

# Israel and the Church: A Preterist Approach to the Israelfrage

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The city set 'in the middle of the nations' (*Ez* 5.5)[1] confronts us in the texts of the Bible as it does daily in the newspaper. Scholars and theologians down through the centuries have searched the *sacra pagina* in an attempt to find the answer to our own contemporary setting: Who is Israel? McKnight's assessment, informed from the NT, is that "Both John [the Baptist] and Jesus had a single vision: the restoration of Israel." [2] *What* that would look like and *when* that would happen, as well as *how* it would come about are the three *foci* of this paper, written from a preterist perspective.

## **Where Are We Now?**

During the last thirty years, operating under the wave to recover the 'historical Jesus,' the issues of eschatology have increasingly become less future oriented in many Evangelical circles distancing themselves from the Scofieldian Dispensationalism of the early twentieth century.[3] For example, Mark W. Elliott is able to write, "The New Testament seems to say slightly less than it used to about the final days of the world as a whole." [4] This is an interesting divide between the popular eschatological works of Lindsey and LaHaye, which are read more by the average churchgoer, and the academia. However, signs are showing that even this divide is beginning to dissolve as the 'preterist view' makes popular inroads within the church.[5] Regardless of what leanings one may have, the questions asked above are ever present, even as they were in Jesus' own day (*Acts* 1.6).

The preterist view has been defined in two ways. It links itself with the works of Schweitzer, Bultmann, Dodd, Cullmann, and N.T. Wright (who have been labeled preterists), but goes much further. In this paper preterists are those who, in the words of Bloesch, "contend that all of the promises of Christ were fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70." [6] Although, for instance, N.T. Wright, "focuses on A.D. 70 as the time of fulfillment" [7] he does believe that the NT expresses fulfillment *beyond* A.D. 70 in *Ro* 8.18-25; *I Th* 4.13-18; *Re* 21-22. It is precisely here that Wright has been criticized as *inconsistent*. [8] Thus, working with the definition Bloesch gives, Wright (and those like him) is not, in this paper, a preterist. Preterists contend that if Wright is, for example, to take all of *Mt* 24-25 as referring to Jerusalem's demise within that 'generation,' then it is virtually impossible *not* to take the above mentioned verses to refer to that event as well. Even more than that, in light of the fulfillment of Jesus' Olivet Discourse, how does one view the *locus classicus* of Israel's future restoration: *Ro* 9-11, provided that there is a *Tradition* between Paul and Jesus on this matter? I will come to this issue shortly.

To sum up where we are today, Dispensationalism has grown 'progressive,' but popular, classic Dispensationalism is still *en vogue* among the novel reading church. A.D. 70 and its importance to NT exegesis is making inroads, but most church attendees have no idea who Josephus was or Titus for that matter. *Stronger* forms that emphasize A.D. 70 as the *terminus ad quem* for *most* of Jesus' predictions are there, but the so-called 'Second Coming' (the NT does not use this phrase) is still future. Preterists, who are just beginning to make their points felt, build on these paradigms but argue rigorously that the *whole* of NT expectation culminated in A.D. 70 with the *ongoing* effects of Christ's ever-increasing kingdom. They reject the 'already/not yet' model used to explain the tensions within kingdom dynamics for two-thousand years of church history and, instead, place that within the forty years between Christ and *parousia* (A.D. 70). [9] So, how does one answer, "Lord, are you to restore the Kingdom to Israel at this time?" (*Acts* 1.6) given that we have many alternatives from which to choose?

## **Building on the Answers Given**

Two important events defined the history of the Jews in the Land of Israel...the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70, and the catastrophic failure of the rebellion against Rome led by Bar Kokhba in 132-135. These two events formed, in reality, a single historical moment...When the temple was destroyed, Jews naturally looked to Scripture to find out the meaning of what had happened and, more important, to learn what to expect. [10]

Neusner goes on to note that when the Revolt under Bar Kokhba failed (occurring roughly a generation later), and the Land was essentially closed to the Jews, a new rabbinical Judaism emerged. Jews were now a

people of God without a Land, but they had a Book.

Goldenberg cites rabbinical sources which attempted to explain the Destruction. The most common was the threefold prophetic denouncement grouped under national sin: "bloodshed, idolatry, and fornication." However it may be that "some tried quite seriously to apply that understanding to the events of the first and second centuries...Others...seem to have turned away from this approach...because they could not ascribe to the generations in question the profound guilt which such a view of history implies."<sup>[11]</sup> That is, the Jews of Jesus' day and the generation of Bar Kokhba were *righteous* towards Torah, but still suffered as if they were evil. This left some to offer no explanation: "the Destruction was simply an incomprehensible disaster before even which God in Heaven was reduced to wailing...[or] was provoked by human wrongdoing...[or that it] threw all moral categories into disarray, so that the most appropriate response was a combination of anger, cynicism, and despair."<sup>[12]</sup>

Against this was the Christian explanation. Goldenberg cites Hippolytus (*Contr. Jud.* 7) as a representative example. Hippolytus wrote, "But it was because they killed the Son of their benefactor."<sup>[13]</sup> Jerome, Tertullian, Irenaeus and Eusebius each reflect these sentiments as well. However, one may legitimately ask how much this early *Christian* interpretation of the Destruction is based on the denunciations of Peter (*Acts* 2.23;3.13-15), Stephen (*Acts* 7.52) and Paul (*I Th* 2.14-16) even though it can easily lend itself to an appearance of anti-Semitism (as Goldenberg implies it does).

The language of some Evangelicals in regards to the Destruction has been 'vindication.' The Son was vindicated within his generation as being the Son of God over and against those who did not hold to that claim. With this preterists largely agree. Yet, this inadvertently introduces an 'us versus them' mentality still felt within the Jewish-Christian dialogue, which we all wish to reduce.<sup>[14]</sup>

Paul has been championed as the founder of Christianity, as the one who 'redefined' Israel so as to 'include' Gentiles. Hays, for example, remarks that, for Isaiah, the prophecies concerning Jerusalem's restoration "envisions a literal restoration...as a manifestation of God's justice and faithfulness to his own people."<sup>[15]</sup> But, Paul "has wrought a major transformation in the sense of the text...[with an] extraordinary hermeneutical inversion."<sup>[16]</sup> It is quite possible to see here a 'take over' of Israel's Book in order to rework it to 'fit' the Christian enterprise.

