

Why Consistent Preterism is a Faulty Approach

by Raymond C. Faircloth

Preterism means: a completed action or condition. So from a biblical perspective modern-day Preterism teaches that all of prophecy was fulfilled when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, there is no evidence of any such Preterist interpretation throughout the history of the early church.

Three Kinds of Preterism

300 YEAR PRETERISM (Mild)

Originator: The Jesuit Luis De Alcasar (1604).

Early proponents: Hugo Grotius (d. 1645. First Protestant) and Henry Hammond (d. 1660).

This teaches that the fulfilment of the book of Revelation was completed during the first three centuries with the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and up to the time the Roman Empire was Christianized in the 4th century. This is a rare belief nowadays and does not need to be dealt with in our Studies.

PARTIAL PRETERISM (Moderate)

Main current Proponents: R. C. Sproul, Kenneth Gentry, Gary DeMar.

This view understands almost all prophecy as having been fulfilled by A.D. 70 although there is still to be a **future visible coming** of Christ at the end of the Millennium (**Post-Millennialism**) and followed by a visible **resurrection** of Christians. This is a popular and growing belief.

The additional factors involved in Partial Preterism will be covered in the next study.

CONSISTENT PRETERISM (Extreme/Radical)

Main early Proponent: **James Stuart Russell** in his book *Parousia* (1878).

Main current Proponents: David Chilton, Max King (*Churches of Christ*) and Walt Hibbard. This is an amillennialist system (see STUDY 1 which shows this to be an unbiblical approach).

INTERPRETATIONS:

- “The Beast” was Nero/Roman Empire.
- “The false prophet” was the Jewish leadership.
- “The Great Harlot” was Jerusalem in A.D. 70..
- The Great Apostasy concerned Israel only and was only up to A.D. 70.
- The term *Antichrist* describes this Great Apostasy.
- The “last days” concerned 1st century Israel only.
- Christ’s *parousia* was his invisible spiritual return and began in A.D.70 when the 5 month siege of Jerusalem started so that he might direct the Roman army.
- The Great Tribulation ended with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There is to be no future Great Tribulation.
- The Armageddon situation is not to be taken literally, but is just a symbol of defeat of the enemies of God.
- Israel is completely replaced by the Church and has no further future.
- New Jerusalem is the church. The New Heavens and New Earth are already in operation because Christians are “the New Creation.”
- The Millennium began at Jesus’ first advent, but is not a literal thousand years only a long, undefined period of time.
- The first resurrection is spiritual regeneration “in Christ” and not a physical raising from the dead.
- Satan is now bound.

This system is also called *Realized Eschatology* because all biblical prophecy is viewed as fulfilled by A.D. 70 and presents Jesus as having **returned invisibly** in A.D. 70 through the operation of the Roman army to bring judgment on Jerusalem at that time. This is a naturalistic interpretation which has been adopted primarily by liberal theologians. Although few have believed this view in the past it is now growing at a considerable rate.

The Historical A.D. 70 Destruction of Jerusalem Does Not Correspond to the Details in the Prophecies

Preterists, whether Consistent or Partial, believe that Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-36) was fulfilled with the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. However, they also believe that the passages in Zechariah 12-14 are parallel to the Olivet Discourse; yet the details of these prophecies do not fit with the events that occurred in AD 70 in regard to the invasion of Jerusalem by the Roman army. Instead, Zechariah's prophecies refer to a time when God would be judging the nations rather than Israel. He says:

❖ "I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zech. 12:9).

Neither Zechariah nor Jesus speaks of a judgment against God's people in these prophecies. And so the prophecy in both passages is yet future.

(Please see STUDY 2 for a complete discussion of this mismatch between the AD 70 history and prophecy).

Reasons Why Nero Was Not the Beast of Revelation

DOES THE NUMBER 666 REPRESENT NERO?

The Preterist view of prophecy is favoured by liberal and Catholic theologians who like to see Revelation as a coded message about the struggle of the early Church with the Roman Empire, particularly during the times of the persecutions of Nero. It is claimed that the 666 of Revelation 13 is a reference to Nero. The way of arriving at this conclusion is somewhat complicated. It involves taking a relatively uncommon form of Nero's name, Nero Caesar or Caesar Nero, and adds an 'n', resulting in Neron Caesar. Next the Latin is transliterated into Aramaic, resulting in NRWN QSR, which when using the numeric equivalent, then adds up to 666.

Nun = 50, Resh = 200, Waw = 6, Nun = 50, Qoph = 100, Samech = 60, Resh = 200.

There is a problem though with the above calculation. According to the rules of Jewish numerology, known as *gematria*, when the letter Nun appears a second time in a word, it is known as a Final, and takes the value of 700. So to be precise, NRWN QSR actually adds up to 1316 and not 666.

