

Applying the Touchstone and Lodestar of *Scripture* To The Morassy Foundation and Principles of *Preterism*

Chapter 1

Introduction

What Is Preterism?

INTRODUCTION

The Preterist theory (from the Latin for *past*), or “70ADism” (widely held especially among those who espouse some form of Postmillennialism or Christian Reconstructionism/Theonomy/Dominion Theology), views all prophecy, or virtually all prophecy, touching the Second Coming of Christ and the results thereof, as *having already been “fulfilled”* as of, or in, 70AD—in connection with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Robert L. Thomas provides a helpful summary of the Preterist theory and its leading advocates today:

“Recently R. C. Sproul has adopted a view that Greg Bahnsen held before his death, namely, that most of Jesus’ predictions about his future coming referred to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the events leading up to it. The position understands the ‘soon’ of Revelation 1:1 in light of Matthew 24:34 where Jesus promised, ‘This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.’ ***It accepts Jesus’ teaching of an imminent return, but also stipulates a time limit within which the predicted events must occur, a limit that came in forty years.***”

“Sproul . . . has noted regarding Matthew 24:34 that ‘this generation’ limits the period during which Jesus’ coming must transpire to thirty or forty years, a limitation similar to that of Gentry. DeMar follows essentially the same approach regarding the meaning of ‘this generation,’ as does Mathison.

“The above-named individuals fall into the camp of ***moderate or partial preterism***. Because of a few passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4, they support the teaching of a future resurrection and kingdom. They distance themselves from ***full or plenary preterism***, which has no place for a future bodily resurrection in its doctrinal system. Sproul, Gentry, and company do allow for a future bodily resurrection and kingdom in the eternal state.”—Robert L. Thomas (“The Place of Imminence in Recent Eschatological Systems,” pp. 201-202, in *Looking into the Future: Evangelical Studies in Eschatology*, Edited by David W. Baker. Baker Academic, 2001) [Emphasis mine.]

Ice and Demy give some further clarification:

“The preterists teach that most, if not all, prophecy has already been fulfilled. They argue that major prophetic portions of Scripture (such as the Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation) were fulfilled in events surrounding the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They believe they are compelled to take such a view because Matthew 24:34 and its parallel passages say that ‘this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.’ They argue that this means it had to take place in the first century. Revelation, they advocate, says something similar in the passages that say Christ is coming ‘quickly’ or that His return is ‘at hand.’ Having settled in their minds that these prophecies had to take place in the first

century, they believe they are justified in making the rest of the language fit into a local (Jerusalem), instead of a worldwide, fulfillment.”

“**Moderate preterists** believe that almost all prophecy was fulfilled in the A.D. 70 event, but they believe that a few passages still teach a *future* second coming [**actually a third coming, according to their scheme**] (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

“**Extreme preterists**, or *consistent* preterists as they prefer to be known, believe that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. **They believe that if there is a [yet] future second coming the Bible doesn't talk about it.**”—Thomas Ice & Timothy Demy (*Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy*, pp. 154-155. Harvest House, 1997) [Emphasis mine.]

The “moderate”/“partial” Preterist holds to a Second Coming of Christ in 70AD according to a non-literal, non-personal, non-physical manner—i.e., as a *providential coming in judgment* in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. Whereas the “extreme”/“full” Preterist claims to hold to a literal (!), personal, physical Second Coming of Christ in, or immediately after, the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, with *all* prophetic truth “fulfilled” at that time; and, as such, it has, e.g., “no place for a future bodily resurrection in its doctrinal system.” This latter brand of Preterism is especially of one spirit with those two men whom the apostle Paul strongly denounced—those *incipient* and *archetypal* preterizers: “*Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who concerning the truth went astray, saying that the resurrection hath already taken place, and overthrow the faith of some.*” (2 Tim. 2:17b-18). Too, Preterism is inherently a *date-setting* scheme—a *preterized* date-setting scheme—as to the Second Coming of Christ, and ought to be denounced on that score as well, as should the date-setting schemes of those who peddle a *counterfeit version* of Futurism.

Within the confines of this relatively short paper, *the four key passages* of scripture which Preterism (of all stripes) relies upon for the *very life-blood* of its theory will be taken up: namely, Matt.24:34, Matt.10:23, Matt. 16:28, and Matt. 26:64. As the Lord enables, some of the issues and insurmountable problems involved in its *isolated* (2 Pet. 1:20), *pseudo-literal*, *eisegesis* of these four key texts will be exposed, and the only scripturally tenable view of each passage will be set forth. Further, certain other so-called “time” references in the NT will be touched on—such as *at hand, near, quickly, shortly, soon*—which Preterists point to as supposedly lending support to their theory, but the true bearing of which they completely miss and distort, given their failure to grasp the true nature and position of God’s *heavenly* people in Christ Jesus, the Church—His heavenly Body and Bride—and the resulting *expectant posture* in which she has been divinely placed and of which she ought always give true heart-expression: toward the *imminent (possible at any moment)* coming of her Beloved to take her everlastingly unto Himself to the Father’s house (*Pre-Tribulational/Pre-70th Week Rapture*).

Before delving into these specifics, however, some preliminary remarks are in order—which are designed as a more general or broad refutation of the Preterist theory, but which will also serve for groundwork and bulwark later on. (And please note: there will be some unavoidable repetition involved in taking up Matt.16:28, Matt. 24:34, Matt. 10:23, and Matt. 26:64 respectively; for many of the same scriptural facts, principles, and arguments apply to all of them. Repetition and reinforcement are not necessarily bad things!)

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