Dispensationalists have largely called this 'replacement theology' in that it replaces 'Israel' with 'church' when reading the prophetic passages of the OT. Instead of this option Dispensationalists postpone the kingdom arrival so that these portions of the Prophets can be *literally* fulfilled in a millennial reign on earth. The problem with this view, however, is that Jesus does not speak of 'postponement' but imminent arrival (which Schweitzer took with a vengeance). It appears, as mentioned earlier, that Ladd's 'already/not yet' and Wright's 'inaugural kingdom' are becoming standard competing answers over and against Dispensationalism. The contention between Dispensationalism and the 'already/not yet' schools, however, is that Dispensationalism would argue that Wright (and those like him) goes too far, whereas preterists would argue that he does not go far enough.

For preterists, Paul *redefines* nothing. They contend that Paul is reading the prophetic Scriptures as *they were intended to be read*. Paul consistently uses the phrase *legei gar h'grafh* (and its corresponding expressions) throughout *Ro* 9-11. The failure of Dispensationalist hermeneutics, in this view, is that they do not *spiritualize* the OT prophecy. What Hays does is, admittedly, redefine 'Israel' so as to virtually equate it with the church as if the inspired utterance of the Prophets possibly never intended that.<sup>[17]</sup> The preterist defines Israel according to the way the Prophets did, in their view: *always inclusive of 'whosoever will' and ethnic Israel*. In this way, 'replacement theology' is avoided as well as the Jewish charge against Christianity that Paul simply redefined major OT themes to fit his own renegade mission apart from Judaism.<sup>[18]</sup> That is, if Isaiah envisioned Israel as a *spiritual people* of God, then Dispensationalists *redefine* Israel as well in Paul by defining it as *only* ethnic Israel. By stating that eschatological Israel in Isaiah meant *spiritual Israel* (inclusive Israel), then Paul is merely quoting Scripture to prove his case, redefining nothing and replacing nothing. Preterists wish to avoid postponement and redefinition.

Donaldson states the problem more in tune with preterism, but, as will be pointed out, implies the same complications. "Paul's new conviction about Christ precipitated the restructuring of a system of convictions in which the Gentiles already figured." The Gentile converts were, "a christologically redefined Israel."<sup>[19]</sup> Although he uses terms such as 'restructuring' and 'redefined,' Donaldson nonetheless sees that the Gentile inclusion was 'already figured' in the Scriptures. That is, the OT *predicted* the Gentile inclusion, and Paul is simply telling Israel that this was now happening. Hays concurs: "[Paul's] prevailing concern is to show how the church is prefigured and guided by Scripture...in a remarkable metonymic transfer...[and can] proceed to

read Israel's Scripture as a mysterious prefiguration of the church, a story in which Christ's Gentile adherents can find their own story prewritten."<sup>[20]</sup>

The question is, though, whether or not the OT prefigured the inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel's commonwealth the way the NT does so that they, too, are counted as Israelites. In other words, no Jew in Paul's day would have had issue with Gentile inclusion (*Acts* 15.1-5). The question was *how* they were to be included. Did Paul rework this inclusion over and against the OT prefiguration? Certainly, *Is* 2.1-5 prefigures the "nations" coming to Zion in droves, but would they come *through* ascribing to the letter of Moses? Did the OT predict a great inclusion of Gentiles through accepted Second Temple Jewish means of proselytization? If this was the means by which Isaiah foresaw Gentile inclusion, then does Paul "redefine" it, too, as Hays stated earlier that he did with Jerusalem's restoration? If this is the case, then Paul's arguments are little more than reinventions made up to suit his own missionary needs.<sup>[21]</sup>

Preterists, nonetheless, agree with those such as Hays, Wright, Donaldson, and Thielman that, "Paul reads the Bible in light of a central conviction that he and his readers are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come."<sup>[22]</sup> Yet, if Paul was correct and the eschatological ends of the ages had indeed befallen his generation, then Israel's restoration was *also* being fulfilled in that time. But, since this is logically inescapable if true, Hays must redefine Israel in a manner foreign to the Prophets (for him and for Dispensationalists) in order to have the ends of the ages *and* Israel's restoration occurring within that generation. Preterists attempt to relieve the problem by saying that Israel's restoration was a spiritual restoration according to the Scriptures (Hebrew Bible). The largely Gentile church has not replaced Israel (nor is Israel redefined so as to become the church), but has now become able to become *members of Israel*, being counted righteous (*dikaiwqentej*) as members *with* those elect *within* ethnic old covenant Israel so that they both are on *equal* footing *coram Deo*.

For Paul, both Jew and Gentile as "one new man" (*Eph* 2.15) would stand before God in the judgment. For the preterist, Paul's sole mission was to prepare his generation, living at "the ends of the ages," to be a "spotless bride" at the *parousia* of Christ (A.D. 70) *together with* and the old covenant saints of Israel at the resurrection/restoration of Israel. Thus, for Paul, in this view, Israel has been, was, and always shall be defined as those who have the faith of Abraham. They are the "circumcised in heart" (*Dt.* 10:16; 30:6; *Jer.* 4:4), the true 'Israel within Israel,' spoken of by the prophets. God raised old covenant Israel from the dead, thus, by transforming them through the crucified and risen "body of Messiah" (*Ro* 7.4). The Gentiles were enabled to be included in that resurrection (promised solely to Israel, that is, those who have the faith of Abraham) and united with Israel in Christ. It was this that Paul so stressed to his Gentile hearers: "the root (Israel) supports you" (*Ro* 11.18).

Within this interpretative framework, quite obviously, Israel *after* A.D. 70 ceased to be a geographical and political nation-state set apart from the other nations simply by their covenantal standing (for the old covenant ceased to be - *Hebr* 8.13<sup>[23]</sup> - and along with it, the old covenant nomism that defined a particular ethnic people specifically selected by God over and against all other nations. For Paul, "there is no distinction"). Israel would be transformed into the 'spiritual body' made up of 'all men' from there on into the "ages to come." The names "Israel" and "*ekklesia*" are synonymous, but have unfortunately become radically separated in meaning.<sup>[24]</sup> Preterists contend that this separation is due to misunderstanding of the texts in a sincere attempt to understand the questions, Who is Israel? What is the relationship of the Church to Israel?

