

# Is Jesus Coming Again?

## Preterism - An Overview in the Light of the Bible

Tom Smith, Latest update Aug 20, 2007

### Introduction

Many who are reading this document for the first time consider the return of Jesus to be such a certainty that they are probably wondering why this question would even be asked. The reason is that belief in the future return of Christ is not accepted by everyone in the church. In many Christian circles, there is nothing that can get a heated debate going faster than to bring up the topic of eschatology, which to Biblical scholars simply means the study and interpretation of Biblical prophecy with respect to the end times or the second coming of Jesus. During this session, we will be reviewing what the Bible says about the coming return of Christ, and where those who deny His future return have gone astray of what God has revealed in His word.

First, let briefly review four of the key schools of thought regarding Biblical prophecy. They are:

**Futurism:** Futurism believes that those things identified in the last days as surrounding or preceding the final judgment and the return of Christ are future events. A good overview of futurism as it relates to eschatology is found here :

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism\\_%28Christian\\_eschatology%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurism_%28Christian_eschatology%29)

**Historicism:** A belief system which holds that prophecies such as found in Revelation have been fulfilled over the past 2000 years. A good overview of historicism as it relates to eschatology is found here : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism\\_%28Christian\\_eschatology%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism_%28Christian_eschatology%29) .

**Polemicism:** The belief that revelation only given to Christian to encourage them during time of persecution.

And finally, the last one and the focus of this session is the school of thought called "Preterism".

**Preterism:** Preterists in general believe that all prophecy was fulfilled in part or in whole at or before 70 AD. A good overview of Preterism is found here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism>

There two types of Preterists - one called full or consistent ( [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism#Full\\_Preterism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism#Full_Preterism) ) and the other is partial Preterism ( [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism#Partial\\_Preterism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism#Partial_Preterism) ). The key difference is that while "full" or "consistent" Preterists believe that all prophecy was finally fulfilled in the 70AD timeframe, including the return of Jesus, "partial" or "moderate" Preterists typically believe that Christ's second advent was not fulfilled in 70 AD (and may also exclude other selective prophetic events as well.).

Page 1 of 17

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Partial Preterists believe that Jesus returned in 70 AD, spiritually, but will also have another physical return in the future.

In this examination of Preterism, we will be spending the majority of our focus on the second coming of Jesus, and an examination from scripture regarding the arguments used by the Preterists to suggest that we are wrong to expect that Jesus is coming again.

What does the Bible say about the second coming of Jesus? As with any doctrinal evaluation, there is only one place to go to find the absolute truth by which to test any argument and that is in God's Holy word.

There are two primary texts that I plan to deal with in this regard, Matthew Chapters 24-25 and Luke Chapter 21, though I will also be looking at texts in other areas of the Bible also.

### Timing of His Coming

One of the key arguments and indeed a critical factor for Preterism is the argument that Jesus returned in 70AD (see also Appendix "A"). Let's look first at Matthew 10, verses 22 to 23:

*Matt 10:22-23*

*22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

*NKJV*

Preterists argue that this was fulfilled because of Col 1:23

*Col 1:23*

*23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

*NKJV*

They therefore promote the idea that the whole world was reached with the gospel before the book of Colossians was written around the 53-56AD timeframe. For this to be true, the reference to every creature must be restricted to only those persons around the Israel. However, then we have a problem with Matthew 24:14, which reads:

*Matt 24:14*

*14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

*NKJV*

Notice that this passage says that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached into *“all the world”*. Now some will say that means that Roman Empire or some other subset of the world, yet Matthew goes on to tell us that he means *“all nations”*. That is much harder to restrict to a small area around Israel or even the Roman Empire. Did Jesus come that only those in the Roman Empire might be saved?

