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The New Testament Canon - Written Before AD 70?



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Editor's Update

Much has happened since our last issue, not the least of which is my being diagnosed with colon cancer in early April. It was discovered as the result of routine tests triggered by my fiftieth birthday last year (I turned fifty-one in April). As you might imagine, it was a shock and certainly unexpected, especially considering that I have no symptoms, which I understand is typical for colon cancer. A subsequent CT scan indicates that the cancer has not spread outside of my colon, so the plan is to surgically remove the bad section, sew the ends together, and be on my way. That is, after four to six weeks of recovery. If I succeeded in getting this issue to the printer prior to my surgery (May 15th), then by the time you are reading this I should be nearly recovered. Of course, that doesn't mean that I won't use this as an excuse for both this issue and the next being late, if need be!

Although I didn't have the time to share this news with everyone in contact with me, the news has spread and I have received many emails with well wishes and prayer support for which my wife and I are thankful. We would appreciate your prayers for a speedy and full recovery with no complications. We have too many ongoing (and planned) projects to be able to afford time for serious health issues. So until we hear otherwise, we are trusting God that this is only an inconvenience.

One of the projects that I continually struggle to keep up with is sharing contact information between Preterists who desire to get in touch with one another (we only share the contact information between those who give permission to do so). As such, I am pleased to be able to inform you of Michael Fenemore's online Preterist map (see p. 14) by which you can easily locate other Preterists and, of course, register yourself.

Beginning with this issue, Ed Stevens is taking a detour from his Matthew 24 series in

order to conduct more research. In the meantime, he is writing a series of articles supporting the formation of the New Testament canon prior to AD 70, which promises to be quite interesting.

I had hoped in this issue to be able to report the release of my revised edition of *Behind the Veil of Moses*, but I am still tweaking the layout with the printer. However, I am pleased that our first video (an introduction to Preterism) is progressing nicely and I hope to announce its release in our next issue. The editing is nearly complete and preliminary viewings have elicited very positive responses. We pray it will be a useful tool in sharing Preterism and laying a foundation for the Preterist view.

I want to remind you that if you have not contacted us asking to remain on our mailing list you need to do so. At the beginning of next year we will remove the names of those who have not asked to stay on the list. We are doing this to minimize "stray" magazines and to be better stewards of our resources. By doing so we hope to continue to offer the magazine without charge. Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to contact us and for your encouraging comments regarding the magazine. It is a continuing pleasure to be able to serve the Preterist community in this capacity.

In the coming months I will be transferring all my email correspondence to my fcg.brian@yahoo.com account, so if you have been using one of my other accounts (brian@fulfilledmagazine.com or blm422@comcast.net) please update your records.

For Christ's Glory,



Dead Sea Scrolls display inside "The Shrine of the Book" museum, Israel

Mailbag



I wish to thank you for Fulfilled Magazine. It has made me feel that I am not alone. I started changing my attitude and insight of God's Word when John L. Bray began sending me his little books, and especially Matthew 24 Fulfilled. I was very excited and still hear from him. Your magazine Fulfilled adds to it. Keep them coming.

Norman, Tennessee

I must say, that I have always been taught the futurist position. After having done some research and plus reading your articles, my position and understanding have greatly shifted. I am searching diligently and faithfully. My eyes are being opened to understanding the Holy Scriptures. I am not quite a full preterist (yet), however, I am doing due diligence and I am digging deep. I love being challenged.

After examining your articles, I must say, that I can't find anything that I can refute. You have a very sound and solid foundation on which you build.

Thank you so very kindly for your dedication and your sharing your research. Until then grace, peace, and blessings be upon you, your heart, and your ministry.

Everett, California

Thanks for sending your magazine Fulfilled! - love it. Keep up the good work.

Norm, Florida

Yes, please keep sending me Fulfilled! Magazine! I enjoy reading all the articles. I have shared with others the light that Preterism/Covenant Eschatology has made the words of Jesus and the New Testament writers mean what they say.

Steve, Ohio

Please keep me on your mailing list. I enjoy reading your magazine. It's the only contact I have with other Preterists. My fellow Christians here think I'm crazy. Keep up the good work.

John, Alabama

Just want to say how much I enjoy Fulfilled! Magazine. I'm sending a little love offering to help keep it coming to me and going out to others. God bless you for your time and effort. Christ's love.

Wanda, Indiana

I always look forward to your magazine. Thank you for your work.

Marie, Washington

We very much enjoy your publication and wish to remain on the subscription list. God bless your desire to share the truth—keep up the good work!

Tony, Indiana

AFTER EXAMINING
YOUR ARTICLES, I
MUST SAY, THAT I
CAN'T FIND
ANYTHING THAT I
CAN REFUTE.

Gleanings from the Past

Throughout the centuries of Church history, many writers have written from the perspective of a past fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Most of them failed to take that perspective to its logical conclusion (Full Preterism) and still applied a few various prophecies to their future. With that caveat in mind, their works contain many gems that can serve two purposes: 1) provide additional Preterist perspectives, and 2) demonstrate that although Full Preterism may have experienced its greatest development in the last fifty years, many others have been blazing that trail through the centuries. In this issue we offer an excerpt from the pen of Harry Hammond—1605-1660. This commentary on 2 Peter, citing chapter 3 verses 1-10, most likely comes from his work *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon all the books of The New Testament, briefly explaining all the difficult places thereof*.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.