A different approach that is also used is that of numerology based on the Latin alpha-numeric system because Nero was a Roman. This time the last N is left on and gives the result 666:

N = 50, E = 6, R = 500, O = 60, N = 50. Total 666.

However, the book of Revelation was written in Greek the letters of which do not give the result of 666 but rather 225 for Nero and 275 for Neron. In fact, the early church father Irenaeus, in his using the Greek alphabet, examined three names as possibilities for the antichrist. These were Evanthas, Lateinos, and Teitan. Each of these totalled 666. Even ordinary Greek words such as *paradosis*, meaning tradition, can be made to add up to 666. So clearly, all such complications are not God's way of communicating information to mankind and so the number 666 cannot realistically be applied to Nero or anyone else.

NERO'S HISTORY DOES NOT MATCH PROPHECY

- Nero never visited Jerusalem; yet the antichrist in the form of the "Man of Lawlessness" will sit in Jerusalem's temple (2 Thess. 2:4). However, Vespasian was the emperor and not Nero when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.
- Nero was not killed by the returning Christ; yet this will happen to the real "Man of Lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2:8). There is also no evidence that Nero was thrown into the lake of fire after fighting with Christ (Rev. 19:20).
- Nero did not gather armies from all nations to the specific location called Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-14; 19:19). In any case, how could it be Jesus who moved the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem when he is shown to be the one who fights against and destroys the national armies (Rev. 19:11-21).

There are many more details that could be shown to know that Nero could not possibly have been the Beast of Revelation.

Consistent Preterism also appears to be naturalistic and so demonstrating a lack of faith in most of the biblical promises which, taken in the normal grammatical/historical reading, must yet be future.

Answering the Preterist Proof Texts

Matthew 24:34:

“Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until** all these things take place.”

A BLOCK OF MANKIND WITH CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS IN COMMON

This refers to: “The crooked generation” of the present age. In Hebrew thinking it refers to the people that Jesus was speaking of at the time, but taken **corporately** of **the entire wicked society of mankind** which is organized against God and living throughout the present age between the two advents. This is seen from an examination of the term “generation” throughout the Scriptures starting with Psalm 14: 5: “*For God is with the righteous generation.*”

THE WICKED GENERATION

- ❖ “They are not his children because of their defect; but are a **perverse** and **crooked** generation” (*Deut. 32:5*).
- ❖ “There is a kind (Lit. *generation*) of man who curses his father...there is a kind (Lit. *generation*) who is **pure in his own eyes**” (*Prov. 30:11, 12*).
- ❖ “An **evil** and **adulterous** generation seeks a sign” (*Matt. 16:4*).

Because they seek a sign in spite of all of Jesus’ proof, this generation is therefore unbelieving. So Jesus also speaks of those who are:

- ❖ “...ashamed of me and my words in this **adulterous** and **sinful** generation...” (*Mark 8:38*).
- ❖ “...the sons of this age are more **shrewd** in relation to their own kind (Lit. *generation*) than the sons of light” (*Luke 16:8*).

THE CONTEXT OF MATTHEW

The Journal of the evangelical Theological Society 38:3 (Sept 1996) states: “In the context of the discourse it (*this generation*) refers to that type of consummately evil and unbelieving people who **deceive and persecute** the disciples of Christ until the time of the parousia...”

So the “*generation that will not pass away until all these things take place*” is **the block of humanity that epitomizes “this age” in being evil**, adulterous, sinful, perverse, crooked, unbelieving and pure in their own eyes. It therefore exists in opposition to God and exists right up to the time of Jesus’ return. Therefore, the term *generation* cannot be narrowed down to some specific length of time such as 40 or 70 years. If such a time-length had been meant it would **contradict Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:36**: “*But concerning that day or hour no one knows...*” Such a time-length for a generation might be the meaning in 21st century Western thinking but not in 1st century or earlier Jewish thinking.

THE “YOU” IN THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

Preterism states that Jesus must have applied all the events he spoke of to **his contemporary generation** because of the use of the word “you.” However, throughout the Scriptures the common usage in prophecy of the word “you” was **corporate** and therefore involving all of God’s people at all times. An example of this was when Moses said:

- ❖ “Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your countrymen, *and* to him you shall listen” (*Deut. 18:15 LEB*).

