

# ***Full-Preterism Vs. Partial Preterism***

Notes by Steve Gregg

## **I. Why ANY kind of Preterism?**

- A. All Christians believe some prophecies have been fulfilled
- B. That Jesus' ministry placed emphasis on the impending (AD 70) events is indisputable (e.g., Mark 13:2; Luke 19:41-44)
- C. The question is whether the New Testament speaks of an additional judgment beyond AD 70
- D. Partial Preterism simply recognizes that some prophecies were about AD 70, but acknowledges that there are prophecies to be fulfilled in the future at Christ's coming.
- E. Full-Preterism believes all prophetic expectations came to pass no later than AD 70, including: The second coming; the resurrection/rapture; the Final Judgment; the end of Satan and demons; and the New Heaven and New Earth.

## **II. Origins of Full-Preterism**

In the centuries following the Reformation, numerous evangelical biblical scholars and theologians have recognized that AD 70 was a major turning point in history, and a significant event predicted in the New Testament.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, James Stuart Russell and Milton Terry wrote convincingly that AD 70, with the passing of the temple order and its replacement by the New Testament was not only a significant event predicted by Jesus and the apostles, but was the only "coming" (Gr. *Parousia*) of the Son of Man predicted in scripture. They interpreted virtually every prophecy of the "end" as referring to this cataclysm.

Russell himself applied this rule to every prophecy, except one, which he could not fit into that paradigm. He believed the judgment after the millennium (Rev.20:10-15) could not reasonably be describing AD 70.

In the 1970s, Max King started the present movement of Full-Preterism. He went further than did Russell, saying that even the last verses in Revelation 20 could be identified with AD 70—and believed that the 1000 years is symbolic for the 40 years between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. He called his view *Transmillennialism*. The leading voice promoting this view today is one of King's disciples, Don K. Preston, though he calls the view *Covenant Eschatology*.

Another disciple of Max King's disciples, Ed Stevens, leads another branch of the Full-Preterist movement, differing from Don Preston's views on several points.

Though recognized by most biblical scholars as novel and heretical, Full-Preterism is today a growing movement with numerous leaders and followers. It is my judgment that those who succumb to this movement, like those who are led off into any cult, are comprised of people of two sorts: 1) serious Bible students who are distracted by novelty views that seem to have some scriptural polemics in their favor, and, believers who possess minimal knowledge of the whole Bible, but who have trusted the expertise of those who can quote lots of scripture—even if those teachers claim meanings for those scriptures which cannot be justified by responsible exegesis.

A common, though not universal, trait observable in most of the Full-Preterists I have encountered is a bias toward an unwarranted exegesis that satisfies one or another personal temperament, or both. One common trait of Full-Preterists is a reaction against Dispensationalism (form which many of them have escaped fairly recently before embracing Full-Preterism). These seem to be the unstable and unnuanced types (so common among cultists), who seem to swing like pendulums to the furthest extremity away from the view they now reject, and toward which they often exhibit animus. The second temperamental trait so commonly observed in those who fall prey to this view is an easily recognized sense of elitism, or intellectual superiority to other Christians, which is embarrassing to the observer who easily sees how unwarranted it is. Both of these traits are common among cult leaders and their converts.

### **III. Arguments of Full-Preterists**

- A. The non-literal use of God/Christ “coming” (Isa.19:1; Mic.1:3; Ps.96:13; Matt.16:28; 24:30; Rev.22:20)
- B. Time Texts: “This generation” (Mark 13:30); “Some of you will not die before...” (Matt.16:28); “must shortly take place” (Rev.1:1); “the time is near” (Rev.1:3; 22:10); allegedly 101 “time texts.”
- C. Audience relevance: Use of pronouns “we” and “you” (e.g., Matt.24:44; 1 Thess.4:15-17; 2 Thess.1:6-7).
- D. New Creation language: “a new creation” (2 Cor.5:17); Isaiah 65, 66; Rev.21-22
- E. Mixture of singular with plural: “the redemption of our body” (Rom.8:23); “will transform our lowly body” (Phil.3:21)
- F. Non-literal use of “resurrection imagery” (Ezek.37:1-14; Hos.6:2; Luke 2:34; Eph.2:5)

### **IV. Reply to these Arguments**

- A. The non-literal use of God/Christ “coming” (Chapter Three, pp.29-50)
- B. Time Texts (Chapters Four and Five, pp.51-90)
- C. Audience relevance: Use of pronouns “we” and “you” (Chapter Six, pp.91-122)
- D. New Creation language (Chapters Eleven and Twelve, pp.225-278)
- E. Mixture of singular with plural: “the redemption of our body
- F. Non-literal use of “resurrection imagery”

### **V. Things that did not occur in AD 70 (and has not yet occurred):**

- A. The Lord “Himself” descending from heaven (1 Thess.4:16)
- B. “This same Jesus shall come in like manner as you saw Him go” (Acts 1:11)
- C. We do not yet “see [Him] face-to-face”, or “know even as we are known” (1 Cor.13:12)
- D. The King did not come to examine and judge the Gentiles (Matt.22:1-13)
- E. There was no corresponding judgment on the Gentiles (Rom.2:8-9)
- F. Christ’s resurrection was the prototype of ours, which we have not experienced (1 Cor.22-23; Col.1:18); We still “groan” in our lowly bodies (Rom.8:23)
- G. Marriage has not been abandoned (Luke 20:35) (Chapter Ten, pp.197-224)
- H. There has been no judgment in which every man received the reward of his deeds (Matt.16:27; 2 Cor.5:10)
- I. Living saints have not followed the resurrected saints into the air to meet Christ (1 Thess.4:16-17)
- J. The Church has not yet become “a mature man” (Eph.4:13)
- K. The Church was not “glorified” (Rom.8:18; 1 Cor.15:43); “changed” (1 Cor.15:51-52); or “transformed” (Phil.3:21) into the likeness of Christ (1 John 3:2-3).
- L. Our mortal bodies did not “put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:53).
- M. The creation has not been delivered from the bondage of decay (Rom.8:21), nor has sin been eradicated (2 Pet.3:13), nor death, sorrow, crying, and pain been abolished (Rev.21:4)
- N. All of Christ’s enemies have not yet been put under His feet (1 Cor.15:24-25)