1, 2. I have now written two epistles to you, both to the same purpose, to be remembrancers to you whose minds remain yet untainted, of that which you cannot but have heard, being prophesied of in the Old Testament very frequently (Joel 2); and by Christ (Matt 24); and by us apostles of Christ, viz. that within a short time there should come a notable destruction upon the unbelieving or impenitent Jews, and all the polluted Christians among them, and a remarkable deliverance of all the persevering Christians; the one an act of Christ as Lord; the other, as Savior or deliverer.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.

3. But before this come, there is one thing to precede, a very remarkable defection of many from the Christian profession (see 2 Thess 2:3), according to what was foretold by Christ (Matt 24:12); and those that thus forsake Christ shall betake themselves to all unclean practices; and therefore this is now to be expected.

And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

4. And they that do thus forsake the faith shall, as a ground of it, pretend that they perceive themselves cheated by those prophecies, which have promised and foretold this coming of His, which, they say is so far from being performed, that all things stand unchanged, in the same constant form, from the beginning of the world till now, save only that all the men that have lived upon the earth (father Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c.) are dead, and other now live in their steads among us. But for anything else, say they, things have gone in a settled, constant course ever since the creation, without any discernible or observable change.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

5, 6. To these I answer; and first for the latter of these: These atheistical scoffers, that suppose or affirm that there hath been no considerable change since the creation, do not consider what a change there was once in Noah's time, the whole world destroyed with a flood for the sins of impure, impenitent sinners, such as these who now object thus; for the heavens being created at the beginning, and the earth so framed, that there was abundance of waters within the globe thereof, and itself placed in the midst of waters, in the clouds round about, God being pleased in the creation so to dispose of it, in order to the punishing of wicked men, at length the

Henry Hammond, D. D.—2 Peter

windows of the heavens, that is, the clouds, were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up (Gen 7:11), and by this means the whole earth was covered and drowned by waters.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

7. But the world which now is, by the same appointment of God, is now secured that it shall be drowned no more (God having given His promise for—Gen 9:11), nor suffer any other kind of destruction but by fire, which is the punishment to be expected by abominable men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

8. This answer being first given to the latter part of the atheist's objection (v. 4), *that all things continue as they were since the creation*, I now proceed, in the second place, to answer the former part proposed by way of question, *Where is the promise of His coming?* that is, Sure God's promise in the Old Testament repeated by Christ (Matt 24) of His coming to punish the obdurate Jews and Gnostics, and delivering the pure, persevering believers, is not performed. And my answer is this, That you may be mistaken in reckoning of times, in thinking that what the prophets have foretold of the latter days, the times of the Messiah, must be instantly performed, as soon as Christ is gone to heaven, or else it will not be performed at all. In this matter it must be considered who it is that makes the promise (v. 2), an infinite God, and then, though forty years (for example) is a very great time among men, whose lives are so short, yet with God, who is infinite, a thousand years is no considerable space, but a very short and small duration (Ps 90:4), and therefore, though the prophecy be not yet fulfilled, about three or four and thirty (33 or 34) years after Christ's departure

from us, yet it may, and will most certainly, and that within a few years now.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

9. As for any slowness in performing His promise of coming, which they that expect and desire to reap a sudden fruit of it in their deliverance, or that others, which would corrupt them, and make them fall off through despair of it, are apt to charge upon God, it is merely a mistake in them; for it is not thus deferred out of want of kindness to the persevering Christians, but out of abundance of patience and long-sufferance to the worst, and an earnest desire that they may all amend and be delivered, without which amendment, whensoever this coming shall be, all are infallibly destroyed.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

10. But this judgment of Christ, so remarkable on the Jews, shall now shortly come, and that very indiscernibly (see Luke 17:20; 1 Thess 5:2), and the temple shall be suddenly destroyed, the greater part of it burnt, and the city and people utterly consumed.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness

11. Seeing then this destruction shall thus involve all, and now approacheth so near, what an engagement doth this lay upon us to live the most pure, strict lives that ever men lived! X



CREATION TO C

Studies in Rede

Ed is taking a brief hiatus from his series of articles on Matthew 24 in order to research some subjects more thoroughly. In the interim he is providing a series of articles on the dating of the New Testament canon. Ed will resume his series on Matthew 24 after this series concludes—BLM

Apostolic Canonization of the New Testament before AD 70

by Ed Stevens

This article affirms that all 27 books of our New Testament were *written, collected, and certified* as authoritative by the apostles before they passed from the earthly scene just before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The word *canon* simply means the list of sacred writings considered by Christians as inspired, inerrant, and absolutely authoritative for all matters of doctrine and practice. Although the New Testament does not use the word *canon* or *canonical* in reference to its contents or to the collection of Old Testament books, the concepts of *canonicity* and *canonization* (including such concepts as inspiration, authority, direct revelation, and Scripture) are found in the New Testament. In this article, we will look at some New Testament contexts where these concepts are either implicitly or explicitly mentioned.

