

A Different Preterist Perspective

By Lloyd Dale -- 2002

Even if we have all knowledge but don't have love we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2). The debate can get heated; our aim should be to speak the truth in love.

INTRODUCTION

I started seriously studying eschatology in the early 1980's. Like most evangelical Christians growing up in the 1950's my main exposure to Biblical prophecy was through itinerant preachers. As a young adult, my continued exposure to eschatology was dominated by the books of Hal Lindsay and other pre-millennial, pre-tribulational futurists.

My own studies in the 1980s highlighted to me the significance of AD 70 and the end of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant in Bible prophecy. During the early 1990s I saw that the Parousia; as the presence of the kingdom of heaven (in heaven) with power and great Glory, did in fact take place in the first century near AD 70.

The following is an overview of my position and some thoughts about where Preterism is going. With this I hope to let the reader know where I am coming from. I want to stress that this is an overview of my position. I have more fully expounded on these matters in other documents. These can be read on my website at www.lloyddale.com .

Current Preterism tends to divide into two main camps, the full (hyper) Preterists and the partial Preterists. The full Preterists think that all of prophecy fulfilled by AD 70. The partial Preterists tend to see AD 70 as a coming of Jesus in judgment on Israel, but not the Second Coming. My view differs from both of these two positions. Like full Preterists I see the Parousia of Jesus Christ as happening in AD 70. Unlike full Preterists I see us as currently being in the of Revelation 20:4ff (the reign of Jesus beginning in His Parousia in AD 70 and continuing into the present, Revelation chapters 19 and 20). Thus, unlike full Preterists, I see at least two major prophetic events that have not yet been fulfilled.

HERMENEUTICS

There is a very important point I want to address in terms of the difference between my views and those of current day full Preterists. Referencing the “thousands years” or the Gog and Magog invasion, I am not coming to these things with a hermeneutic constraint that my understanding must fit a pre AD 70 paradigm as the full Preterists do.

Ultimately, however, it is Scripture that is the final authority.

The basic hermeneutical difference between my paradigm and that of the current full Preterists is that my paradigm does not presuppose that a given passage must have an AD 70 fulfillment. I believe that this hermeneutical constraint of coming to a given passage with the presupposition that it must fit before AD 70 is a mistake. Once again, let me state that it is Scripture that is the final authority.

THE ADVERSARY BEING RELEASED TO DECEIVE THE NATIONS WHICH CULMINATES IN THE GOG AND MAGOG EVENT AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE EVENT

I currently see us as being near the period of Revelation 20:7-10. This is the period at the end of the “thousands years” when the first century adversary is released from the abyss to go out and deceive the nations of the world again, especially Gog and Magog into a world wide war against Christianity. I think that this is why we are currently experiencing such spiritual darkness in the world. Thus, the next event I see on the prophetic calendar is for Gog and Magog to come up against **the Israel of God** (Gal 6:16, i.e. the redeemed and restored house of Israel).

The details of my thinking about this are offered in other papers entitled “Revelation 17,” “The Thousand Years,” and “The Abyss” available on my website: www.lloyddale.com . However, I would like to offer some thoughts here.

Josephus identified Magog with the Scythians. He wrote:

"Magog founded the Magogians, thus named after him, but who by the Greeks are called the Scythians." Jos. Antiq. 1.6.1

The Scythians lived in the area north of the Black Sea in the area around current day Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan.

"In the narrow sense, the Scythians were the tribes who lived in the area which Herodotus designated as Scythia (i.e., the territory north of the Black Sea and who spoke the Scythian language.... **In the broader sense the word Scythian can designate the other tribes that surrounded Israel, especially the children of Ishmael..**

God said the following to Gog of the land of Magog:

Be prepared and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. 8. After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but it's people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them. 9. "And you will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you. Ezekiel 38:7-9

"...gathered from many nations", refers to the regathering of scattered Israel, out of their Diaspora among the nations -- which occurred as a result of God's divorce of Israel followed by the Assyrian exile from the land and the scattering of Israel among the nations. This also shows that the "continual waste" spoken of denotes a much longer emptiness of the land than was the Chaldean captivity of 70 years.

Israel was left desolate¹ because of her harlotry and transgression of God's covenant (2Kings 17:18-23; 18:9-13). I see this section in Ezekiel as speaking of an Israel **which long before these events of Ezekiel 38 had been redeemed, restored and gathered out of the Diaspora** (dispersion) into the nations which had occurred in the 8th century BC.

In consideration of the phrase "times of the Gentiles:" -- Jesus said that the first century Jews (i.e. the house of Judah) would be led, as captives from Jerusalem, into the Nations **following** the destruction of Jerusalem (AD

¹ "Left Desolate" meaning that in the 8th century Israel was divorced by God, put out of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant, put out of the land of promise, and "sown" (scattered) among the nations out of God's mercy and without being known as His people to remain there until the coming of "Shiloh," the Messiah -- Jesus Christ when **they would be regathered in Him.**

70) and Jerusalem² would be “...trodden down of the Nations, until the times of the Nations be fulfilled.”