Evidently those Israelites spoken to by Moses did not personally “listen to him [*the prophet like Moses*];” and yet Moses was not a failed prophet. This is because of the corporate aspect to the prophecy and means that a contemporary audience is spoken to but the reference is to all of God’s people throughout time. That this principle was fully understood in the first century is proved by the fact that the apostle **Peter** quoted Deuteronomy 18:15 and made no negative comment about Moses having promised the coming of “the prophet” in the time of that ancient Israelite generation; but rather that this prophecy had now been fulfilled in Peter’s own day (Acts 3:19-26). So when Jude and Peter write, they write to the entire body of Christ as the “you” **rather than exclusively to the contemporary audience**. Even the **religious leaders** of the first century still expected the fulfilment of Deuteronomy 18:15 as yet to occur (John 1:21, 25). Furthermore, the disciple **Stephen** spoke of the same fulfilment of Moses’ words and clearly it did not occur to Stephen that Moses was in any way a false prophet because the fulfilment did not occur soon after the ancient Mount Sinai event. So when Jesus, in the Olivet discourse, speaks to his contemporary audience he uses the word “you” as not being limited exclusively to them, but **rather to the entire body of Christ**. In any case, many of those disciples—the “you” spoken to—had already died before A.D. 70 which is when Preterism considers that the Olivet discourse was completely fulfilled.

Matthew 10:23:

“When they **persecute you in one town**, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through **all the towns of Israel** before **the Son of Man comes**.”

Preterists use this verse to prove that the coming of the Son of Man must have been in the 1st century because Jesus said that the apostles would not finish the relatively small work of evangelizing Palestine before he returned.

PART OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE CONCERNING FUTURE PERSECUTION

Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:16-22 are parallel with his Olivet discourse words in Mark 13:9-13 and Luke 21:12-19 concerning steadily **intensifying persecution** right through to the time Jesus returns. Unlike Luke Matthew arranged much of his material by subjects and places rather than by chronological events.

SPOKEN NOT JUST TO THE TWELVE CONCERNING EVANGELIZING

Therefore, Matthew 10:16-23 is not an account which chronologically follows on from verses 1-15 which was *spoken only to the Twelve* concerning their being sent out of **to evangelize** Palestine and with parallels in Mark 6:7-13, 30 and Luke 9:1-6, 10. So Luke informs us that:

- ❖ “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and **all except the apostles** were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (*Acts 8:1*).

Although in Matthew 10 Jesus’ audience was the Twelve, the fact that when persecution did arise in the first century the apostles **did not flee** from one town to the next indicates that his words in verse 23 of “when they **persecute you in one town**, flee to the next” were the common prophetic usage. So the word “you” could therefore transcend to future times and future people.

WHAT JESUS MAY HAVE MEANT

- Matthew 10:23 shows that the disciples **will not run out of towns** in Israel to which they can flee **when they are being persecuted**. So Jesus was giving them some reassuring thoughts in view of the impending persecution and **not a time-frame for his return** (*such would be out of context*) as in Preterist thinking.
- For these reasons Matthew 10:23 is most likely detailing events that will take place during the coming “*Great Tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be*” (Matt. 24:21). The A.D. 70 **troubles for Jerusalem do not compare** with many other disasters both before and since. So Matthew 10:23 is more reasonably seen as a future scenario of the local [*within the boundaries of Israel*] persecution of Christians during the end-times and that the final evangelization of Israel will not be completed before the end of the present age. (Proof that the Olivet discourse mainly deals with events yet future can be found in STUDY 6).

DOESN'T FIT PRETERIST THEORY

- Even if Matthew 10:23 **was a time-frame marker** it does not serve the Preterist theory well because the persecution of Christians did not cease after the A.D. 70 event as it should have if Jesus really had returned then. Jesus’ statement that “the one who endures to the end” of this persecution (verse 22) is linked with the event when “the Son of Man **comes**” (verse 23). In other words, according to these verses, persecution of Christians comes to an end as soon as Jesus returns. Also note: 1 Tim. 4:18; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Pet.1:6 and 4:12 all of which show that a period of intense persecution of Christians ends with the arrival of Jesus. Rather than in A.D. 70, early persecution did not end until the time of Constantine when the corrupted version of Christianity became the official religion of the empire. The Emperors at the times of persecution after A.D. 70 were: Domitian (81-96), Trajan (98-117), Antonines (138-161), Decius (249-251), **Valerian** (253-260), Diocletian (284-305) and Galerius (305-310) Maximin (308-313).
- Furthermore, the Son **comes in glory**—something only worth mentioning if he will be visible (Matt. 24:30; 25:31) in contradiction of the Preterist view.
- There is no suggestion in any of Jesus’ words that he only returns in the sense of directing the Roman army to attack Jerusalem.

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Matthew 16:27, 28 (Also Mark 8:38-9:1 and Luke 9:26-27):

“For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly I say to you, there are *some* standing here who will **not taste death until** they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

1. Preterists use this passage to prove that the coming of the Son of Man would be before these disciples died and so would be in A.D. 70.
2. **Most commentators** recognize this as being fulfilled 6/8 days later when Jesus took three apostles into the mountain where he was then **transfigured**. In all three synoptic accounts the **transfiguration comes straight after Jesus’ promise**, thereby making it the likely fulfilment.
3. In the earlier verse 21 Jesus had just revealed to the disciples that **he was going to die**. So providing them with a **supernatural taste of the coming kingdom** by means of the transfiguration would be **very comforting** for them. It would also let them know that to follow Jesus means suffering before glory.
4. In 1 Peter 1:16-18 the apostle Peter refers back to the transfiguration as the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:”
 - ❖ “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, but we were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty. For when he received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased’, we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him **on the holy mountain.**”
5. **If it was an invisible event** the disciples would not “see the Son of Man coming.” However, Peter says they were “*eyewitnesses.*”

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John 12:31-33:

“**Now** is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by **what death** He would die.”