### **Romans 9-11**

Thielman properly addresses the concern that Paul faced in these chapters. Indeed, it appears to be the climax of the letter before Paul expounds on the question of 'what all of this means in terms of how-do-we-live-now' (12-14). The problem, as Thielman notes, is how the promises of God for Israel's restoration can be transferred "to a group dominated by Gentiles."<sup>[25]</sup>

Thielman correctly observes Paul's opening move: "It is not as though the word of God has failed" (*Ro* 9.6). That is, God's word *has not* failed to *Israel*. He sees this in three stages: "The first stage attempts to prove from Scripture that God alone - and no human qualities, whether ethnic or moral - decides who will receive his mercy (9:6-29; compare 11:5-6). His second step argues that at the present time many within Israel...have rejected [the gospel] and so have not become part of God's people (9:30-10:21). The third and final step in Paul's argument claims that despite the rejection of the gospel...God has not rejected his people. Even now, Paul says, God is constituting a remnant of Israel; and at the end, when God's mysterious purposes are finished, many within Israel will join Paul among the remnant that will be saved (11:1-36)."<sup>[26]</sup>

For Thielman this 'end' of the purposes of God stretch throughout church history and are consummated in an end to the space-time world as we know it by the final 'coming of the Lord' within history. Although A.D. 70 was indeed a 'day of the Lord' and a 'coming' of sorts, it is not the *final* coming. Preterists see this as arbitrary theological distinctions based, not on the texts themselves, but on prior theological/creedal commitments.

Nonetheless, Thielman is correct to assert these three stages. The preterist, as will be shown, can work them out quite well within his framework. It is the contention of the preterist that his framework, in fact, *works them out the best*. The third and final stage of Thielman, in the preterist model, culminates in A.D. 70.[27] When one combines Thielman's "even now God is constituting a remnant" with "the end" at some indefinite future, then logically, a "remnant" of Israel has been in process of being "constituted" for two-thousand years and counting. This is sort of along the lines of N.T. Wright's proposal.

In Wright's commentary on *Romans*[28] one finds a candid admission that his take on 11.25-27 is not popular. In a radically fresh approach, 11.25-27 is not speaking of the *parousia* or the end of the space-time universe at all, but a process throughout course of history until the 'end.' That is, 11.26b (from *Is* 59.20-21) and 27 (from *Is* 27.9; *Jr* 31.33-34) is a commentary of the now inaugurated historical process. God *is* coming from Zion through the Spirit in the ages. God *has* and *is* sending his Deliverer. This *is* the new covenant in action throughout time with the house of Jacob. Finally, God *is* taking away the sins of those who are called *kata.thn ekloghn* (v. 28) out of the Gentiles *and* ethnic Israel. And so, *paj VIsrahl swqhsetai*, which, for Wright, means, "all the elect, Jews and Gentiles alike." [29]

When this process of gathering together all the elect throughout the ages is completed, then the 'end' will come. It is not a large-scale immediate conversion-by-God of the ethnic people of Israel just before his *parousia*. It really has nothing to do with the modern nation-state of Israel today (for Wright, that is not a fulfillment of any biblical prophecy). Jews are found all over the world, and one by one, those whom God has called together with the majority of Gentiles (the "nations") constitute God's true spiritual nation of Israel.

There are many things here, with which the preterist agrees and disagrees. True, the nation-state, created by the U.N. in 1948, has nothing to do with biblical prophecy.[30] It is equally true that "Israel" is made up of all those whom God calls. It is, from the preterist perspective, not true that this process is heading towards some 'end' to history. Finally, it is not true that 11.25-27 is not speaking about the *parousia* and 'end of the age.'

Moo rejects Wright's interpretation of 11.25-27 and sees, along with strong support, that Paul here, as he does in *I Co* 15.22-28, is looking forward to the *parousia*. [31] Preterist exegesis largely concurs. However, Moo thinks that these verses "refer to or at least presuppose large-scale conversion of Jews." [32] It is here that the problems arise in these discussions and the preterist solution is at least able to make as plausible a case when there are so many competing cases that can be made. The question for the preterist is whether or not the framework he has adopted survives the test of incorporating 9-11 within that framework.

As mentioned in agreement with Thielman above, Paul's entire concern is to show that God, in spite of the so-called Jewish rejection of the gospel, *is* and *will be* faithful to his promises to Israel. For Paul, "For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy" (*Ro* 15.8,9a - *ESV*). The reason why Christ came was to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises given to Israel, and to cause the Gentiles (nations) to come to the mount of the Lord, as pictured in *Is* 2.1-5. [33] There, "in the last days" *according to the Scriptures*, the Gentiles would come to Mount Zion, which, for Hays, has been transformed to mean heavenly Zion (*Hebr* 12.22).

With this in mind, Luke records thousands of Jewish conversions in *Acts*, and by the time we get into the late fifties, he records James as saying, "You see, Paul, how many thousands of Jews have believed" (*Acts* 21.20). The view that "all Israel" must somehow constitute "the majority of Israelites" has misled the entire discussion. For Paul, "all" means "all whom God foreknew" (*Ro* 11.2) among Israel, and it is quite apparent in his opening argument that not "all Israel is Israel" (9.6). This is proven by a logical deduction from the stories of Ishmael/Isaac and Jacob/Esau (9.7-13). All four were legitimately Abraham's "seed" *kata sarka*, and all were certainly circumcised on the eighth day, but only two were "chosen" and two were not.

Paul continues this line of scriptural exegesis, *redefining nothing*, by noting that the *promises* made to Israel was that "only a remnant will be saved" (9.27 - quoting *Is* 10.22,23). Moving on, he quotes *Is* 8.14 (*cf.* 28.16) that explicitly mentions the *falling* of Israel, but his point is, *not all of them have fallen*. That is, *every individual Israelite need not be elected by God in order for God to carry out his promises to all those whom he intended*

to save, for he never intended to save every single individual Israelite.