Biederwolf says the following about the Greek word translated as "times":

"Greek for times (kairos) which means opportunity, instead of the word "kronos" which means a space of time."

So the phrase "times of the Gentiles" could be translated as the time or season of opportunity for the Gentile nations. Whatever the meaning of "this time of opportunity," according to the text it would start in AD 70 following the destruction of Jerusalem, and it would end when Jerusalem was no longer trampled by the Nations.

Thus, following the destruction of Jerusalem; the surviving Jews, as Roman captives, were led away from their city, out of their land, into the "nations," and the house of Judah was left desolate among the nations.

After being out of the land for centuries, a group of people known as the Jews were once again granted a home in the land of promise by the Nations³. The Jews regained control of much of Jerusalem when it was partitioned in 1948. They gained control of the whole city in 1967.

Personally, I am inclined to think that 1948 has something to do with the fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 20:7. In the first century AD, the Jewish apostates, who were not killed, were led captive into all the nations, where they were kept until they were allowed into Palestine, which they claim was their homeland, in 1948. *So according to this reckoning "the times of the Nations" was the period from AD 70 to ????*

It appears to me that the "thousands years" of Revelation 20 coincides with this "time of opportunity" for the Nations? The system I am proposing sees both the "thousands years and this time of opportunity for the Nations as starting in AD 70.

² “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is near. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.”

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Nations, until the times of the Nations be fulfilled. (Lu 21:20-24, emphasis added)

³ Based in part on The Balfour Declaration of 1917 and subsequent events, the “nations” granted the Jews a homeland in Palestine in 1948.

Now we need to consider the purpose for the binding of the adversary in AD 70, at the beginning of the “thousands years.”

1. And I saw a messenger coming down from heaven, having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold of the dragon, the old serpent of old, who is false accuser/slanderer and the adversary, and bound him for thousands years, 3. and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not be deceiving the nations any more, **until** the thousands years are completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. (Revelation 20:1-3)

Thus, this first century slandering, false accusing, adversary **is bound** for the “thousands years” **so that he should not deceive the Nations** (Greek, "ethne") any longer **until** after the completion of the “thousands years.”

If this AD 70 binding of this first century adversary for the “thousands years” corresponds to this time of opportunity for the Nations, then the **end of the times of the Nations** would correspond to the period when this first century adversary is released from the abyss to go forth and deceive the Nations (Rev. 20:7-10) once again. That is, the end of the times of the Nations would correspond to the end of the “thousands years” at which point this first century adversary is released for **the express purpose of once again deceiving the Nations for “a short season.”**

Thus, when the “thousands years” are completed, this first century adversary will be released from prison, and will go forth once again to deceive (see Rev 13:14), the nations which are in the four corners of the land, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the slandering false accuser who deceives them will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet already are; and they will be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages. (Rev. 20:7-10)

I am proposing that at some time the same adversary of Christians that was bound in AD 70 will be released to go forth and again deceive the Nations. The conditions for the Gog and Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38 & 39 are in place. This "unlikely" coalition (Magog led by Gog) involves peoples from the "remote parts of the north" (Ezek. 38:15), the area north of the Black Sea (the area around modern day Ukraine, Russia and

Kazakhstan). It also involves Iran (Persia), Ethiopia or Sudan (Cush) and Libya (Put) and peoples from the area of current day Turkey (Ezekiel 38:1-6). Many of these countries have strong Islamic influences and there is no love lost on the place called 'Israel,' nor, for that matter, on Christians either. Such a confederation would have been very unlikely prior to 1948. There is nothing unlikely about it at present. In our time, this coalition of countries doesn't seem strange at all.

Has a spiritual darkness grown on the earth since 1948 as my hypothesis of the first century adversary being released near that time would expect? I fear that our country is like the frog in a pot of water that keeps getting hotter and hotter. He doesn't jump out because of the gradual nature of the heat increase. ***I don't think we fully appreciate the magnitude of the evil in this present*** time due to its insidious increase. For example, homosexuality used to be classified as a mental disorder, now it is a civil right (let me interject I don't want to take away anyone's civil rights. Having said that let me also say that homosexuality is an abomination to God, Leviticus 20:13). The Biblical concept that the only proper place for sex is in marriage is laughable to our current culture. Relativism and new age concepts permeate our society and infiltrate the church as does Evolutionism, Humanism, and et.al. Do I need to go on to the prevalence of divorce, drug abuse and abortion?

God's first adversary's attack on the human race was to question the meaning and authority of God's Word, and this attitude was also extremely present in the first century adversaries of Christianity as it is now.

Now the serpent (Adam rebelling against God) was more crafty than any beast of the field which YHWH GOD had made. And he said to the woman (his wife), "Has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1) Thus, the serpent caused the woman to question God's word.

Today, there is an incredible attack on God's Word. I am not just thinking about the attacks from the secular media; I'm also thinking about those in the seminaries, churches, and everywhere else! If the average Christian knew the full force of the attacks on the Bible going on in the world today they would be appalled. When God's first adversary attacked His word, the focus of his point of attack was a woman; I think that is happening today also through feminism, but I will not go into that right now.