Because of the word “**now**” Preterists present this verse as proof that Jesus’ second coming must have been in the first century. They make **the assumption** that this “judgment of this world” must refer to the coming of the kingdom of God. However, the context concerns his crucifixion. Most translations with *headings* have “*Jesus predicts his death and subsequent glorification.*” Nevertheless, the Preterist view itself creates **quite a delay** and is a significantly stretched interpretation because 40 years would have to pass until fulfilment in A.D. 70. This is hardly “**now**”; whereas in a few days time, when Jesus is crucified, could hardly come within the time constraint of “the judgment of this world” and “the ruler of this world [being] cast out” meant that a **defeat occurred for the world and for Satan**. However, this is not the same as **the Day of Judgment** which is *yet future* as noted in the many post-resurrection statements connecting it with God’s day of wrath.

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Luke 17:20-21 NKJV:

“Now when He was asked by **the Pharisees** when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come **with observation** (“*with your careful observation*” NIV); nor will they say, ‘See **here!**’ or ‘See **there!**’ For indeed, the Kingdom of God is *within you.*”

TRANSLATION POINTS

- “*with observation.*” This is correct according to Greek lexicons and the UBS interlinear text. The NASB and the ESV incorrectly give: “is not coming **with signs** to be observed.” The phrase “with signs” is not in the Greek.
- “*within you*” should contextually be translated as: “the kingdom of God is **in the midst of** (Gk *entos*) you” or “**among** you.” (see NRSV, NASB, ESV, NAB, NJB, REB, Moffatt, and Rotherham)

So Darby renders the verse as: “And having been asked by the Pharisees, When is the kingdom of God coming? he answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with **observation**; nor shall they say, Lo **here**, or, Lo **there**, for behold, the kingdom of God is **in the midst of you.**”

So Jesus is here saying to the Pharisees that they do not have to go looking (i.e. “with observation”) *here* or *there* for the kingdom because when it arrives it will be very evident to everyone just as the king of the kingdom Jesus, standing in their midst, is very **evident to** and **within the grasp of** the Pharisees. Next and for his disciples only, Jesus develops that thought with the use of a simile which shows that the coming of the kingdom will be as **evident as lightning**:

- ❖ “Then He said **to the disciples**, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, ‘Look *here!*’ or ‘Look *there!*’ Do not go after them or follow them. For **as the lightning that flashes** out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day” (*Luke 17:22-24*).

So verse 20 does not mean that the kingdom will not be coming without an observable physical sign. If that is what Jesus had meant then he would have been contradicting all that he said in the Olivet Discourse where the **visible sign** is:

- ❖ “When you **see** the desolating abomination, standing where he should not” (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains” (*Mark 13:14 NAB*).

So the Preterist theory that the kingdom came invisibly in A.D. 70 cannot legitimately be supported with the use of Luke 17:20, 21. Furthermore, it *makes no sense* to say that the kingdom came in A.D. 70 **with no observable signs** and, at the same time, to posit the idea that Jesus used the *Roman army* which steadily advanced through Judea and up to Jerusalem. Certainly its advance was a very visible sign.

Preterist Misunderstanding of the Book of Revelation

The Preterist system is based in part on the following false ideas concerning the Book of Revelation:

1. Preterists propose that **the theme** of Revelation is the *Roman destruction of Jerusalem* rather than about Jesus’ second coming so that Jesus only comes **invisibly**.

REPLY:

- That the theme of Revelation concerns the second coming of Christ is evident:
- ❖ “Behold, **he is coming** with the clouds and every eye (*ophthalmos*) will **see** (*opsetai*) **him**, even those who pierced him, and **all the tribes of the earth** will wail on account of him” (**Rev. 1:7**).

This is clearly a **very visible** coming and is seen world-wide. There is no mention of Roman armies. Also Revelation’s theme of the second coming of Christ is well described in Revelation 19:11-20 concerning the one **“called Faithful and True”** riding on a white horse and to rule with an iron rod.

2. Preterists propose that the **time of writing** of Revelation was *about 65 A.D.*, rather than the generally accepted dates of the **early-mid 90s** A.D. Preterism absolutely depends on the early date and reasons that:
 - a. Revelation 11:1, 2 speaks of the A.D. 70 temple which John was to measure. If John was writing in 95 there would be no temple for him to have a vision about.
 - b. The 7 kings of Revelation 17:1-6 are Roman emperors of the 1st century. The “one is” refers to Nero. Furthermore, Preterists interpret the 10 kings as also a reference to Roman emperors and so that they make Vespasian the 10th king. A different version proposes that Nero was the 7th king and that Vespasian was the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8.