This is further brought out in the fact that by quoting Moses' preaching of "the word of faith," any Jew could see that not all believed Moses (10.5-8), as his quotation of Moses makes clear in 10.19. Paul strings together the stories of Israel beginning with Abraham to show that God did not chose everyone that came from the seed of Abraham. Abraham's sons were not all chosen. In the days of Moses, many within his generation perished. He quotes David from *Ps* 69.22,23 in 11.10, which was a psalm by David directed at his own kinsmen (*Ps* 69.8). He used the story of Elijah and "how he appealed to God *against Israel*" because Israel tore down the altars and killed the prophets (10.2,3). God's answer was that he "reserved" for himself only seven-thousand. When one considers these stories, one sees that in each generation, from Abraham to Moses, from David to Elijah, Isaiah and Ezra, a "remnant" has always been saved and never the entire lot. Was it not only Caleb and Joshua that entered the promised land from that original generation of the exodus? Paul's conclusion is forceful: *why should it be any different in this generation?* Paul is arguing logical deductions from the Hebrew Scriptures and not redefining anything from there in order to make his point. It is the Hebrew Bible that teaches that not "all Israel (according to the *flesh*) is Israel (according to the promise)." It is this latter Israel (an Israel within an Israel) that "will be saved" (11.26).

It is, in this view, an exaggeration to suggest that Paul expected most Jews to accept the gospel when based upon his quotes from Scripture such was never the case. He surely expected many more ("some") to "be saved" (11.13-15, 26), but he never expects every one of them, or even the majority of them to be saved. The gentiles far outnumbered the Jews in Paul's day (and always have), and if, according to the Abrahamic promise that the "nations will be blessed" and the prophetic promise that "the nations will come to mount Zion," would not Paul *expect* the Gentiles to outnumber the Jews on a massive ratio? Therefore, the first thing preterist exegesis needs to clear the way of is the idea that Paul was somehow viewed the gospel proclamation as having, somewhat, failed by the lack of the majority of Jewish conversion. Even if it meant the fragrance of "death to death," *it was still accomplishing its purpose for the redemption of Israel (II Co 2.14-ff)*.

If this is not the case, then it hardly makes sense for Paul to argue that God's word has not failed and that God "has not rejected his people" (11.2).[34] Paul's conclusion is the result of scriptural deduction: "What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect [of Israel] did" (11.7). That is, in each story that Paul has brought to mind, God elected a remnant out of every generation of Israelites. He was "presently" doing this as well in Paul's day (11.5). *Some* of these elect Jews were already saved, as Luke records their conversion by the thousands in *Acts*. Others, equally elect, were still *hardened* and *enemies of the gospel* (11.28), but they, too, would be "grafted back into their own tree" (11.24) in Paul's day as the end arrived. What some of these Gentiles were doing was boasting over elect branches lying on the ground, and what Paul does is correct their arrogance and command them to "love your enemies" (12-13.9). Again, when Paul mentions that God's mercy to Israel is expressed in his saving all whom he foreknew (both past and presently), and that, as a result, mercy has come to the Gentiles, it is done with a view to "accept one another" (15.7).[35]

It is, indeed, difficult to follow Wright's idea (which has a long Reformed backing) that "all Israel" means "Jews and Gentiles" in this passage. It is true that the Gentiles had, by their faith, become "sons of God" which was what was promised to Israel (*Ho* 1.10 quoted in *Ro* 9.26) and "sons of Abraham" (4.11,12). But, that is not his point in 9-11 where he consistently meant throughout these chapters ethnic Israel. The Olive Tree analogy shows that Gentile inclusion is assumed, but it is not the point here: the Gentiles have not *replaced* Israel, nor has their inclusion *redefined* Israel. "All Israel" means all those whom God foreknew among the sons of Abraham "according to the flesh" from Abraham to Paul's present day up until God closed the Mosaic covenant in A.D. 70 (*Hebr* 8.13). Therefore, since the "end" had not yet come, the Gentile response to such a great salvation shown to Israel is to continue to love the Jews, in spite of many of them being enemies of the gospel, for *still* among them are those whom God plans on "saving from the fire" (*Jude* 23) right up until their "end."

When the "end" comes, *all Israel* will be raised from the dead, that is, all whom he did foreknow from the loins of Abraham. That Paul equates resurrection with "and all Israel shall be saved" can be seen from the paralleling of *Ro* 11.11-15. The "hardening" of part meant the current salvation of Gentiles (their inclusion into the tree), but this only served to save more Israelites. The rejection of part of Israel brought "reconciliation for the world" (Gentiles), so then, upon the acceptance of Gentile inclusion, *qal vahomer* "will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" Paul entertained that God was "now" ready (11.31) to show mercy on the hardened part of those whom God foreknew, and it was of utmost importance for the Gentiles in Rome (and in Corinth) to understand God's eschatological program for Israel. In short, for Paul, Gentile salvation signified that God, indeed, had not rejected his people, nor had his promised-word failed to save all "whom he did foreknow" among Israel.

This is a positive reading of 9-11 in that Paul, though certainly heart-broken concerning his people (as was Jesus), was nonetheless comforted by the Scriptures that, in spite of the failure of a great deal of his people, God, nonetheless, was saving Israel according to the plan outlined in the Scriptures. The preterist view picks up on the fact that Paul's own time ("the now time" - 11.5) was the time in which God was "now" showing mercy to Israel (11.31[36]). If this is the case, then Israel's "acceptance" *after* the Gentile ministry was well under way was something seen on the near horizon.[37] Further, if God was "accepting" hardened Israel in Paul's day, then, if the parallelism holds for 11.11-15 and here (11.30-32), the Israel was receiving "life from the dead." [38]

In this parallel it can be seen that Israel's "fall" (11.11) and "unbelief of these [Israel] (11.30)" refer to the same thing. Equally, "salvation of the nations" (11.11) and those who did not believe [Gentiles] finding "kindness" (11.30) are parallel. The kindness being shown to the Gentiles would, in turn, provoke *some* within Israel (not "all") to turn to their Messiah.[39] This is where Paul holds out "the hope" of their redemption; those whom God did foreknow, but who are now still hardened and enemies of Paul's gospel. However, "now" that the Gentiles have found favor with God, "they [Israel] also may now find kindness" (11.31). That is, *some* (not "all") among Israel in Paul's day are and will be aroused by the kindness and are "being saved." This acceptance is their "life from the dead," which was the current outworking of God having "mercy on them all" (Israel and Gentiles). In short, if God's eschatological program was now in the phase of the outworking of mercy to "all," then one could equally say that "the dead are being raised." [40] However, if one rejects this proposal, then it is very difficult not to conclude that God has "not yet" extended "kindness" to Israel for two millennia, since the extending of gospel kindness and "life from the dead" mean, for Moo, "the final manifestation of God's mercy to Israel." [41] Preterism does not run into this problem.