Something very evil is going on in our world. The position I propose offers an explanation for this current spiritual darkness and evil. If my

analysis is correct, then, we are living near to the "short time" or "little season" of Rev. 20:3 which is to occur after the fulfillment of the "thousands years" (Rev. 20:7-10). How long is left, 10 years? 30 years? We cannot know for sure. How long is a "short time" in relationship to nearly 2000 years?

I see the Gog and Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38 & 39 building even as I write this. Revelation 20:7-15 describes the judgment of "the rest of the dead" and the beginning of the eternal (non-Adamic) state. Therefore, I think that Preterism is being raised up, not just to lead Christianity in this century, to also lead it into Christianities last battle.

Notice that my different Preterist position allows me to explore ideas like those which I have just presented. Many Full (hyper) Preterists have rejected, out of hand, the possibility of my view having any validity because I am proposing fulfillment of certain Scriptures after AD 70. Whether I am right or wrong the full Preterists are going to have a hard time being impartial in their analysis because for them, allowing any fulfillment after AD 70 would mean they are not being a "consistent" full Preterist.

Adjusting one's theoretical position is not an easy thing for any us to do.

When Ezekiel 38 speaks of the Gog and Magog invasion it says that Israel would be dwelling in unwallled villages (Ezekiel 38:11). Today, the Israel of God (Gal 6:16) is "dwelling in unwallled villages" (Ez 38:11). This Israel of God (from her perspective) is at peace with her neighbors. However, things might have to get worse before they can get better. As I have said, after the Gog and Magog invasion I see the eternal state (at least that is how it looks in Revelation, Ezekiel's symbolism is less clear to me). In Revelation chapter 20 after the released adversary is thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the Gog and Magog invasion; the next thing seen is the judgment of "the rest of the dead" at the great white throne, Rev. 20:10-15). I see this as the beginning of the eternal state at which time all evil is purged and thrown into the lake of fire.

To some of the uninformed, this consideration of Gog and Magog may sound rather far fetched; note however, that **Revelation shows Gog and Magog invading at the end of the "thousands years"** not before it. Revelation shows just one Gog and Magog invasion and **it is at the end of the "thousands years."**

As I have stated, many full Preterists see the millennium as being the 40-year period between the cross and AD 70. Because of this they tend to see

the Gog and Magog invasion (Rev. 20:7-10) as happening at AD 70 because the Gog and Magog invasion happens at the end of the millennium (which they see as AD 70). Full Preterists also see the war⁴ of Revelation 19:11-21 as happening at the Parousia of AD 70. This writer agrees that the Revelation 19:11-21 war occurred in AD 70. However, because full Preterists see the 2 wars (Rev 19:17-21 & Rev 20:7-15) as both happening in AD 70, they are forced to conclude that they are the same war. This creates some serious problems for them. This writer sees them as two wars separated by the “thousands years” period.

In the Revelation 19:20 war the beast and the false prophet are prominent and are “taken and cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 19:20); whereas in the Rev 20:10 war they are pictured as having already been in the lake of fire for “the thousands years”. (For a detailed analysis of the events of Revelation 19:19-20 see this writer’s paper “**Some clear and convincing contextual analysis of Revelation chapters 13-19**” on the website:

www.lloyddale.com

At the end of the Revelation 20:8-9 Gog and Magog war this “released” first century adversary is thrown into the lake of fire where “the beast and the false prophet already are” (Rev. 20:10). If the two wars are referring to the same conflict, how is it that the beast and false prophet are already in the lake of fire long before the beginning of Gog and Magog war? No full nor partial preterist has ever satisfactorily explained that. Their sequence simply does not fit.

As I see it, the most natural reading of Revelation chapters 19 and 20, in terms of sequence is the following: In the Revelation 19 war (during the Day of the Lord in AD 70) the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). It is at this time that this first century adversary is bound and cast into the abyss (judgment), which is by no means the lake of fire, for the “thousands years” (Rev. 20:2). At the end of the “thousands years” this first century adversary is released from the abyss for a short season (Rev. 20:3). He then goes out to deceive the nations again and gather Gog and Magog (the nations) for that invasion (Rev. 20: 7-10) of Christianity. After the full scale war against Christians which he instigates, he is thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are already. After which, we have the resurrection and judgment of “the rest of the dead” at the great white throne event (Rev. 20:5, 11-15).

⁴ This war which some erroneously call Armageddon, I will call the “wars of the Jews.”