John 3:16 says:

*John 3:16-17*

*16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*NKJV*

It really does not make much sense to say that God only loved those controlled by the Roman Empire and indeed such a concept would be entirely foreign to scripture. No, He came that whosoever believes upon Him shall have eternal life. All men are under the condemnation of sin and all men have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), therefore God, out of His love for all mankind, sent Jesus (God in the flesh 1 Tim 3:16) to die on the cross to pay the price for our sins.

What then is the context of Matthew 10:23? If we look at Matt 10:23 in context, we see something much different. Verse 22 says that when they persecute them in one city they should flee to another and that that will not have gone over all the cities of Israel until the Son of man come. This is in the context of persecution, not in the context of spreading the gospel. When does this occur? We have some indication if we look earlier in the same section of the chapter:

*Matt 10:16-23*

*16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

*NKJV*

This did not happen to the apostles. None of this happened at that point in time. These things did happen to Jesus but not to the apostles. What we see in this passage is an indication of the persecution to come upon the believers in the last days but clearly not prior to the writing of the

Page 3 of 17

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book of Colossians.

Another argument that they give to suggest that Jesus had to return in the 1<sup>st</sup> century is found in Matthew Chapter 16, verses 27 and 28, and Luke 9:27. I will read from the Matthew 16:

*Matt 16:27-28*

*27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."*

*NKJV*

Those who hold to the Preterist view believe that this refers to the second coming, but Jesus does not say that. He says that there are some who will still be alive when he comes in his kingdom. When Jesus defeated death and was resurrected, he took His place at the right hand of the Father, and was in His kingdom with all things subject to Him.

*1 Peter 3:21-22*

*21 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 **who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.***

*NKJV*

*(emphasis is mine)*

These same apostles would have seen Jesus dead, and then resurrected in His glorified body, and subsequently lifted up unto heaven before their eyes. They had not tasted death prior to that event. Yet there is a return of Christ - that return will come in the last days, after the prophecies given in scripture regarding the persecution and tribulation have been fulfilled as we see in the Bible, and then Jesus shall return the same way as He left, and every eye shall see Him.

*Matt 24:34*

*34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

*NKJV*

Often this verse is taken out of context or mis-understood.

*Matt 24:32-35*

*32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but*

Page 4 of 17

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*My words will by no means pass away.*  
NKJV

Note that Jesus is giving the signs of the end, and points out that though we cannot know specifically when the end will occur, when we see these signs all come to pass, we know the season and that not everyone of that generation will die before Jesus returns.

### Short Timeframe

Another argument is that the Bible appears to suggest that the events will happen in a short timeframe. For example

*1 Peter 4:7*  
*7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*  
NKJV

*Rev 22:12*  
*12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*  
NKJV

These terms however are not exacting terms, so to understand these terms, we need to look at them in the context of scripture, so let's spend some time to look at what the Bible does say about the events of the last days and when they will occur.

What are the clues which are provided in scripture that the Day of Judgment would come long after the period of time? Here is at least a partial list:

## **1. The Timing of the Final Judgment**

The final judgment, which is described in Matthew 25:31-46 is shown in Rev chapter 20 as following a thousand year rule of Jesus on earth.

*Rev 20:4-6*  
*4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

NKJV

*Rev 20:7-9*

*7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison  
8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth,  
Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of  
the sea.*

NKJV

*Rev 20:11-13*

*11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth  
and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the  
dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another  
book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to  
their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

NKJV

For the final judgment to have occurred in 70AD, we would have to accept that the revelation to John was in error, and that the thousand years must now be shortened to the less than 40 year span of time between Jesus' resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem. And that the rule of Jesus would have to happen without Jesus being in control during that period of time.

Further, we would have to accept that despite the fact that the millennial rule has Satan bound and unable to deceive the nations, that during that 40 yr time span, and yet we see the apostles warning the church about the deception of Satan over and over again. Why would this be an issue if Satan were bound and all prophecy were fulfilled in 70AD?