In keeping with Israel's "day of salvation," it can be easily interpreted from *Ro* 13.11-14 that Paul saw the salvation of "all Israel" as "nearer now than when we first believed." Provided that God was already "now" saving the last remnant of Israelites "according to the flesh," the preterist framework can be worked out in this light.[42]

Now, before I come to the conclusion of this paper, I want to further interact with Moo in his commentary on Romans. Moo does not find in 9-11 any hint that Israel's salvation must mean the literal restoration of the land.[43] Secondly, he affirms that "salvation can be found in one place only: within the one community made up of those who believe in Jesus Christ." [44] Thirdly, he ties the "life from the dead" and the "acceptance" of the parallel shown above as the "eschatological resurrection of the dead." [45] And, finally, by commenting on Paul's change from the MT and LXX to his own "out of Zion" (whereas the LXX and MT have "to Zion" - see *Ro* 11.26a; *Is* 59.20,21), he remarks, "Zion is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem, the site of Christ's high-priestly ministry. If so, he probably changes the text in order to make clear that the final deliverance of Israel is accomplished by Christ at his parousia." [46] These are all observances with which the preterist can agree.

However, Moo insists that "all Israel" must mean the large majority of Israelites just before the *parousia* of Christ, which, for him, has not yet happened. Yet, if this *parousia* be the same mentioned in the Matthaean discourse (24.27,37,39), and that discourse, according to Wright, has been fulfilled, then how could one not possibly link together the two events? [47] If Jesus' *parousia* is "out of" heavenly Zion and "Jerusalem below" is destroyed, the transcendent nature of the kingdom of God can readily be seen. Israel "according to the flesh" was annihilated as God's covenant with her "according to the letter" came to a crashing "end." However, that did not mean that God's word failed since he *did* establish the new covenant "with the House of Israel and the House of Judah" (*Jer* 31.31) through Jesus Christ, saving a remnant "at the present time" and raising all those faithful Israelites of past generations through the risen Christ when she came to her "life from the dead." *This is what Paul is saying that God was doing and would do, and the time of his completing his mercy on old covenant Israel was "nigh" and "at hand."* The preterist scheme can certainly make a case here.

Further than this, Moo writes that Paul certainly thought that Israel's final mass conversion (in his view) "could take place "now, at any time."" [48] Logically, though, if this were the case, then wouldn't other "signs" have been in place in order for Paul to have reached the conclusion that the next thing could be the salvation and resurrection of Israel? And, if it were possible for him to think that Israel's resurrection was right around the corner, what does that mean for us who have been waiting for two millennia? If all things have been set for God to "now" show mercy to Israel via mass conversion, then one could easily ask, what is taking him so long? The preterist solution requires a redefinition, not of the texts, but of our reading of these texts in the light of two-thousand years of traditions that have, up to this point, not provided a satisfactorily cohesive eschatology that squares with the texts of the NT.

The assumptions carried into this historical-contextual matrix are manifold. Two or three appear to be so

unshakeable that any attempt of reading an alternative interpretation that would disagree with the creeds and confessions would be unthinkable. These are the issues surrounding the nature of the resurrection of the dead (the traditional 'self-same' body being raised from the casket versus an entirely spiritual resurrection that utilizes physical nature as a metaphor of a much deeper reality); the nature of the so-called Second Coming (visible, bodily), and the assumption that the nation-state of Israel today plays a major part at the end of history, time, and space. But, as I have shown briefly, Evangelical scholarship hints at the signs that these assumptions are being unraveled.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between Israel and the church has changed since the tragedies of the Holocaust, and the history between the two has not always been conducive to gospel love. It has been the attempt to reduce this tension between us by softening the so-called anti-Semitic flavor of the gospels and apostles. Charging Jesus and Paul, however, with anti-Semitism is impossible in view of the fact that both were struggling for their people. Both entertained a transcendent vision of Israel that would bring her into the position with God so that the world may experience her inheritance and riches promised to her by God. Jesus died for his people in order to raise his people in Himself and to "enlarge the place" (*Is* 54.2) of the nation he so loved. Scholarship is correct to emphasize Jesus and Paul within this context of Judaism's national hopes. While we should make all amends for the inexcusable abuses of the church, we should also emphasize the great many blessings the gospel, *Israel's gospel*, has brought to billions upon billions of believers throughout history.

For Paul, he had "the same hope as these men (Jews), that God is about to (*mellein esesqai*) to raise the dead" (*Acts* 24.15).[49] God was about to raise Israel and fulfill the promises made to her by swallowing up the death forever (*Is* 25.8) and remove her disgrace. He was about to ransom her from the grave and redeem her from death, taunting Death and the Grave (*Hos* 13.14). God, in the midst of times of tribulation "such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then," would cause multitudes to rise from their sleep and shine like the brightness of the heavens (*Da* 12.1-3). For Jesus, God was about to gather, and already was gathering together those whom he would call to the table of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus' interest in Israel's restoration and resurrection is the sole context in which to hear his words today.

This means, unfortunately, that we have, down through the centuries, missed certain key aspects of Jesus' teachings concerning the topic we refer to as eschatology. If McKnight is correct (and Wright), we are in dire need of redefining what we once thought was secure. Yet, it is also in this light that we must re-approach our relationship with modern Israel. Rather than approach Jews today as hardened by God, and rather than see Jews returning to Israel as a sign for their great slaughter, we must, first, rid the theological landscape of such monstrous scenarios.[50]

The preterist approach understands that the apostles, under the guidance of Jesus and the Spirit, saw the *ekklesia* as a fulfillment of biblical Judaism. The *ekklesia* was not a separate entity unforeseen within the prophetic corpus, but precisely what was seen. Israel was destined, pre-destined, to bring riches to the world, and those riches are identified with the kindness (*chesed*) of God shown to her throughout her history. For all of the good the *ekklesia* has done in the world, it is due to the fact that God's word to Israel has not failed. The *ekklesia* is Israel assembled together in Paul's generation *and* those whom God foreknew and assembled under the patriarchs, kings and prophets. The writer(s) of *Hebrews* never envisioned the assembly of his day apart from the past saints of the old covenant era, but expressly acknowledged that "we together *with them* (the great cloud of OT witnesses) would *they* be made perfect" (11.40). Israel is seen as inclusive of all of those elect within those generations together with the *ekklesia* of Jesus' generation. And, just as many Gentiles were included within Israel's past, so also were they included then.