REPLY:

- When Ezekiel had his vision of measuring a temple there was no actually existing structure. A vision does not require the existence of the actual object. Yet the proposed time-frame of the Preterists cannot be established to prove that Roman emperors are involved. For Nero to be considered as the 6th king would require that Julius Caesar be considered a king, which he never was. So the line of kings would start with Augustus and would make Nero only the 5th king and Vespasian only the 9th king. Also there is no historical record that Vespasian was associated with a *“false prophet”* who called down fire from heaven (Rev. 13:14). Most importantly the 7 kings and the 10 kings are entirely different groupings of kings. So this whole approach does not fit and is simply speculative.

- EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE LATE DATE

Irenaeus writing around *A.D. 180* tells us that the *Antichrist had not come up to that time* and that revelation was written toward the *end of Domitian's reign* (assassinated *A.D. 96*):

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

There is a direct discipleship link between Irenaeus and the apostle John through Polycarp who was Irenaeus' teacher in Smyrna, Asia Minor. This was the same area John operated in and was imprisoned in (Patmos). So if there was a witness to an earlier (65) date for the writing of Revelation then Asia Minor is the area it should have come from, but this is not the case.

Eusebius (Christian historian 265-339 A.D.) affirms Irenaeus' dating of Revelation when he notes that the Apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos in the 14th year [A.D.95] of Emperor Domitian's reign:

After Domitian had reigned fifteen years, Nerva succeeded. The sentences of Domitian were annulled, and the Roman Senate decreed the return of those who had been unjustly banished and the restoration of their property. Those who committed the story of those times to writing relate it. At that time too the story of the ancient Christians relates that the Apostle John after his banishment to the island took up his abode in Ephesus.

On the other hand, according to researcher Mark Hitchcock:

The first clear, accepted, unambiguous witness to the Neronian date is a one-line subscription in the Syriac translation of the New Testament in a.d. 550 ... Only two other external witnesses to the early date exist: Arethas (c. 900) and Theophylact (d.1107).

Hitchcock also notes that **the late date** "has an unbroken line of support from some of the greatest, most reliable names in church history..." These include Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius. Also the two emperors Nero and Domitian approached persecution of Christians differently. Nero, reigning from 54 to 68, had Christians *put to death*, whereas Domitian, reigning from 81 to 96 *banished* Christians as was the case with the apostle John. Furthermore, Nero's persecution of Christians was largely confined to the area around Rome itself.

- INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE LATE DATE

The descriptions in Revelation 2 and 3 of the seven churches favour them as being second-generation churches and therefore supporting the late date for Revelation. For instance: The situation in the Church at *Ephesus* (Rev. 2) does not resemble its situation when Paul wrote about it to Timothy in about A.D. 64-68. This church's major failing, as raised by Christ in Revelation, should have been, at least, mentioned by Paul—but it wasn't. Also Phillip Schaff notes that: "It was probably the martyrdom of Peter and Paul that induced John to take charge of the orphan churches, exposed to serious danger and trials."

According to Polycarp no church even existed in *Smyrna* (Rev. 2:8-22) during the ministry of Paul who died around A.D. 68. Also because an earthquake had devastated the city of *Laodicea* in A.D. 60, it makes no sense for the church there to say "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing" (3:17) at that time. Historians state that it took another 25 years to restore the city.

- THE PRETERIST ATTEMPT TO FIND A LOOPHOLE

To escape the obvious implication of Irenaeus' statement above, which demonstrates that the time of the writing of the Revelation was in the mid-90s A.D, Preterists assert that the word *that* in the statement refers to *John himself* rather than to **the apocalyptic vision** which then could be taken to have been written at an earlier time. Apart from this assertion being incorrect grammatically it still doesn't prove a pre-A.D.70 recording of the Revelation. This still allows that it could have been written in the 70s, 80s, or early 90s. Nevertheless, an examination of the grammatical structure of Irenaeus' statement shows that when he refers to what had been *seen* it was what had been *beheld* by John, namely, **the apocalyptic vision towards the end of Domitian's reign**. So the phrase "*that* was *seen*" does not refer to John himself.

However, if we suppose that the Preterist assertion was correct then we would have to ask why during the 26 years to the end of Domitian's reign John did not manage to communicate the fact that **the apocalyptic vision**

had been fulfilled right back in A.D. 70? It is hardly likely that he chose not to teach that fulfilment. For the Preterist scheme *everything hangs on a pre-A.D. 70 date for the writing of the Revelation*. So their attempt to find a loophole simply shows their willingness to throw out the proven factual evidence because it disagrees with their hypothesis.