One of the beauties of seeing the Parousia as beginning in AD 70 is that one can have this natural sequence of Revelation chapters 19 and 20 and **maintain that the kingdom has come in power as Jesus proclaimed**⁵. I think the different Preterist position I am proposing has the best of both worlds. It allows for the natural sequence of Revelation 19 and 20, **while at the same time, affirming that the kingdom in its full power is now.**

James Stuart Russell the author of *The Parousia* (and a big influence on some modern Preterists) also saw the millennial reign as beginning in AD 70 and extending into the future. In writing about the difficulty this presented in light of the statements in Revelation that these things "must shortly take place", (Rev. 1:1, near to when Revelation was written) he said:

"Some interpreters indeed attempt to get over the difficulty by supposing that the thousand years, being a symbolic number, may represent a period of very short duration, and so bring the whole within the prescribed apocalyptic limits; but *this method of interpretation appears to us so violent and unnatural* that we cannot hesitate to reject it. **The act of binding and shutting up the dragon, old serpent, slanderer, adversary does indeed come within the 'shortly' of the apocalyptic statement**, for it is coincident, or nearly so with the judgment of the harlot and the beast; *but the term of the dragon's imprisonment is distinctly stated to be for a thousand years, and thus must necessarily pass entirely beyond the field of vision so strictly and constantly limited by the book itself.*" (*The Parousia* pg.514. my emphasis)

Russell was saying was that those who were trying to fit the millennium in between AD 30 and AD 70 were wrong. Unfortunately, many full Preterists are currently advocating the erroneous notion that the millennium was the period between AD 30 and AD 70⁶. Russell correctly saw the millennium as beginning in AD 70 with the fall of Jerusalem, (the harlot, Rev. 17&18) at the Day of the Lord⁷

I am in agreement with him on this. If full Preterism is defined as the position that all prophecy has been fulfilled by or around AD 70 (including the millennium), then even J.S. Russell was not a full Preterist.

⁵ See Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1; and Luke 9:26-27.

⁶ For a complete refutation of this erroneous notion see the paper "**The Timing of the Millennium and Millennial Martyrs**" on my website – www.lloyddale.com

⁷ See Ac 2:20; 1Co 5:5; 2Co 1:14; 1Th 5:2; 2Pe 3:10 and Revelation 19.

My position is that the first century adversary was cast out of 'heaven to the land' (not the abyss) during the transition period⁸. This adversary then had a short time until he was bound and cast into the abyss (Rev. 12:12). The woman of Revelation chapter 12 1, representing Jesus' people, is protected for this short period of time, given as 1260 days in Rev. 12:6 and a time and times and half a time in Rev. 12:14. This time period of 3½ years is the last half of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27, see my book the Oracle of Destruction: A great prophecy fulfilled on my website – www.lloyddale.com). The ending point of this 3 ½ year period (a time and times and half a time) is when the power of the Jews was shattered in AD 70 (Daniel 12:6-7). This is also when the adversary was bound following the destruction of the whore (the harlot city of Jerusalem) just prior to the Parousia of Jesus Christ. (Salient portions of Revelation 17, 18, 19 & 20)

In reference to the adversary being loosed out of the abyss at the end of the "thousands years" to gather Gog and Magog for the invasion of Revelation 20:9 Russell found this quite obscure but offered the following thoughts:

"We must consequently regard this prediction of the loosing of Satan (sic), and the events which follow, as still future, and therefore unfulfilled. We know of nothing recorded in history which can be adduced as in any way a probable fulfillment (sic) of this prophecy. Wetstein has hazarded the hypothesis that possibly it may symbolize (sic) the Jewish revolt under Barcochebas (sic), in the reign of Hadrian; but *the suggestion is too extravagant to be entertained for a moment.*

There is an evident connection between this prophecy and the vision in Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog (chaps. 38 & 39) which is equally mysterious and obscure. In both the scene of conflict is laid in the same place, the land of Israel; and in both the enemies of God meet with a signal and disastrous overthrow." (The Parousia pgs. 522-523, my emphasis)

J.S. Russell was writing these things in the 1870's when there was no modern state of Israel (falsely so-called). A scenario for how the Ezekiel 38 & 39 invasion could happen is much easier to imagine today than it was when Russell was writing in the 19th century

⁸ See Revelation 12:7-10; and Lu 10:18

Modern (falsely so-called) ISRAEL

To avoid sounding like a dispensationalist let me state my views on the present day state of modern (falsely so-called) Israel⁹. When I am writing about the current state of modern (falsely so-called) Israel I mean Jews after the flesh. **We believers in Jesus are “the Israel of God as in Galatians 6:16”¹⁰ (Israel after the Spirit)**. We have been grafted into the olive tree of Israel (Romans 11) by Jesus Christ. Thus, we are Abraham's offspring (Galatians 3:7 & 29). The true Israelite is the one who has been circumcised of the heart by the Spirit of God (Romans 2:28-29). We believers in and followers of Jesus Christ are the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).

Having said that, let me also say that I believe that God is dealing (not necessarily in a good way) with Judah after the flesh. I believe that He has brought them back into the land for a purpose. The Jews being brought together back into the land as a nation is either God's doing or it is a monumental coincidence.

It seems to this writer that Preterism, in its disdain for the errors of Dispensationalism, has over reacted. Almost anything the dispensationalists believe preterists will not believe. Overreacting to a theory that is wrong is not an uncommon event in the annals of human thought. It often leads to a theory that goes too far in the other direction.

J.S. Russell, *reacting in part to historicist interpretations of Revelation*, insisted that all the prophecies in the Revelation except the “thousands years” had to have a fulfillment around AD 70. In this insistence, Russell was nearly correct as all prophecies except for the “the thousands years” and the great white throne in Revelation 20:7-15 were fulfilled by 70 AD.