But the covenants were changing. The new covenant was now seen as replacing the old, and the new "would not be like the covenant I made with your forefathers" (*Jer* 31.31). Therefore, Gentile inclusion would not be by the customs of Moses, nor circumcision by the hands of men.[51] Therefore, Paul could argue that a "new" and "better" way had been inaugurated through the cross and resurrection of Israel's anointed King and Lord. Paul never argued that God had delayed his purposes, postponed his purposes, or created an irreconcilable paradox of the kingdom-fulfillment. God's plan was right on schedule and the Prophets are being fulfilled as his Gentile mission *proved*. Yet, if this were the case, then Israel must be undergoing her restoration at the same time.

It is here that the 'spiritual' and 'transcendent' hermeneutic of the apostles is seen as applying to *how* Paul saw Israel's restoration. As we have seen, many Evangelicals see Paul as identifying Israel's restoration in terms of a spiritual restoration. It is difficult to resist such a move when Jesus himself said, "neither on this mountain

nor in Jerusalem" will worship to the Father happen, but "a time is coming and now has come when true worshippers will worship in Spirit and in truth" (*John* 4.21-24). Will this be reversed one day when Jerusalem again will become the center of worship in a millennial age? It is very problematic to see both at the same time.[52]

If Israel's restoration and resurrection in and through the resurrected "body of Christ;" if her regathering to the Land and Jerusalem is seen as "heavenly Jerusalem" and a "heavenly country" (*Hebr* 11.16; 12.22), and if these things are invisible, "spiritual blessings of the Jews" (*Ro* 15.27), then one can see that this was what the prophets envisioned as ultimately promised to Israel. Israel would be raised from the dead, her covenant with "the death" would be annulled and Mount Zion would be raised above all mountains so that all nations could come into the riches of her inheritance and promise: the kindness, love, and eternal union without stain before God Himself in perfect holiness and eternal comfort from all fears and worries as to her status with God. To reduce these promises, as Dispensationalism does, to earthly fulfillments (when Israel in the past had enjoyed earthly glory before under Joshua, David and Solomon) is to miss the *kata sarka/kata pneuma* distinction found in the Scriptures.

Israel had already enjoyed life according to the flesh, but it was always short lived because she could never transcend the curse of Adam (*Ro* 5.12-ff). In Christ, as God promised, the curse of Adam is annulled so that Israel, through the body of Christ, could transcend her limitations with God and become one with her Creator. Since the world's destiny was bound up in the destiny of the Israel, "the reconciliation of the world" was the result of God's faithfulness to Israel. But this requires us to see, as "Christians," that the faith we have through Christ is the only means by which such blessings are secured, and that those who reject such a gospel of grace, whether modern day Jews or Indians, cannot have such eternal blessings. In this, I agree with Moo. Christian apologetics cannot shrink back from the statements found in the NT, but we should equally, with Paul, Stephen, Apollos and Peter, be able to show *from the OT* that all of these NT conclusions are justified logically and exegetically. Paul redefined nothing and he postponed not one promise.

Messianic Jews, Jews for Jesus, and completed Hebrews are all certainly welcomed members of Christ's assembly. But, there cannot be this obsession for the city of Jerusalem as God's city of destiny. This has created a political climate between Muslims and Jews that is unbearable, and in the preterist scheme, Jerusalem is no more important than Mecca, the Taj Mahal or Washinton D.C. when it comes to *prophetic* importance (this is not to deny its political importance as an ally). God is *not* fulfilling prophecy or any promise, and Zionism is not a "righteous cause" often celebrated among the religious right. These are the practical implications of much Evangelical theology that seeks a non-Dispensational approach to eschatology. And it is here that the charge of "anti-Semitism" is felt.

In no way should misguided eschatological views influence the political decisions of any nation, including Israel. The Muslim world does the same thing when, according to its end time scenario, Allah and Mohammed will rule the world. When Orthodox Judaism, among some of its more radical adherents, virtually has the same view for themselves, one can understand the tensions that exist by having two major religions fighting for the Land promised to them by God Himself. The preterist approach understands that all Land promises were absorbed, and would be absorbed according to the Prophets, into a spiritual heavenly Land. When politics, then, sides with a particular eschatology, the results can be devastating. Politics is best served when the interest of our neighbors are best served in light of helping cultures through alleviating human suffering with economical, medical, educational and humanitarian aid. Abuse against the dignity of human beings in light of their being created in the image of God cannot ever be supported, regardless of who commits it. There is no room for speculative eschatology that envisions God ushering in the worst unimaginable bloodshed of all to occur in Israel.

The love that God commands in Torah is love towards our neighbors. It is here, in the co-text of Paul dealing with "the end," that he states "the fullness of Torah is the love" (*Ro* 13.8-14). When the "end" came, "the love remains," whereas the prophetic will cease (*I Co* 13.8). Preterism announces that the prophetic has ceased and has been summed up in Christ. What remains for the *ekklesia*, made up of "everyone who calls upon the name of *YHWH*," (*Joel* 2.32) is to love those of the Jewish faith; those of Muslim faith; those of the Mormon faith; those of the all faiths. There is no distinction and one person, because of their heritage, is no more deserving over another. The election of God is also among those who are currently enemies of the gospel, but the message of Paul is plain: "love your enemies" and leave room for God's providential judgment. Preterism de-eschatologizes Christianity by leaving *revealed eschatology* where it belongs: in the first century A.D. The peace, mercy, kindness that must be examples of all those who follow Jesus, however, is the fruit of God's answer to Israel and what, through Israel, God has given to the world. It is the duty of the *ekklesia* to carry out and bear the fruit of Israel's glorious vineyard.

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[1] *betok hagoyim* - in the midst of the nations. The imagery here is that Jerusalem is the center of the nations and 'round about her are the lands.'

[2] McKnight, Scot, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999, 5.

[3] See D.E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity*, NovTsupp XXVIII, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1972; John J. Collins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume 1 The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, Continuum, 2003, Dale C. Allison, "The Eschatology of Jesus," 267-302.

[4] Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott (eds.), *Eschatology in the Bible & Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, Downers Grove, IVP, 1997, 3.