## **2. The Signs of the Last Days**

In the Book of Matthew, chapters 24 and 25 and in Luke 21, we have a detailed list of the signs that we should expect to see in the Last Days:

What are those things which scripture says will come before his return? Let's briefly look at the events of Matthew 24 and Luke 21. In Matthew 24 we see Jesus predicting the destruction of the temple which we know did occur in 70 AD when the Rome took the city of Jerusalem.

*Matt 24:1-2*

*24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

NKJV

But then the disciples ask a different question in verse 3 of Matthew 24:

*Matt 24:3*

*3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

NKJV

They ask about the end of the age. Preterists will tell you that vs 1-2 and the remainder of Chapters 24 and 25 speak of the same timeframe, and Jesus carries on to answer this new question. Also note that there was a break in this discussion. The discussion about the destruction of the temple took place at the temple as we are told in vs 1, and then vs 3, we see that he is 1-2 km away from the temple on the Mount of Olives. We are not told what discussion took place in-between, but what we do know is that there is a break between vs 2 and vs 3. Preterists typically ignore this break.

Let's read on:

*Matt 24:4-6*

*4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.*

NKJV

The first sign is that there will be false Christs, and there will be wars and rumours of wars. There have likely never been more people claiming to be Christ or to falsely claim to come in His name than since the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further, the most destructive wars of all history have taken place in this past century.

Preterists will tell us that this refers solely to the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the wars and rumours of wars speaks to the timeframe of the few years just prior to the fall of Jerusalem. But even if we were to accept that argument, they still missed what Jesus said, because in the next line, Jesus says:

*Matt 24:6-7*

*See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

NKJV

So these signs would not be signs of the end, but rather the beginning of sorrows. Then we see more signs of the end times:

*Matt 24:9-13*

*9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

*NKJV*

The gospel will be preached but people will turn away from it. Instead, they will turn to false teachers and false prophets. Look around today, false prophets are on the news on a frequent basis. False prophets do deceive many - we need only look at the Mormon church following the false prophet Joseph Smith, and the Jehovah Witnesses following the teachings of the false prophet Charles T. Russell. But more recently we have false prophets and false teachers like Jim Jones and David Koresh, and indeed we could include men like Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland, amongst many others.

Skipping ahead to verses 23-27, we see that these false prophets will do amazing things:

*Matt 24:23-27*

*23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

*NKJV*

*(emphasis is mine)*

These false prophets will do amazing signs and wonders and deceive, if possible even the elect. That puts to rest the argument by some that Christians cannot be deceived. Jesus warned in Matthew 7

*Matt 7:21-23*

*21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

*NKJV*



He does not say that they cannot do signs and wonders, but rather he shows that not everyone who calls His name and does great signs and wonders is a follower of the true Jesus. Many today will tell you that anyone who says that they follow Jesus is a Christian. But Jesus himself in these verses disputed that.

Why would these false prophets be able to deceive the very elect? Not because they come in the name of Satan, but because they come in the name of Jesus, yet teach a false gospel. If they did not attempt to counterfeit the truth, it would not be deceptive to Christians. We even see today many who profess Christ will accept Mormonism as simply another denomination despite the fact that their theology has little in common with true Christianity, simply because they use the name of Jesus. Yet despite these false teachers, vs 14 says that the gospel will be preached as a witness to all nations. Only in this generation has that even been possible.

Let's read again verses 26-27:

*Matt 24:26-27*

*26 Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*  
*NKJV*

This tells us that his coming will not be hidden. Indeed if we skip ahead again a few more verses, we see that his coming will not be quiet or hidden, but will be something seen and known to all people:

*Matt 24:30-31*

*30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*  
*NKJV*

Acts 1, where we see the ascension of Jesus into heaven says the same thing:

*Acts 1:9-11*

*9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him*

*go into heaven."*  
NKJV

Revelation 1:7 says that every eye will see Him:

*Rev 1:6-7*  
*7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.*  
NKJV

Yet the Preterists tell us that Jesus came in 70AD and we should not expect him to return again. They tell us that he came invisibly, the same thing that the Jehovah Witnesses tell us. Yet scripture is abundantly clear that His coming will not be hidden and will not be something that anyone will miss.