In terms of Dispensationalism, one must be careful to not overreact, to “throw the baby out with the bathwater” so to speak (I think that Dispensationalism has a lot of ‘bathwater’ that needs to be thrown out!).

Consider the following from Ezekiel chapter 36:16-22:

16. The word of the Lord came to me saying,

⁹ In writing about Israel one needs to qualify which or what Israel you are writing about. Paul makes this distinction when he speaks of “Israel after the flesh” in 1 Corinthians 10:18.

¹⁰ See also 1 Peter 2: 1-2, 9-11; and James 1:1. Peter and James are both writing to the same group of people, the Israel of God – Israel after the Spirit.

17. 'Son of man, **when the house of Israel** was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity (a whore).

18. Therefore, I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols.

19. Also **I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the lands.** According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.

20. When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land'

21. But I had concern for My holy name which **the house of Israel** had profaned among the nations where they went.

22. Therefore, say to **the house of Israel**, Thus says the Lord God, It is not for your sake, O **house of Israel**, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

Above, God is saying how He had poured out His wrath on **the house of Israel in the 8th century BC** for defiling the land by worshipping idols, going after other gods, playing the harlot as in Ezekiel Chapters 16 & 23, and polluting the land with the blood that had been shed on the land. The preceding could be used as a summary of the book of Revelation. However, in Revelation God is dealing with the house of Judah and is showing God's wrath being poured out on the dwellers on the land¹¹ of Judea, [Rev 6:10; 11:18]. This pouring out of God's wrath culminates in the stoning and burning of the great harlot (Rev. 17:2, 18:24; Jerusalem's destruction at the Day of the Lord in AD 70).

In Romans 9:1-14, Paul identifies the "children of promise" i.e. those who descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob as the true descendants of Abraham, the true Israel (Romans 9:6-8); and he also confirms that those who descended from Abraham through Ishmael and

¹¹ The Greek word "ge" is better translated "land" than "earth" in most of Revelation, compare Rev. 1:7 with Zechariah 12:10-14.

Esau are “children of the flesh” not children of promise¹². In Romans 10:21, Paul cites Isaiah 65:2:

“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walks in a way *that was not good*, *after their own thoughts*” and then asks the rhetorical question, “I ask, then, has God cast away and rejected His people *Israel*? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.” (Ro 11:1)

Looking more carefully at what Paul is saying in Romans 11

1. I ask then, has God cast away and rejected His people *of the house Israel*? May it never be! For I to am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin

2. God has not rejected and cast away His people *of the house of Israel* whom He foreknew...

5 “...there is also at the present time a remnant *of the house of Israel* according to the choice of Grace.” (Ro 11:1-2, 5)

7 “What then? The house of Israel does not find what it is looking for, but the elect do find it and the rest are hardened,” (Ro 11:7)

8 “as it is written: “God gives them (Israel) a spirit of stupor, eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear, to this day.” (Ro 11:8; Cf. 11:25)

11. I ask then, have they of the house of Israel stumbled that they should *permanently* fall? May it never be! **But by their transgression salvation has come to the Nations** to make them jealous.

12. Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Nations, **how much more their fulness be riches!** (Cf. 11:26, the riches of resurrection)

¹² “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” (Ge 17: -21 AV)

15 “For if the casting away of *the house of Israel* is reconciling the world, **what is the receiving of them, but life from the dead (resurrection)?**” (Ro 11:15)

17 “And if some of the *Jewish* branches were broken off, and you of *the house of Israel*, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

18 do not boast against the *Jewish* branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 You then may say, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they of *the Jews*

were broken off, and you of *the house of Israel*, the *wild olive branch* stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

21 For if God did not spare the natural *Jewish* branches, He may not spare you *grafted in branches* either.

22 Therefore, **consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity, but toward you, the grafted in branches, goodness**, if you continue in *His*

goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they of *the house of Judah* do not continue in unbelief, will be

grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you of *the wild olive branches* were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by

nature, and were grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are of the Jewish* natural

branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I do not

desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that *God dealt*¹³ blindness

in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Nations has come in. 26 And so *when the fulness of the nations comes in* all

Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;” (Ro 11:17-

26)

¹³ “(According as it is written, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber*, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see*, and bow down their back alway.” (Ro 11:8-10 AV)

Above, Paul states that the believers from the Nations should not be arrogant. Yes, natural branches (the Jews after the flesh) have been broken off. Yes, you believers of the Nations have been grafted into the olive tree of Israel. The natural branches can and will be grafted in again if they continue not in unbelief.

27. AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

28. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers

29. For **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

According to Paul, **God**, in the first century **was bringing the house of Israel back to Himself for His name's sake**, for the sake of the fathers, and because His calling is irrevocable. The book of Romans was written ca. AD 60.

