

Why Partial Preterism Is a Faulty Approach to Prophecy

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The Partial Preterist approach views 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.

INTERPRETATIONS:

- “The Beast” was Nero.
- “The false prophet” was the Jewish leadership.
- “The Great Harlot” was Jerusalem.
- The Great Apostasy concerned Israel only and was only up to A.D. 70. (The term *antichrist* describes this apostasy).
- The “last days” concerned Israel only and ended in A.D. 70 with the Great Tribulation.
- Israel is completely replaced by the Church and has no further future.
- New Jerusalem is the church.
- The 1000 years—a large undefined period which began at Jesus’ first advent.

The Factors in Common with Consistent Preterism

All noted and answered in the previous study

THE PROOF TEXTS

The Preterist interpretations of Matthew 10:23, 16:27, 28, 24:34; Luke 17:20-21 NKJV; John 12:31-33 are incorrect.

REASONS WHY THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS NOT PRETERIST

1. The theme of Revelation concerns the second coming of Christ.
2. Internal and external evidence shows the Revelation was written in about **96 A.D.**:
3. **The genre** of the book of Revelation is mainly **prophecy** rather than entirely *apocalyptic*.
4. The Greek words:
 - *taxos, taxu, en taxei* are **qualitative indicators** e. g. *speedily, quickly* (adverbs of manner) and *with speed* (adverbial phrase of manner) rather than **chronological texts** i.e. *soon/shortly* (adverbs of time) propose by Preterists.
 - *eggus* = *near, at hand* is used the same way the ancient Hebrew prophets used it i.e. the prophecies were not going to be fulfilled until long after they were written. So these terms were used so that each reader would take their message very seriously by giving him/her a sense of tangibility.
 - *meloo* in 1:19, 3:10 = *about to, on the point of*. This simply gives a sense of **inevitability** rather than being a **chronological marker** for A.D.70.

THE HISTORICAL A.D. 70 DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

This does not correspond to the details in the end-time prophecies. Please see STUDY 2.

Partial Preterism is a Compromise

Partial Preterism is a compromise between Consistent Preterism and Futurism. However, their version of Futurism is not usually the clear apostolic teaching that is today called Classical Pre-Millennial Futurism (Please see STUDY 6), but rather a Post-Millennialist understanding (Please see STUDY 1). Nevertheless the main emphasis is on a past fulfilment.

THE DISCIPLES’ QUESTION

- ❖ “Tell us, when will (1) these things happen [*destruction of the temple*] and (2) what will be the sign of your coming and (3) of the end of the age” (*Matt. 24:3*).

In Matthew 23:38 and 39 Jesus linked the destruction of the Jerusalem temple with his return. In the disciples question of Matthew 24:3 they associate Jesus' return with "*the end of the age*" because it is **a single sign** for his return and the end of the age that they enquire about. So these three events are locked together in the same time-frame and so must occur in the same period with Jesus returning at the end of the age when the temple is destroyed. So either the end of the age came in A.D. 70 (Consistent Preterism) or Jesus is yet to return immediately following the destruction of a future temple (Futurism). This cannot be Partial Preterism. So the *Word Biblical commentary* Vol. 34b p. 305 says:

Jesus' teaching about the end of the age, which is *closely related to the fate of Jerusalem* and her temple, seems to have been brought up to date during the turbulent and uncertain 50s and 60s. But these parallels are not so close as to require that Jesus' sayings be seen either as generated by these events **or as fulfilled in them.**

So Partial Preterism is a self-contradictory theory because it takes a time-frame which it views as concerning only the first century and says that all these events must have been fulfilled in A.D.70, but then negates that very time-frame by placing one of those events, namely, the second coming, beyond the deadline that they have set for all the events.

To overcome this problem some Partial Preterists propose the idea that there are two second comings, an idea which is completely unscriptural. Furthermore, this idea is based on circular reasoning by making an assumption to support a failed theory.

1 & 2 Thessalonians Still Have a Future Fulfilment But Was the Olivet Discourse Fulfilled in A.D. 70?

Please see STUDY 2 which shows that the A.D. 70 invasion of Judea does not fit with Jesus' statements in the Olivet discourse. This Partial Preterist proposal cannot work because many of the details in the Olivet discourse are restated in the letters to the Thessalonians. This shows that neither can be separated but must take place within the same time frame.

