; for a certain Jesus, the son of Ananias, a common countryman, four years before the war, when the city was particularly prosperous and peaceful, came to the feast, at which it was customary for all to make tents at the temple to the honor of God, and suddenly began to cry out: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against bridegrooms and brides, a voice against all the people.' Day and night he went through all the alleys crying thus. But certain of the more distinguished citizens, vexed at the ominous cry, seized the man and beat him with many stripes. But without uttering a word in his own behalf, or saying anything in particular to those that were present, he continued to cry out in the same words as before. And the rulers, thinking, as was true, that the man was moved by a higher power, brought him before the Roman governor. And then, though he was scourged to the bone, he neither made supplication nor shed tears, but, changing his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, he answered each stroke with the words, 'Woe, woe unto Jerusalem.'" The same historian records another fact still more wonderful than this. He says that a certain oracle was found in their sacred writings which declared that at that time a certain person should go forth from their country to rule the world. He himself understood that this was fulfilled in Vespasian. But Vespasian did not rule the whole world, but only that part of it which was subject to the Romans. With better right could it be applied to

Christ; to whom it was said by the Father, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession." At that very time, indeed, the voice of his holy apostles "went throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

The Preterist Archive's [Church History page](#) displays numerous early historical and Christian writings, which substantiate the legitimacy of the Preterist view. Included are those of [Tertullian](#) (II Cent.) ; [Justin Martyr](#) (II Cent.) ; [Melito, Bp. of Sardis](#) (II Cent.) ; [Cyprian](#) (III Cent.) ; [Chrysostom](#) (IV Cent.) ; [Eusebius](#) (325) ; [Athanasius](#) (IV Cent.), and many, many more. Perhaps the finest example is the *First Epistle of Clement*.

APPLICATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Another strength of the Preterist view is its jealous protection of God's glory. We know that ours is a jealous God. If fulfillment is past, and Christ fulfilled His Word entirely, then a large majority of Christians are waiting to glorify a glorified Christ. This would be horribly tragic and disrespectful. That fear alone justifies further study of the Preterist view.

Of the question of disrespect, consider the role of the high priest and how that was fulfilled in Christ. In the Old Covenant period, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year, to present the blood sacrifices for the sins of the people. If the blood was acceptable, then the sins of the people were covered. If the blood were not acceptable, then the high priest would die on the spot. He would never return unto the people waiting outside. In fact, so many priests were dying that it became the practice to tie a rope around their legs before they entered, that upon their death the people could pull them out.

Christ is said to have already entered into the holiest of all, to present His blood sacrifice to God (Heb. 9:24) Clearly, Christ's blood was found acceptable to God. The question remains, however, "when did He emerge?" If Christ has not yet emerged, then not only is redemption not yet given, but God has not found His blood acceptable. In short, the terms of fulfillment were not met (Heb. 9:18-22), and the New Covenant is null and void - now.

The Futurist non-fulfillment model is especially grieving in light of the fact that the New Testament writers repeatedly declared that Christ was about to return to make his power known among **the people then living**. They were simply repeating the Words of Christ. Many Dispensationalists argue that Christ was telling them a half-truth about the imminency of His return, so that they would stay sober and vigilant. Teaching that Christ misled them, knowing that it would be thousands of years, imputes a gross sin upon our Saviour. Consider how America viewed Bill Clinton's attempts to influence public opinion by misleading his closest aides, knowing that they would repeat his lies.

The New Testament is filled with ample testimony that Christ was going to judge Israel quite soon. All the following passages are out of the Weymouth NT for emphasis on the Greek word [Mello](#) (3195), which means "about to" or "before long" :

Acts 23:3 "Before long," exclaimed Paul, "God will strike you, you white-washed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me in accordance with the Law, and do you yourself actually break the Law by ordering me to be struck?"

Acts 24:15 and having a hope directed towards God, which my accusers themselves also entertain, that **before long** there will be a resurrection both of the righteous and the unrighteous.

II Tim. 4:1 I solemnly implore you, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is **about to** judge the living and the dead, and by His Appearing and His Kingship:

Hebrews 10:27 There remains nothing but a certain awful expectation of judgement, and the fury of a fire which **before long** will devour the enemies of the truth.

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the Elders among you--I who am their fellow Elder and have been an eye-witness of the sufferings of the Christ, and am also a sharer in the glory which is **soon to be** revealed.