I think Preterists (both partial and full) should be careful. In their zeal to counteract the errors of Dispensationalists and others, they may be actually missing something that God is doing with the Jews. Jewish natural branches are being grafted back into the tree of true Israel in numbers unprecedented since the first century. However, Among the Jews, there is a great deal of hostility toward the Good News of Jesus and most who identify themselves as Jews are not being grafted into the true olive tree of the Israel of God. So, what about those who are not grafted back into the olive tree of the Israel of God? What is to become of them? What did Jesus say about a "dry tree"?

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James Stuart Russell wrote his classic Preterist work The Parousia in the 19th century (1878). One of the purposes Russell had in writing his book was to counteract historicist theories of his time. These theories interpreted the book of Revelation in terms of history (from the 1st century through the ages to the present).

Referring to the book of Revelation, Russell said:

"If it spake, as some would have us believe, of Huns and Goths and Saracens, of mediaeval emperors and popes of Rome, of the

Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution, what possible interest or meaning could it have had for the Christian churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Philadelphia, and Laodicea?" (The Parousia, pg. 366, slightly edited for this paper.)

To counteract these wild speculations, Russell strongly emphasized the verses in Revelation that spoke of the nearness of the prophesied events.

"As this is a point of the highest importance, and indispensable to the right interpretation of the Apocalypse, it is proper to bring forward the proof that the events depicted in the book are comprehended within a very brief period of time.

The opening sentence, containing what may be called the title of the book, is of itself decisive of the nearness of the events to which it relates:

"Chap. 1:1 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants what things, must shortly come to pass'" (The Parousia, pg. 367, emphasis added)

When Russell writes of the "thousands years" beginning in AD 70 and extending into the future; he takes great pains to explain why it is the only place in the book of Revelation that he thought extended beyond AD 70.

Allow me to quote him on the "thousand years":

"Some interpreters indeed attempt to get over the difficulty by supposing that the thousand years, being a symbolic number, may represent a period of very short duration, and so bring the whole within the prescribed apocalyptic limits; *but this method of interpretation appears to us so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it.* The act of binding and shutting up the dragon does indeed come within the shortly of the apocalyptic statement, for it is coincident, or nearly so with the judgment of the harlot and the beast; but the term of the dragon's imprisonment is distinctly stated to be for a thousand years, and thus must necessarily pass entirely beyond the field of vision so strictly and constantly limited by the book itself. (The Parousia, pg. 514, emphasis mine)

In writing about the events of Luke 21:20-24, (and the parallel accounts in Matthew 24:15-22 and Mark 13:14-20) Russell said the following:

"No argument is required to prove the strict and exclusive reference of this section to Jerusalem and Judea. Here we can detect no trace of a double meaning, of primary and ulterior fulfillments, of underlying and typical senses. Everything is national, local, and near: 'the land' is the land of Judea, 'this people'; is the people of Israel, and the 'time'; the lifetime of the disciples, 'The YE therefore shall see'." (The Parousia, pgs. 72 & 73).

Russell lets the context of the passage determine the meaning. Surprisingly, He makes no special reference to Luke 21:22.

Luke 21:22 "Because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

Now consider a quote from David Chilton's introduction to Ed Stevens What Happened in AD 70:

"Stevens presses Christ's declaration in Luke 21:22 to its limit: Jesus said ALL Old Testament prophecy would be fulfilled by the time Jerusalem was destroyed. The more I pondered the awesome implications of Jesus words, the more I realized their truly revolutionary significance for eschatology. Without exception, every event foretold by the Biblical prophets was fulfilled within that generation, as Jesus had said (Matt. 16:27-28; 24:34)."

Stevens is at variance with Russell. He is attempting to establish a hermeneutic constraint that ALL prophecy must be fulfilled by AD 70. To the extent full Preterists approach a given passage with the preconception that it must have a pre-A.D. 70 fulfillment, they make a mistake. I think that full Preterism gets off the track at this very point.

When Russell writes of the Gog and Magog invasion, he makes little effort to explain why he thought it was in the future. Ostensibly, He didn't think that it was necessary as the context of the passage called for a post-A.D. 70 fulfillment. Most current day full Preterist and many partial preterists come to Revelation 20:7-10 and its ostensible counterpart,

Ezekiel 38 and 39, with a hermeneutic constraint *that it must have been fulfilled by AD 70*.

RAMIFICATIONS OF PRETERISM

One of the most important ramifications of believing that the Parousia of Jesus Christ occurred in AD 70 is in the demonstration that the funeral eschatology of most churches today is correct¹⁴ while their classroom eschatology is seriously flawed.

Another important area that needs exploring is the implications and ramifications of Preterism for today's Christian community.

AD 30 TO AD 70: IS IT A 40 YEAR MILLENNIUM OR IS IT A 40-YEAR WILDERNESS JOURNEY?

My position sees us at a point in time near the end of the "thousands years" reign of Jesus Christ. Jesus is ruling and will do so until He subdues all enemies are under His feet (1 Cor. 15:23-28). This "thousands years" reign is the beginning stage of His eternal reign.

Therefore, the time between the Baptism of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in the AD 70 "Day of the Lord" is a time of transition between covenants, *it is **not** the "thousands years" of Revelation 20*. While most full preterists see this transition time as the "thousands years," I do not.