PRELUDE TO JESUS' RETURN

1. Abomination in holy place (Matt. 24:15) / Man of lawlessness in temple (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).
2. Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21) / Retribution (1 Thess. 1:10, 2 Thess. 1:8).
3. False wonders and signs (Matt. 24:24) / False wonders and signs from Satan (2 Thess. 2:9).
4. False prophets/deceivers (Matt. 24:4ff) / False teachers/deceivers (2 Thess. 2:2).
5. Rebellion precedes return (Matt. 24:10) / Rebellion precedes return (2 Thess. 2:3).
6. Sense of complacency (Matt. 24:37-39, 48-51) / Peace and safety cry (1 Thess. 5:3).
7. Destruction comes unexpectedly (Matt. 24:39) / Destruction unexpectedly (1 Thess. 5:3).

JESUS RETURNS

- The sign of your coming (Matt. 24:3) / When the Lord comes (1 Thess. 4:15, 2 Thess. 2:1).
- Jesus is visible like lightning (Matt. 24:27) / Jesus visible in blazing fire (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).
- With angels (Matt. 25:31) / with angels (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

1. Son of man (24:30) / Lord himself (4:16).
2. Clouds of heaven (24:30) / air (4:17).
3. Great sound of a trumpet (24:31) / the trumpet of God (4:16).
4. Gather together (24:31) / caught away together (4:17).
5. Know that summer is near (24:32) / times and the seasons (5:1).
6. Marrying, then flood came (24:38) / safety then destruction (5:3).
7. Watch (24:42) / stay awake and keep our senses (5:6).
8. Known in what watch the thief was coming (24:43) / thief in the night (5:4).

Evidently Paul wrote about the same subject in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5 that Jesus had earlier spoken of in Matthew 24 and 25, namely the time of the end which culminates in the resurrection when Christians are gathered together by the angels to meet Jesus.

Revelation Still Has a Future Fulfilment but Was the Olivet Discourse Fulfilled in A.D. 70?

There are some Partial Preterists who try to separate the Olivet discourse as having been fulfilled in A.D. 70 from the, as yet to be fulfilled, prophecies in the Book of Revelation. However, this, too, is not possible because:

- There is a tight connection between Jesus' words in Matthew 24:29 and the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17 which is about the dramatic and miraculous darkening of the sun, moon and stars.
- This event in the Olivet prophecy is entirely literal in this prophetic context and so must be the same entirely literal event that is portrayed in Revelation 6. Yet Preterists are reduced to **allegorizing** the details of Matthew 24 to make it fit their A.D. 70 theory.
- This event concerns the wrath of God and "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:16, 17). Preterists reduce this wrath to only falling upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by means of the Roman army; whereas Revelation says: "I will keep you from *the hour of trial* that is coming on ***the whole world*** (Lit. *All the inhabited earth*)" (Rev. 3:10).
- The descriptions of these cosmic events were first recorded by a number of Old Testament prophets who linked them with "the day of Yahweh"—"the day of God's wrath." e. g. Isaiah 13:9-13, Joel 2:10, 11).

So, however Partial Preterists try to break up New Testament prophecy in their attempt to make the Olivet discourse refer to the A.D. 70 event, it just will not fit the biblical data.

JESUS DID NOT BEGIN TO REIGN AT HIS ASCENSION

This aspect of the Messianic prophecies and fulfilment is covered in the previous study on Consistent Preterism.

Key Problems with Partial Preterism

Although Partial Preterists correctly acknowledge that Jesus' return is a future visible return along with a future resurrection/rapture, they fail to realize that the **Great Tribulation, return of Jesus and the attack upon Jerusalem are foretold to be in relatively close proximity of time.**

- Jesus links "***the end of the age***" (Matt. 24:3, 13, 14) with the event of "***the Abomination of desolation***" [*Man of Lawlessness*] which Christians will "**see.**" Because the "end of the age" has not yet occurred and "the Abomination of desolation" is shown in Daniel 9 to appear in the last half of the 70th *seven* this period must be yet future.
- The rapid fire eschatological events described by Jesus in the Olivet discourse show that Jesus' return will follow "***immediately after***" the Great Tribulation that will be triggered by the setting up of "***the Abomination of desolation.***" Hence both events must be yet future if one is to believe that Jesus will return visibly.