3. Preterists propose that **the genre** was entirely *apocalyptic* rather than mainly **prophecy**.

REPLY: “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of **this prophecy...**” (*Rev. 1:3*).

4. Preterists propose that the following Greek words in Revelation are **chronological texts** i.e. *soon/shortly* (adverbs of time) rather than **qualitative indicators** e. g. *speedily, quickly* (adverbs of manner) and *with speed* (adverbial phrase of manner).

REPLY:

DEFINITIONS: *taxos* (the root noun from which we get the noun *taxei* [pronounced tachee]): *A very brief period of time, with focus on speed of activity or event, speed, quickness, swiftness, haste.* Bauer’s Greek/Eng. Lexicon.

taxu (neut. of the adj. *taxus*) adv., *quickly, speedily, (without delay).* Thayer’s Greek/Eng Lexicon.

TRANSLATION: The UBS 4th edition, Nestle-Aland 26th edition Interlinear gives the following translations in all cases:

taxu = *quickly* in Revelation 2:16; 3:11; 11:14 and 22: 7, 12, 20.

en taxei = *with speed* in Revelation 1:1 and *quickly* in 22:6.

The preposition *en* is coupled with *taxei* making it **an adverbial phrase**. So both *taxu* and *en taxei* function adverbially. Also in the book of Revelation, Young’s Literal, Rotherham’s and the Diaglott consistently translate as above i.e. with speed, speedily, quickly. The NASB, NKJ and KJV mostly do the same.

GRAMMAR

Because there are adverbs of manner, place, time or correlative adverbs we must determine how the above Greek terms are being used in each sentence. In today’s most authoritative Greek grammar by Blass, Debrunner, and Funk no example of the *tachos* family of Greek words is listed under “adverbs of time,” but rather the *tachos* family comes under the classification of “adverbs of manner.” Furthermore, renowned Greek scholar Nigel Turner supports the *adverb of manner* sense of the meaning of “quickly.”

Lexicons generally demonstrate that all of the occurrences in Revelation are adverbs of manner i.e. the way/manner in which something is done. Hence, *taxu* and *en taxei* indicate the rapidity of execution of an event, **rather than when it is to be executed**. Examples outside of Revelation are:

- ❖ “.he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down **quickly** (*taxeos*).and write fifty” (*Luke 16:6 NKJV*).
- ❖ “...he will give justice to them **speedily** (*en taxei*)” (*Luke 18:8 ESV*).
- ❖ “Get up quickly (*en taxei*)” (*Acts 12:7b NAB*) or “with quickness”UBS.
- ❖ “...get out of Jerusalem **quickly** (*en taxei*)” (*Acts 22:18 NRSV*) i.e. with speed or in haste.
- ❖ “Do not lay hands on anyone **hastily** (*taxeos*)” (*1 Tim. 5:22 NKJV*).

According to the above information it is inappropriate to translate these Greek terms as “soon” or “shortly” because these are adverbs of time; whereas the actual Greek words are adverbs of manner. These statements in Revelation seem also to fit well with Jesus’ earlier statements concerning the **suddenness** or **unexpectedness** of his return for those who are not watchfully waiting for him.

eggus (pronounced *engus*) = *near, at hand* in the phrase “the time is near” as written at the beginning and the end of the book of Revelation i.e.:

- ❖ “Do not seal up *the words of the prophecy* of this book for **the time is near**” (*Rev. 22:10*).
- ❖ “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear *the words of this prophecy*, and heed the things written in it; for **the time is near**” (*Rev. 1:3*).

There is no reason to think that John uses the phrase “**the time is near**” in any way differently of the ancient Hebrew prophets whose words he alludes to in the Revelation e.g. “For the day of the Yahweh **is near** upon all the nations” (*Obadiah. v. 15*) and “...for the day of Yahweh *is coming*—**it is indeed near**.² A day of darkness and gloom...” (*Joel 2:1b, 2 LEB*).

Yet most of these types of prophecies were not going to be fulfilled until long after, and in some cases hundreds of years after, they were written. For the prophets the future was always viewed as imminent—they blended the near and distant perspectives so that their readers would take their message very seriously. John does the same. So to say it is *at hand* gives the reader a sense of tangibility.

melloo in 1:19, 3:10 = about to, on the point of, i.e.:

- ❖ “Write therefore the things you saw and the things which are and the things which **are about** to happen after these things” (*Rev. 1:19 UBS*).
- ❖ “I also will keep you from *the hour of testing*, that hour which **is about** to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (*Rev. 3:10 NASB*).