We went ahead a bit in order to show the details around Jesus return, but let's now return back to vs 15 to pick where we left off earlier:

*Matt 24:15-22*  
*15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*  
NKJV

A great tribulation unlike anything before or after. Verse 22 goes on to tell us that...

*Matt 24:22-23*  
*22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*  
NKJV

This event will be of enormous significance historically. Nothing like it before or after. The Preterists tell us that this occurred in 70AD because the destruction of Jerusalem was an important part of the redemption of mankind. They say that even the holocaust, or the atomic bombs do not compare to the Roman armies' destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. They tell us that not even the first or second world wars are comparable to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

Let's move on and look at verse 29:

*Matt 24:29*

*29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

*NKJV*

Again, historically this has not occurred. When will it happen? Verse 36 tells us that we do not know the time or place, but we are told that we will know the timeframe or the season:

*"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

So the generation that sees these signs will be the generation that will witness the second coming of Christ. Since these did not all occur in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Jesus could not have returned in 70AD as claimed by Preterists.

Reading on, we see that Matthew 24 leads into Matthew 25 where the final judgment occurs:

*Matt 25:31-33*

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

*NKJV*

Every man is to be judged according to Revelation 22:

*Rev 22:12-13*

*12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

*NKJV*

How could every man be judged in 70AD according to His work? Not all men had even been born at that point in time. This judgment must occur much later in time, not in 70AD. In addition to that, the judgment according to the Preterists fell only upon the Jews and

specifically in Jerusalem. That represents quite a limited view of a judgment of all men. Are those who did not live in Jerusalem in 70AD spared judgment? Not according to scripture.

Jeremiah 30 has something to tell us about events at this time:

*Jer 30:7-9*  
*7 Alas! For that day is great,*  
*So that none is like it;*  
*And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,*  
*But he shall be saved out of it.*

*8'For it shall come to pass in that day,'*  
*Says the LORD of hosts,*  
*'That I will break his yoke from your neck,*  
*And will burst your bonds;*  
*Foreigners shall no more enslave them.*  
*9 But they shall serve the LORD their God,*  
*And David their king,*  
*Whom I will raise up for them.*  
*NKJV*

The time of Jacob's trouble is the tribulation in the New Testament prophecies, which Preterists tell us occurred in the timeframe of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Yet Jeremiah tells us that they (the Jews) will be saved out of it, they will serve the Lord their God and that foreigners will not longer enslave them. None of this can be said to be true of Jerusalem, Israel or the Jews after 70AD. Indeed, only in the past century have we started to see large numbers of Jews accepting Jesus as their Messiah, and certainly no one can claim that the Jews have not been subject to enslavement of foreigners for the last nearly 2000 years. Quite the contrary.

There are many other questions too which we cannot go through in detail, but which Preterism is unable to answer, for example:

- Where is the mark of the beast in 70AD? (Rev 16:2, Rev 19:20)
- The attack on Jerusalem was one nation, not all the nations (Rev 19:19, Ps 2:2, Zech 12:9)
- During the great tribulation, 2/3 of the Jewish population will perish - under Hitler, this was about 1/3
- 200 Million man army? (Rev 9:16)
- If it was already fulfilled, why the rebirth of the nation of Israel now? Why is Jerusalem a burden as was predicted in scripture? (Zech 12)
- Mount of Olives split in two? (Zech 14:4)

Preterists look at this same verse in Rev 22:12 and they read:

*And behold, I am coming quickly*

And other verses which appear to imply a short timeframe, and insist that these verses mean that it must be within the lifetime of those living in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. But that timeframe is from God's perspective, which is not always the same as ours. For example, let's look at the book of Haggai:

*Hag 2:6-7*

*6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: "Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory," says the LORD of hosts.*

*NKJV*

How long is a “little while”?