[5] Hank Hanegraaff and Sigmund Brouwer, *The Last Disciple*, Henry Holt & Co Inc, 2004. This novel has caused a 'fued' between LaHaye and Hanegraaff. Hanegraaff wrote, "I want it remembered that we have all agreed that the truth of the prophecies of Jesus on the Mount of Olives is meaningless unless all the events He predicted occur, not just some" (*Last*, 93). See also, Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *The End Times Controversy: The Second Coming under Attack*, Eugene, Harvest House, 2003; *When Shall These Things Be?: A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism*, Keith A. Mathison (ed.), Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 2004; Jay E. Adams, *Preterism: Orthodox or Unorthodox?*, Stanley, Timeless Texts, 2003; R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1998. 'Hyper-preterism' is that name given to those who hold that the Second Coming took place in A.D. 70.

[6] Bloesch, Donald G., *The Last Things: Resurrection, Judgment, Glory*, Christian Foundations, Downers Grove, IVP, 2004, 29.

[7] Metts, H. Leroy, "The Kingdom of God: Background and Development," *CTR*, Vol 2, 1 (2004), 52. For Wright, see *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1996.

[8] See Samuel M. Frost, *Exegetical Essays on the Resurrection of the Dead*, Dayton, TruthVoice Publications, 2004. Carey C. Newman (ed.), *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, Downers Grove, IVP, 1999, Darrell L. Bock in particular, 121. In my private conversation with Thomas Ice (a classic Dispensationalist), *none* of the Olivet Discourse is fulfilled in A.D. 70. For Ice it is an all or nothing approach. If *some* of it is fulfilled, then *all* of it is fulfilled.

[9] See Max R. King *The Cross and the Parousia: The Two Dimensions of One Age Changing Eschaton*, Warren, OH, Parkman Road Church of Christ, 1987; J.S. Russell *The Parousia: A Critical Enquiry Into The NT Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books (1887), 1978. For the ongoing effects within church history see Samuel M. Frost *Misplaced Hope: The Origins of First and Second Century Eschatology*, Bi-Millennial Publications, 2002; Randall E. Otto, *Coming in the Clouds: An Evangelical Case for the Invisibility of Christ at His Second Coming*, Landham, University Press of America, Inc., 1994 and by the same author, *Case Dismissed: Rebutting Common Charges Against Preterism*, Bradford, IPA, 2000; *Into All the World, Then Comes The End*, Don K. Preston, self published, Ardmore, Ok. 1996.

[10] Neusner, Jacob, *Scriptures of the Oral Torah*, San Francisco, Harpers & Row, 1987, 6-7.

[11] Robert Goldenberg, "Early Explanations of the Destruction of Jerusalem," *JJS*, (1982), 525. Thanks to Don K. Preston for pointing this out to me.

[12] *ibid.*, 525.

[13] *ibid.*, 518.

[14] See Craig C. Hill, "Luke-Acts and Christian Supersessionism," for a discussion of positions relating to Israel and the church, <<http://home.earthlink.net/~revschaef/restoringisrael.html>>.

[15] Hays, Richard B., *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Yale University Press, 1989, 120. No doubt

the author Wisdom 3.7-8 (and like apocryphal and pseudapigraphal writings) intended this.

[16] *ibid.*, 120

[17] In the quote from Hays above, he wrote that Isaiah "envisioned a literal restoration." How does he know this? It is equally just as possible that Paul, writing by the Spirit (since we accept inspiration), correctly understood Isaiah's meaning all along.

[18] One can imagine an argument between Paul and a Jewish opponent where the Jew says, "but that is not what the text says, Paul!", only to hear Paul retort: "But the Spirit of God in me is telling me that that is the *real meaning* of the text!" It can be seen that if "redefinition" is indeed what Paul is doing, then Paul's argument is entirely subjective in appearance to any outsider and becomes highly gnostic in tendency at that point. Rather, the force must be from Paul, "This *is* what the Scripture is saying by strict interpretation of the texts themselves!", thus forcing his argument by way of text rather than by way of redefining the text in dispute.

[19] Donaldson, Terence L., *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1997, 236.

[20] Hays, *Echoes*, 121.

[21] See Heiki Räisänen for a not too flattering look at Paul's so-called 'redefining' hermeneutic, which he considered as 'arbitrary.' *Paul & The Law*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1986.

[22] Hays, *Echoes*, 121.

[23] In the preterist schema, *Hebr* 8.13 specifically identifies the 'new' and 'soon' disappearance of the 'old.' For F.F. Bruce this possibly meant that, if the fall of the Temple is in view here (which preterists think that it is), then "it is more imminent now that the forty years of probation were more than three-quarters of the way towards to their end," *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967, 179,180. Bruce argues that this depends on the date of *Hebrews*. If it is to be dated before A.D. 70, then this verse denotes that the 'end' of the old covenant was wrapped up in the Destruction and along with it the old covenant *definition* of the 'people of God.' Before such event, however, both covenants overlapped so that Paul could speak of Israel "according to the flesh" and "sons of Abraham according to the Spirit" as respecting old and new. The latter designation included *both* elect ethnic Israelites and Gentiles, whereas the former was *primarily in toto* those who genealogically were "sons of Abraham." (though not exclusively The fact that Israel was not *exclusively* made up of those genealogically related creates a *biblical* loophole that Paul seizes upon in *Ro* 9-11, not a redefinition. Under the old covenant the majority was genealogically privileged "sons of Abraham," but in the inaugural new covenant they are a 'remnant' whereas the Gentiles become the majority. Since Israel was naturally smaller than "the nations," then when God's time of restoration for Israel appeared, Paul knew that the majority would be Gentiles and not Israelites "according to the flesh." See Bruce K. Waltke, "The Irruption of the Kingdom of God," *CTR*, Vol 2, 1 (2004), 6,7.

[24] *lh'q'* and *ekklhsia* occur as translations of each other. I believe this dynamic underlies the NT usage. The 'assembly' is "plainly an eschatological entity," *TDNT*, III, 487-536. The "assembly" of that generation under Christ was never something seen *apart from* the assemblies of those old covenant saints of Israel, but the "firstfruits of the Spirit" community that functioned as the eschatological "guarantee of *our* (Israel's promised) inheritance" (*Eph* 1.14) which was "the redemption of God's possession" (1.14), Israel (*cf. Ex* 19.5; *Dt* 14.2; 26.18; *Mal* 3.17). See Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, Dallas, Thomas Nelson, 1990, 40-42. The present "firstfruits" community of that generation guaranteed the redemption of the "harvest" of OT elect Israel; their resurrection (the "inheritance") which was "already" in motion towards the soon to come consummation at the "ends of the ages."