In addition to these (and numerous other) Biblical texts, we also have the dying testimony of James the Just. He was taken to the top of the temple to publicly recant his position that Christ was about to return. After he spoke these words, he was martyred, being cast down to his death from the top of the Temple:

"Why do ye ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man ? He himself sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and **is about to come upon the clouds of heaven.**" ([Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History - Chapter XXIII](#))

At some point, Christians must decide to either start pulling on the rope, or to look to the past for His declaration of the freedom from sin (Revelation 14:13-16; cf. I Thess. 4:16,17) and entrance into the kingdom (Matthew 25:21-34; cf. 16:27-28).

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

There is often confusion regarding how the Preterist Christian views their place in the world today. The short answer is that we are all individually called to some unique aspect of the kingdom work here on earth.

"...then face to face"

My favorite strength of this view, though, is that it changes lives. It reveals that we now see God face to face (I Cor. 13:12). It reveals "that which is perfect" (I Cor. 13:10) to have come. The parousia (presence) of Christ is an intimate relationship between He and His bride. The eternal presence of Christ is "within" us, and that we walk in the presence of Christ at all times - composing as we do the collective body and temple of Christ. It seems that the knowledge of the perfect being here now inspires many to look inward, addressing spiritual shortcomings anew.

One shocking but solidifying change that is brought into the parousia-conscious Christian is the realization that they **do, indeed, see God face to face**. This can be extremely jarring, but we must remember that in His presence is fullness and joy. The first comment made by the angel of the Lord to the people in His presence was usually something like "fear not."

Recognize, instead instead of turning back, that you have been called to a life akin to that of the Crusaders of long ago - except that our battles are those against spiritual wickedness. We are involved in the total domination of the earth by the zeal of our King -- there is a lot for you to do! And all you have to do to find your role is to petition the Commander in chief -- He'll have you in the battlefield soon enough (allow months and years for spiritual training - like that of Saul/Paul), so be careful for what you ask!

[Many testify](#) of a closer relationship with God. One of the most common testimonies is that love for the Bible and the Lord is kindled like never before. Another common testimony is that through the Preterist viewpoint, one can begin to understand books like Hebrews, Numbers, Deuteronomy, etc. (In

fact, most Christians have never read the whole Bible, limiting their ability to understand the Bible, as the NT is believed to be the explanation of the OT), let alone Revelation.

We are able to communicate with God as freely now as Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden. We have full fellowship with God, so that we can do as the Israelites could not - call him Abba, Father. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they *see God*.

CONCLUSION

So... here I am. After four years of study, and three years of managing the website, I am convinced that Christians are making a big mistake by not being Bereans with respect to the Preterist issues. I am seeing quite a few who are, though. People and churches come to the same conclusions and convert in bold moves. The growth of Preteristic doctrine was displayed at the 1999 Ligonier Eschatology Conference, when Republican House Manager Charles Canaday addressed the crowd of 4000, winning three standing ovations.

Pastors from nearly every denomination (including Dispensationalism, myself included) have studied into, and accepted, Preterism. We also mustn't forget the already existing 1000s of partial Preterist churches. Major theologians are writing seriously about the view, and some are accepting it, including best-selling author **R.C. Sproul** (at least, we are now allowed into the realm of study – that is the whole battle, as the Bible teaches itself).

If Preterism has not completely taken the world by storm in the next few years, I will be surprised. According to the latest Dispensational interpretation of Matt. 24:34, the year 2007 is the end of the "generation" of people who saw the formation of Israel in Palestine in 1967. Perhaps the view will be given opportunity to be heard when that date comes and goes with nothing to show for it except a higher tide in the **waters issuing from Ezekiel's Temple**.

Thank you, again, for sending the critical materials. I am afraid that they were probably little help in helping you get a handle on the view, as Bob Ross always lives up to his reputation as a misrepresenter of others' positions. That opinion crosses many denominational lines. I am a particular target of his, as he mentions my web site as "The 'Rosetta Stone' of Preterism" in his articles (I take that as a compliment). Few contemporary Preterists believe what he says they do, including that the Maccabees or Antioch Epiphanes had anything to do with the abomination of desolation, etc.

If you are ever interested in pursuing a discussion about this, or any other, matter, please feel free to write or call. I am always interested in charitable discussions. todd@preteristarchive ; (907) 455-7850