Haggai was written about 500 BC and Jesus, “the desire of all nations” referred to by this prophecy, did not come until 500 years later. That is what God called “a little while”. So we need to be careful about trying to quantify these terms within our timeframe, but rather let's look to what God has to say with respect to the specifics of the timing of these events.

### **3. The Testimony of Scripture**

2 Thess 2:2 tells us that the second coming is not coming immediately:

*2 Thess 2:1-4*

*2:1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 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. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 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.*

*NKJV*

The reference translated as “though the day of the Lord had come” carries with it the sense from the Greek that the day of the Lord is not at hand, or the near future, but things will continue for some time as they now are at the time it was spoken.

Further, Paul goes on to state that before this can happen, that the anti-Christ must come first, thus putting a restriction on how soon it will be before the events of last days will occur.

Paul refers in verse 3 to the “falling away” which refers to a widespread apostasy, and that is a reference to the church turning away from the truth. I believe that this is the same time that Paul refers to when he writes to Timothy:

*2 Tim 4:2-4*

*3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

*NKJV*

We can see here how Paul is warning about the same apostasy as he spoke about in 2 Thess 2. Paul also gives a similar warning in 1 Tim 4:1-3.

*1 Tim 4:1-3*

*4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

*NKJV*

Lets now take a look at Luke 21:20-24 which again tells us about the timing of the last days events.

*Luke 21:20-24*

*20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

*NKJV*

This passage and others speak of a timeframe during which the Jews will be spread throughout the world, until the times of gentiles are over. Clearly, this speaks of a much longer timeframe and in hindsight, we can see that that timeframe has continue for the last 2000 years.

The basic idea of Preterism is that all prophecy was fulfilled. Though some may hold to a partial Preterist position which allows for some future events, the essence of Preterism is the belief that prophecy has been fulfilled. With respect to the full or consistent Preterists view, that means that

they believe that what we have today is as good as it gets. Satan is bound and deceives the nations no more.

To the contrary...scripture clearly teaches that we have a coming hope, the coming return of the Messiah. We know this because we can believe what God says in His word to be true. We know that before His coming we will see the signs and thus we know of His return.

Signs such as:

- the falling away from the truth and apostasy in the church
- False christs
- the revelation of the man of sin, the anti-christ
- the great tribulation
- signs in the sky

and the return of Israel as a nation - a nation which was, as prophecy said, created in a single day, culminating in the ultimate sign, the return of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, who will return as He left, riding on a cloud, coming so that every eye will see Him, so that there is no doubt whatsoever who is or that he has returned.

We also know that after His return, we can expect to see the direct rule of Christ on earth during the millennium, a millennium which will not be filled with greed, murder, deception, cults, pornography and rebellion, but in which Satan is no longer able to deceive or promote rebellion until the 1000 years is up, at the end of which he finds his final resting place in the bottomless pit, and we who are saved through Jesus sacrifice on the cross will spend eternity with God.

We can look around now and start to see the seasons change, we can see that some of the signs are beginning to happen, and we therefore know are in the last days and that soon we will be able to look up and see Him return, for we know that our redemption draweth nigh.

### Bibliography

- 1) Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by Permission. All rights reserved.
- 2) The Most High God : A Commentary on the Book of Daniel, Dr. Renald Showers, Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

# Appendix "A"

## Arguments/Rebuttals Regarding Early Date for Book of Revelation

### Introduction

It is critical for those who hold to the Preterist position to hold to an early (before 70 AD) date for the writing of the book of Revelation. If the book of Revelation was written after 70 AD, then a pivotal point of the doctrine that requires that the Jews were rejected with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD as described in the book of Revelation falls, because the book of Revelation deals with Israel, Jerusalem and the temple. If the book was written after 70 AD, then these events must be in the future, and thus there must be a restoration of Israel. The reason for this is that the Preterists believe that all prophecy regarding the return of Christ was fulfilled in 70 AD at the destruction of Jerusalem, and if in fact the book of Revelation was written afterward, then it must refer events which were to occur, not at 70AD, but sometime after 96 AD.