No such testing has yet come upon the whole world. However, Preterists attempt to circumvent this fact by saying that “the whole world” simply referred to Israel. (Please see Rev. 12:9 and 16:14 for events concerning “the whole world”). In fact the word *melloo* simply gives a sense of **inevitability**. So this term does not support the Preterist position that such things must have happened in A.D.70. The understanding and application of these Greek words has to take into account the rest of the biblical descriptions concerning Jesus’ return as well as Daniel’s, Joel’s and Zechariah’s end-time prophecies. Furthermore, it was after 70 A.D. that the letters of Clement and Barnabas and the writings of Justin Martyr showed that they were still looking forward to the return of Christ and the first resurrection.

Further Failings of Consistent Preterism

WHY WARN THE CORINTHIANS AND OTHERS?

If Paul was contemplating a fulfilment of Jesus’ words to be **upon Judea only**, then why did he write so many warnings of the coming “Day of the Lord” to the Christians in other lands of up to a thousand miles away (Corinth). Such words would be meaningless to them.

NOT ALLEGORICAL

The Consistent Preterist system cannot work because, according to the Scriptures, the sun and moon will literally and supernaturally darken. Furthermore, Jesus will visibly return, which, of course, must be yet future. Please see Volume 5. STUDY 2. So Preterists are forced to interpret clear prophetic statements as **allegorical**.

THE REALITY OF KINGDOM CONDITIONS ON EARTH

If the Consistent Preterist view was right the world would be a very different place—a veritable paradise instead of experiencing the poverty, the starvation of millions and continuing serious wars.

NOT A MYSTICAL FIRST RESURRECTION

The Preterist system denies the biblical description of the first resurrection. Roman Catholicism first wrongly described the first resurrection as symbolic but this leads to several problems:

- The future first resurrection is based on the resurrection of Jesus which was that of his own actual body, yet changed to be imperishable and immortal.
- If the Preterist view was correct there would have been no more marriage for Christians since A.D. 70 (See Matt. 22:23, Mark 12:18 and Acts 23:8).
- In the Preterist system Christians since A.D. 70 have clearly missed out on the rewards promised to be given at the resurrection.

ISRAEL’S RETURN

If an A.D. 70 coming of Christ for judgment was to finally end the Jewish nation, why were they able to return to the land in 1948 and subsequently to prosper?

SATAN IS NOT CURRENTLY BOUND

Preterism would also have Christians believe that Satan is now bound because we are supposedly positioned in the symbolic 1,000 years. This brings the Christian’s guard down rather than his continuing to “resist the devil” (Jas. 4:7). Generally this system fosters a negative feeling toward or even a hatred of Jews.

The Long Wait until Christ Returns

- ❖ “But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master **is delaying his coming,**’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant **will come on a day when he is not looking for him** and at **an hour that he is not aware of...**” (*Matt. 24:48-51*).
- ❖ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a **far country**, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them” (*Matt. 25:14 also Mark 13:34*).
- ❖ “Then He began to tell the people this parable: “A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country **for a long time**” (*Luke 20:9*).
- ❖ “But while the bridegroom **was delayed**, they all slumbered and slept” (*Matt. 25:5*).
- ❖ “**After a long time** the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them” (*Matt. 25:19*).

Although Preterists emphasize a soon coming of Jesus in the 1st century, the above statements show that Jesus himself did not expect that to be the case. Although it is difficult to determine from the above texts just what Jesus meant by “**after a long time**” the following Scriptures indicate that the apostles were not expecting the return to be around A.D. 70:

- ❖ “Now, brethren, concerning *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come unless the falling away [“rebellion” ESV] comes first*, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (*2 Thess. 2:1-4 written c. 51/52 A.D.*).

The Roman army began its invasion of the area in A.D. 66 just 15 years after Paul’s letter. No significant rebellion against God occurred during those years. Neither was there sufficient time for the appearance of the antichrist who “sits as God in the temple of God.” (Please see above showing that Nero could not have fulfilled that role). So it would appear that Paul envisaged a return of Christ at least well after the A.D. 70 event. Peter’s words take the time of the return of Jesus even further into the future:

- ❖ “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, **3** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and **saying**, “**Where is the promise of His coming?** For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” ... **8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that **with the Lord one day is as a thousand years**, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but **is longsuffering toward us**, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (*2 Pet. 3:1-4, 8, 9 written c. 67/68 A.D.*).

Clearly from the time of the writing of this letter it is evident that Peter did not expect a very soon return of Christ; but rather that Christians were being admonished to look at things according to God’s time-scale wherein He is able to demonstrate His long-suffering and patience with all.

Jesus Did Not Begin to Reign at His Ascension

Messianic prophecies such as those in Isaiah 9:6 and Luke 1:32 foretell that Messiah will rule “*upon the throne of David.*” He (“one like a son of man”) also will, as “the star out of Jacob” and at a future time, be given the kingdom (Dan. 7:13; Num. 24:15). So Jesus is the one who will “restore the kingdom to Israel” in his Father’s due time (Acts 1:6). When time comes for the restoration of the kingdom a number of things will be evident:

- Restoration of the world begins at the return of Christ (Acts 3:20, 21).
- Jesus will be physically present **on his throne** on earth to judge the nations (Matt 25:31). This throne will not be God’s own throne in heaven.