[25] Thielman, Frank, *Paul & The Law*, Downers Grove, IVP, 1994, 204.

[26] *ibid.*, 204. see also Mark Nanos, *The Mystery of God in Romans*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1996,

[27] See James B. Jordan "The Future of Israel Considered," Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper No. 18, 1994. Although Jordan is not a preterist in the sense Bloesch described above, he nonetheless can write, "Romans 11 predicts an event that was future to Paul, but not future to us; to wit: that Romans 11 predicts a conversion of many Jews to Christ just before the destruction of Israel in AD 70" (2).

[28] Wright, N.T., *The Letter to the Romans*, Vol X (*Acts, Romans, I Corinthians*), *NIB*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2002.

[29] *Ibid.*, 689.

[30] From a detailed preterist justification of this see Don K. Preston *1948: Countdown to Nowhere*, pub. by author, 2002; John L. Bray, *Israel in Bible Prophecy*, pub. by author, 1997; Ovid Need, Jr., *Death of the Church Victorious*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2002. For a historical/critical discussion of Christian Zionism see Donald E. Wagner, *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*, Melisende, 2003; Stephen R. Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon?*, Downers Grove, IVP, 2004.

[31] Douglas Moo, "The Theology of Romans 9-11: A Response to E. Elizabeth Johnson," *SBLSS 23, Pauline Theology, Vol III, Romans*, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2002, David M. Hay and E.Elizabeth Johnson (eds), 251,252.

[32] *Ibid.*, 251,252. Moo never argues clearly as to why it is presupposed. It appears to be just assumed by him and others on this point.

[33] See Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans, NICNT*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996, 875-878.

[34] In *Ro* 3.4, speaking with a Jewish interlocutor, Paul anticipates the question being asked, "what if *some* did not believe. Will their having no faith destroy God's faithfulness? By no means." Paul knows that *some* will not believe, but that failure on their part will not nullify God's faithfulness to restore and deliver those who do believe.

[35] Moo writes on this verse that the Jew/Gentile barrier is in the forefront here, *op. cit.*, 875,876.

[36] This assumes that *nun* is the correct reading.

[37] If Paul wrote this letter before he went to Jerusalem, which most assuredly he did (*Ro* 15), then by the time he gets to Jerusalem (early 57 A.D.), Luke presents "many thousands of Jews who believe" (*Acts* 21.20). Yet, Paul knew in spite of Jews turning to Christ, that many would not (*Acts* 20.22,23). "Some" were convinced after he arrived at Rome in 60 A.D. (*Acts* 28.24) as he continued to preach to the Jews the gospel of the kingdom.

[38] If our interpretation is correct here, then this has implications for *I Co* 15 and the denial of "the resurrection of the dead." On this reading, denying resurrection meant denying Israel's future hope and, thus, meant the same as denying the Gospel itself, and it is this that Max King (*op. cited* n.9) argues for. Preterists are able to argue along with Moo that "to jettison God's promises to Israel is to jettison the gospel" (*op. cited*, n.31), 249. However, preterists insist that Israel's promised salvation-fulfillment cannot be removed from the time of transition between the old and new covenants, and since the end of the old covenant was A.D. 70 (*Hebr* 8.13), in our assumption, Paul's time statements here fit perfectly. See W.D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1984, 133: "The reconciliations of unbelieving Jews to 'Israel' the church, and ipso facto of the world of God-would be 'the resurrection of the dead.' This enigmatic phrase must not be diluted to mean merely the greatest moral and spiritual blessings in a general way: It denotes rather the inauguration of the end (11:15). This recognition of this role for the Jewish people-it must be emphasized-is in the context of an almost immediate expectation of the end."

[39] The Song of Moses which Paul quotes in *Ro* 10.19 lets us know that the Gentiles had a prophetic role to play *for Israel's salvation* at the end. Since they were playing that role, Israel's time of salvation had come, and had not been postponed.

[40] For the present passive phrase see *Acts* 26.8. For Paul see *I Co* 15.13,15,16,35. The resurrected Christ had already begun the eschatological resurrection of Israel and those included in her and to deny this as an outworking of Israel's salvation would be to deny the resurrection of Christ who "came to confirm the promises made to our forefathers" (*Ro* 15.8)

[41] *Op. cited*, 735.

[42] See *II Co* 6.2 which parallels *Ro* 13.11-14 here. *Is* 49.8, 18, 22 informs the language of Paul here in *Ro* 13.11-14 and 15.9-12 (which are parallel quotes from *Is* 11.10).

[43] *Ibid.*, 724, n.59.

[44] *Ibid.*, 725.

[45] *Ibid.*, 724.

[46] *Ibid.*, 728.

[47] Though Scot McKnight is not what I would call a preterist in light of this paper, he can nonetheless write, "It might be argued that Jesus made a distinction between the climatic events pertaining to the nation and to Jerusalem, on one hand, and to the final events of history, on the other; that is, that Jesus distinguished the events of A.D. 70 from the final events (judgment, kingdom, etc.). This would be very difficult to prove and need not be proved, since Jesus' method was so typical of Jewish prophecy" (*op. cited*, 12). McKnight, however, argues that history can take another course unforeseen by the prophet (and did). Nonetheless, "In his vision of human history, Jesus saw no further than A.D. 70" (*ibid.*, 12). I argue that the resurrection of the dead was directly related to the Destruction and that, with McKnight, is inseparably linked to that event. There was no "unseen events of unfolding history" that would have "delayed" and "detached" the resurrection from the Destruction (see my *Exegetical Essays* already cited).

[48] *Ibid.*, 735.

[49] The present infinitive with a future of *eimi* is used three times in the Bible (*Acts* 11.28; 27.10 and here) and is used to denote something on the verge of happening within the time of the speakers, as each instant shows. It is difficult to insist on the nearness of the events in 11.28 and 27.10, and then conclude that that is not meant here.

[50] This is the theme of Mark Hitchcock, a classic Dispensationalist, *Seven Signs of the End Times*, Multnomah Publishers, 2002. He predicts that Israel will have peace, and then Antichrist will unleash bloodshed.

[51] This was the first major controversy (*Acts* 15.1-5).

[52] See Don K. Preston, <<http://www.eschatology.org/articles/israelofgod/arkOfCovenant.htm>>.