Ostensibly, this period is analogous to the ramshackle nation of *Israel's 40-year wilderness wandering before they were permitted to enter the Promised Land*.

In essence, the children of Israel were released from Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb. This was a type of our being released from the kingdom of sin and death by the blood of the true Passover Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Although the Israelites had been released from Egypt,

¹⁴ Today, at nearly every funeral/memorial service held, the statement is that the person, who has just died, if a Christian, is now has a new body and is with Jesus in Paradise/Heaven. However, in the classrooms of those same churches the people are taught that they must wait for "a general resurrection" for their old body to be with Jesus in Paradise/Heaven. How sad!

it would be 40 years until they were permitted to enter the Promised Land. And so it was for the first century Christians – they were released from the *Egypt*¹⁵ of sin and death by the blood of Jesus; however, it would be forty years before they were able to enter the new Promised Land – the Paradise of His Heavenly Kingdom. Thus, their entrance into the new Promised Land was equivalent to the Israelites' entrance into the old Promised Land. [See 1Cor 15:23c & 2Tim 4:18]

This Israelites entrance into the Promised Land after 40 years was the beginning of their life in the new world of the Promised Land. That then, would be a type of the entrance of the resurrected saints into their new world of Paradise, the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ with Him as their new king seated on His Glorious throne, I. e. the throne of David promised throughout Scripture. Thus, the reign of Jesus described in Revelation 11:15-19 began in AD 70.

The writer of Hebrews speaks of the parallels between what his readers were experiencing and the children of Israel in the wilderness (Hebrews chapters 3 and 4). Paul writes about the same wilderness parallels in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. In Revelation chapter 12, the woman and her children (representing God's true people, the Israel of God) escape into the wilderness (Rev 12:14) after 'the adversary is cast out (Rev 12:9). In the wilderness, they are "nourished" for a time and times and half a time (Rev. 12:14). The book of Daniel (Daniel 12:7) gives the ending point of time, times and half a time as when the power of the Jews was completely shattered (AD 70).

The harlot (i.e. Jerusalem) of Revelation chapters 17 and 18 (representing those Jews who rejected Jesus) is also found in the wilderness and ends up being killed by the beast as she is stoned and burned to death.

So, the period between AD 30 and AD 70 was an anti-type of the time when the children of Israel were in the wilderness for 40 years. In the wilderness period the children of Israel were free from Egypt, but not yet in the new Promised Land.

The kingdom was being set forth during Jesus' earthly ministry and the ministry of His apostles and it would arrive with power in His Parousia (Mark 9:11; Matthew 16:27 & 28).

¹⁵ Re 11:8, Among other things, the spiritual state of the non-believer is considered as "Egypt" in Scripture

Hebrews 4 speaks of resurrection into the kingdom in terms of a Sabbath Day of rest.

1. Therefore let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of *you should seem to have come short of it*. 2. For indeed we have had good news preached to us just as they also; *but the word they heard did not profit them* because it was not united by faith in those who heard. 3. for we who believe enter that rest (*through resurrection*); Just as He said of those who did not believe, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST although His works were finished from the foundation of the world." 4. For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; 5. and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST" 6. Since; therefore, it remains for some to enter rest, and those who formerly had good news preached to *them failed to enter because of disobedience*, 7. He again fixes a certain day, "this-day" saying through David after so long a time just as it is said "THIS-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." 8. For if, Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day. 9. There remains; therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works¹⁶, as God did from His. 11. Let us; therefore, be diligent to enter that rest lest anyone fall through the same example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:1-11, emphasis mine)

The writer of Hebrews is encouraging his readers to be diligent to be ready to enter this Sabbath Day rest and not to fall in the wilderness as many of the children of Israel did.

In a similar manner, Paul, in 1 Corinthians wrote:

27. But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. 10:1 for I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2. And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3. And all ate the same spiritual food; 4. And all drank the same spiritual drink, for

¹⁶ Compare Revelation 14:13 where this is mentioned again.

they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5. Nevertheless, *with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were buried in the wilderness*, 6. Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. 7. And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." 8. Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did and were destroyed by the serpents, 10. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 9:27-10:12)

Paul indicates that it was possible to fall from grace during this 40-year transition time (AD 30- AD 70) as does the author of Hebrews. Paul was explaining to his first century readers that many of the children of Israel, after being set free from Egypt and tasting the good things of God, died and were buried in the wilderness. They did not make it to the Promised Land. He warns his first century readers not to take their salvation for granted because they too could die and be buried in the wilderness and not make it to the new Promised Land.

Consider what the writer of Hebrews says about this:

14. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; 15. While it is said: "THIS-DAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME." 16. For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17. And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (Hebrews 3:14-17)

The writer of Hebrews is instructing his first century readers that they need to hold fast the beginning of their assurance of salvation until Jesus comes and takes them to that Salvation which is reserved in Heaven for them¹⁷. They have not yet reached the Promised Land; they need to hold

¹⁷ See 1Peter 1:3-5; Cf. the Fourth Gospel 13:3, 14: 3, 17:24

steady in their present course until the resurrection in the Parousia of Jesus Christ (1Cor 15:23c).