The following are some key arguments in favour of the 70 AD date that have been put forward to in my discussions with those who hold to the 70AD date, along with rebuttals. As you will see, most or all the arguments in favour of the 70AD date depend upon assuming the validity of the 70AD date first, and thus fall into the logical fallacy of circular arguments.

1) Jerusalem is spoken of in Revelation as still standing. It would have been destroyed after 70 AD.

**Rebuttal:** *This is only an issue if you assume that Revelation is referring to the timeframe around the first century and not a future timeframe during which Jerusalem is re-built. Since we can look on a map and see that Jerusalem is alive and well today, this is not a problem or an issue. Further, the most reliable external source that we have to establish the date of the writing of Revelation is Irenaeus who specifically places it during the reign of Domitian, which would place the writing of the book in the range of AD 90-95.*

2) Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of 70 weeks after which Jerusalem would be destroyed and that period would "seal up the vision and prophecy", and thus all special revelation would cease. If that is true, then there would be no Revelation after 70 AD.

### **Rebuttal:**

*1) The part of Daniel referred to here refers not to 70 years, but to 70 weeks, which is interpreted as weeks of years, and thus would be 7 times 70 years, or 490 years. This interpretation is backed up by Daniel where the last half of the last week is described as 1290 days, or 3.5 years. This represents half a week of years, not half a year (Daniel 9:27 refers to the half week of years, Daniel 12:11 refers to 1290 days).*



2) Daniel 9:26 says that after 62 weeks, the anointed one will be cut off. That would have put the crucifixion at 62 AD, not around 30 AD.

3) The verses referenced make no mention of the end of special revelation. The reference to the sealing of the words is in Daniel 12:9, in which he says that the meaning of the words in this book (Daniel) are to be shut up or sealed until the time of the end. If I were to use the interpretation given, that would mean special revelation stops in 70 AD and starts during the end times.

3) Emperor Nero is mentioned as being alive because Revelation refers to the 7 kings (Rev 17), and says that the current king is the 5th, Caesar, Augustus, Tiberus, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba and Vespasian being the 7 kings.

**Rebuttal:** This requires assumptions again with respect to the timeframe and the meanings of the 7 kings. Kings in scripture typically or frequently refers to nations, not a lineage of specific rulers of a single nation. The context of Rev 17 would suggest that this is the correct interpretation, since it is clear that there are another 10 kings who co-exist with "the beast". Interesting, Rev. 17 also refers to an "eighth king" who is "the beast", and belongs to the seven. This eighth king does not fit in well with the view that this occurred before AD 70, since there has to be found some way to have one of the previous emperors return (which didn't happen) and to fit it in before AD 70.

4) Rev 13:8 identifies the number of Nero's name in Hebrew, and is intended to be a further support of the previous point.

**Rebuttal:** The previous rebuttal shows that Nero was not the king mentioned in Revelation, therefore this is a moot point. However, the number 666 can also be found to apply to other names and therefore without some other solid reason to believe that it is Nero, and unless some other valid reason can be found to place this part of the Bible in the pre-AD70 timeframe, this point in and of itself would not be relevant.

5) John makes the point repeatedly that the great tribulation "must shortly come to pass" (Rev 1:1). The point made is that shortly must mean that it would happen in the timeframe of the writer.

**Rebuttal:** The short answer is that the word "shortly" can be different things in the context of scripture. Revelation 22:20 has Jesus saying that he is coming soon, and the context of that part of Revelation is the coming for the final judgment. That is a future event, and yet Jesus called it soon. That being the case, we cannot assume that "shortly" means the 1st century.