- The resurrection of the faithful occurs at the time of Jesus' return. (2 Thess. 2:1).
- These ones will rule with Jesus (Matt 19:28).
- The kingdom will be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6).
- Messiah will rule the world "with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

SITTING ON GOD'S THRONE

- ❖ "Yahweh says to my Lord, "**Sit at my right hand**, *until* I make your enemies your footstool for your feet. Yahweh will send forth the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies" *(Ps. 110:1, 2 Word English Bible)*.
- ❖ "She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to **God and to his throne**" *(Rev. 12:5)*.

RESTORATION

- ❖ "...that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, **whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring** all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" *(Acts 3:20, 21)*.
- ❖ "After making purification for sins, he sat down **at the right hand of the Majesty on high**" *(Heb. 1:3)*.
- ❖ "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, **we do not yet see everything in subjection to him**. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" *(Heb. 2:8, 9 written about 30 years after Jesus' ascension)*.

So even by the time of the Roman march through Israel toward Jerusalem Jesus was still not king with "**everything in subjection to him.**"

TWO DIFFERENT THRONES

- ❖ "The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me **on my throne**, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father **on his throne**" *(Rev. 3:21)*.

SITTING ON THE THRONE OF DAVID

Psalm 110:1, 2 demonstrates that Messiah only sits on God's throne in heaven until the time to deal with his enemies. Acts 3:20, 21 shows "that times of refreshing may come" only when Jesus leaves his Father's throne. He is to stay on that throne "**until the time for restoring** all the things." This will involve the restoring of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). Evidently the messianic prophecies such as those in Isaiah 9:6 and Luke 1:32, which foretell that Messiah will rule "*upon the throne of David,*" are only to be fulfilled when Jesus leaves heaven and comes in his glory to earth:

- ❖ "When the Son of Man **comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him, then he will **sit on his glorious throne**" *(Matt. 25:31)*.
- ❖ "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and **the authority of his Christ have come**"" *(Rev. 12:10)*.

This statement clearly could not be fulfilled until after the mid-90s A.D. when the Revelation was written. Most importantly when Jesus begins his reign sitting on the throne of David as Israel's rightful king it will be very evident because his rule will be with an iron rod:

- ❖ "The Lord is at your right hand. He will crush kings in the day of his wrath. He will judge among the nations. He will heap up dead bodies. He will crush the ruler of the whole earth" *(Ps. 110:5, 6 Word English Bible)*.

This event will make the Roman destruction of Jerusalem pale into insignificance by comparison. Hence the warning to the kings of the earth at that future time:

- ❖ "The kings of the earth take a stand, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh, and against his Anointed saying, "Let's break their bonds apart, and cast their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens will laugh. The Lord will have them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his anger, and terrify them in

his wrath: “Yet I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion.” I will tell of the decree. Yahweh said to me, “You are my son. Today I have become your father. Ask of me, and I will give the nations for your inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Now therefore **be wise, you kings**. Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Give sincere homage to the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him” (*Ps. 2. Word English Bible*).

The real future installation of Jesus as king will be, not an invisible affair and with only events occurring in Israel as it was in A.D. 70, but an earth-wide and visibly dramatic time.

Key Reasons Why Consistent Preterism is Unbiblical

- 1) The **Amillennial** interpretation to avoid a future 1,000 year reign of Jesus is an unbiblical scheme (see STUDY 1).
- 2) The prophecies in Scripture should not be subjected to **allegorical** interpretation.
- 3) Although Consistent Preterists correctly acknowledge that Jesus’ return, the first resurrection, the attack upon Jerusalem, and the establishment of the kingdom are all in very close proximity of time in the Scriptural description, yet under their scheme they are then obliged to make the **return of Jesus**, the **first resurrection** and the **kingdom** all **invisible** because it is evident that these events have not yet literally occurred. (Please see Volume 4, STUDY 2).

NOTE: This aspect is also true of the JW explanations.

- 4) There is faulty explanation given to all the Preterist so-called **proof texts**.
- 5) There is **significant mismatch** between the historical A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the details of the end-time prophecies.
- 6) From both internal and external evidence **the date of writing the book of Revelation** was long after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem in c.96 A.D.
- 7) **Nero** does not fit the description of **the Beast** of Revelation.
- 8) **The Roman emperors** do not fit the description of the **7 kings** in Revelation.
- 9) The Greek terms used in Revelation: *taXeî* (quickly), *en taXie* (with speed), *eggus* (near, at hand), *melloo* (about to) are **not chronological markers** but are qualitative.

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