I praise Jesus our God that we who have come to FAITH after AD 70 will never "sleep" in the grave as did those of faith prior to AD 70.

In the transition time between AD 30 and AD 70 it was required of one to be an overcomer¹⁸; if not, one could become a cast off; die and be buried in the wilderness (Rev. 3:5). In Jesus' Parousia/appearing¹⁹ in AD 70 the Sabbath rest that the writer of Hebrews spoke of became a reality for those first century saints (Rev. 14:13-16). The believer today rejoices in that Sabbath Day of rest, knowing that he will join the others there upon his leaving this physical body at its death (See Rev. 14:13 for confirmation).

When the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, which was the shadow/type of the first century Christian's entrance into His heavenly kingdom, God told Joshua the following:

"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you." (Joshua 1:3)

"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:5 & 6, Cf. Jesus' statements in Mt 28:20 & the Fourth Gospel 14:18)

During the transition period the followers of Jesus were instructed:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."²⁰ (Ac 1:8)

¹⁸ To learn more about being an overcomer study the following: Joh 16:33; 2Pe 2:20; 1Jo 2:13; 1Jo 2:14; 1Jo 4:4; 1Jo 5:4; 1Jo 5:5; Re 2:7; Re 2:11; Re 2:17; Re 2:26; Re 3:5; Re 3:12; Re 3:21; Re 21:7.

¹⁹ See the following for "the appearing of Jesus" as it directly relates to His Parousia: Col 3:4; 1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 1:10; 2Ti 4:1; 2Ti 4:8 ; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 1:7 ; 1Pe 5:4; 1Jo 2:28; 1Jo 3:2.

²⁰ To learn more about the Gospel being preached in all the world during the first century in fulfillment of the great commission carefully study the following: Mt 4:23; Mt 9:35; Mt 24:14; Mr 1:14; Ac 1:8; Ac 8:5; Ac 8:14; Ac 9:31; Romans 16:26; Col 1:6, 23, 26; Re 5:13.

Thus they had been given a spiritual commission to “take the earth” for Jesus Christ. But just like the children of Israel they needed to possess it by the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom. Which according to Paul, they did²¹. The children of Israel had been given the Promised Land but the ungodly nations still had to be overcome. The enemies had no rights to the land but were still on the scene.

In an analogous situation, first century Christians were faced with enemies who no longer had any right to the land but were still on the scene.

I think that we are very near the short time of Revelation 20:3 when the first century adversary will be released to deceive the Nations again (Rev. 20:7-10). I think that this is why the modern American culture is being called a “post-Christian culture”. Most Americans say that they believe in God. Unfortunately, when you look closely at their "God" he is not the God of the Bible.

I look for a continuing separation of dark and light. The dark is getting darker and darker. While hopefully; the light is getting lighter, although I see very little of that at present. It is hard to argue with the fact that the dark has been getting darker the last few decades or so. Things such as Evolutionism, Humanism, new age philosophies, and societal breakdowns of every sort imaginably have dominated our culture and infiltrated the church as well.

Assume for a moment that I am right and we are living in the end portion of the millennium, the adversary is about to be released from the abyss to go out among the nations and deceive them again. According to Scripture that will produce a world wide war against Christianity:

“And when the thousands years are expired, the adversary (which was bound in AD 70) shall be released out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, the number²² of whom *is* as the sand of the sea, **to gather them together to battle:** And they (the armies of Gog and Magog) went up on the expanse of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints (Christians) about, and the beloved city (which

²¹ Ibid

²² A number as great as the grains of” sand of the sea,” where does such a number come from? The Scriptures explain: ““And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.” (Ge 17:20) I.e. the nation of Islam who claim Ishmael as there father.

in this context must surely be the new Jerusalem): and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them (the armies of Gog and Magog). And the malicious slanderer that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *already are* (from the first century), and shall be tormented day and night unto the age (in this context, surely this must be eternity) of the ages.” (Re 20:7-10)

In Revelation 20 the world wide war against Christians is ended by fire coming down from heaven and destroying the armies of Gog and Magog. The great white throne event follows immediately after the termination of the world wide war against Christians:

“And seeing a great white throne, and him that sits on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven flees away; and finding no place for them. And seeing the dead, small and great, stand before God; and opening the books: and another book opening, which is *the book of life*: and judging the dead according to their works out of those things which had been written in the books. And the sea giving up the dead who were in it; and death and the graves delivering up the dead who were in them, and He is judging every man according to their works. And death and the graves He is casting into the lake of the fire. And casting into the lake of the fire whosoever was not found written in the book of life. This is the second death.” (Re 20:11-15)

After the Great White Throne Event

When everything is completed at the great white throne event there will be no more Adamic life on planet earth. The death which he brought will have perished in the lake of the fire along with all the graves that held this death. Just as Holy Scripture declares:

The last enemy being destroyed in the lake of the fire is death

The first Adam brought pain sorrow and death. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, has made all things new!