Contrary to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, it did not give us the canon of Scripture—the Holy Spirit did. The Roman Church's claim is based on the idea of *apostolic succession*. As we Protestants are quick to point out, the office of apostle (specifically the twelve "apostles" of Christ, not the apostles or missionaries of the churches like Barnabas or Mark) required direct eyewitness experience of the resurrected Christ, full inspiration and empowerment by the *Paraclete* (the Holy Spirit or "comforter"), and direct revelation and commission from Christ. The only exceptions to this were those whom Jesus directly commissioned (such as Paul and James) or those upon whom Peter and the apostles laid their hands (such as Mark, Luke, and Jude) using the canonical authority ("the keys of the Kingdom," Matt 16:19) that Christ had given to Peter. That authority passed away permanently when Peter and the other inspired apostles and prophets left the earthly scene.

If that authority of Peter and the apostles had been given to each successive generation of church leaders (i.e., apostolic succession) after the passing of Peter and the apostles, it would mean that the gift of inspiration was also passed down perpetually, thus keeping the canon open forever. The Mormons especially, with their *Book of Mormon*, would love that idea of the canon still being open, as would the Moonies with their writings of Sun Myung Moon. The Roman Catholic idea of apostolic

succession opens the door for all kinds of confusion and corruption to creep into the church, and cheapens the idea of the inspiration, inerrancy, and absolute authority of the true canon of Scripture.

However, this idea of a closed canon by the time of the passing of the apostles is a sword that cuts both ways. Not only does it rule out the Roman Church's claim of having the right to decide the content of our canon, it rules out *all* other claims by Protestants (and the cults as well). What we are affirming here is that the apostles were the only ones who had the inspiration and authority to not only *write* inspired Scripture, but also to infallibly *decide* which books were authoritative. Subsequent church leaders were neither inspired, inerrant, eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ, nor directly commissioned by Him. This means that the only Christians who were ever qualified to set the boundaries of the New Testament canon were those very apostles who wrote the inspired books in the first place. This view is called *apostolic canonization*. It is not a new theory nor is it exclusive to Preterism (cf. Ernest L. Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, 1994), but it is certainly consistent with the Preterist idea of a pre-70 date for all the New Testament books.

The challenge to both Protestants and Catholics is now clear: Does the New Testament contain historical evidence which demonstrates not only that the apostles *wrote* those inspired books, but also made an authoritative, *certified collection* of them? That is the burden of this series of articles, and to demonstrate this we must go back before the Athanasian Canon of the fourth century, before the Muratorian Fragment (late second century, ca. 170 AD), and even before the New Testament books were written, to look at the Old Testament basis for the development of a New Testament canon. We find a chain of canonical authority that begins with Moses and ends with "the prophet like Moses."

The LORD said to me [Moses], "... I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put **My words** in his mouth, and he shall speak to them **ALL that I command him**. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to **My words** which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him." (Deut 18:17-19 NASB95)

CONSUMMATION

emptive History



[Peter speaking] Moses said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall **give heed to everything** He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not **heed that prophet** shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:22-23 NASB95)

While he [Peter] was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them [during the Transfiguration], and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; **listen to Him!**” (Matt 17:5 NASB95; cf. Luke 9:35)

Jesus was the prophet like Moses who was to come. Moses was the archetype, both in the spoken word and the written word. Moses first spoke the word, and then later wrote it down. Christ certainly spoke the word, but did not write it down. But we can see in the pages of the New Testament that Jesus was making preparations through the Paraclete for His Word to be written down by His apostles and prophets. Interesting in this regard is Christ’s statement about the value of a scribe who became a disciple of the kingdom:

And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every **scribe** who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who **brings out of his treasure things new and old.**” (Matt 13:52 NASB95)

The scribe who became a disciple of Jesus would use his talents to produce treasures both **new** and old (note the word “new” here). None of the twelve apostles were scribes by trade, as far as we know. So this means Jesus anticipated some scribes becoming Christians and using their writing and copying skills to produce some “**new**” canonical Scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the oversight of the twelve apostles. Both Mark and Luke might fit this scenario.

Several times Jesus mentions to the apostles the coming work of the Paraclete: “. . . do not worry about how or what you are to say, for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say, for it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Matt 10:19-20 NASB95).

Jesus promised to send to them the Holy Spirit, Who would “teach you **ALL** things,” “bring to your remembrance **ALL** that I said to you,” “guide you into **ALL** the truth,” and “disclose to you what is to come” (John 14:26; 16:13 NASB95; emphasis mine). Notice the use of the word “**ALL**” in three of these phrases regarding the work of the Paraclete. This does not sound like the canon would be left open after the Paraclete finished giving them **ALL** things, **ALL** truth, and brought to their remembrance **ALL** that Jesus wanted them to teach. Nothing would be left out—the Holy Spirit would make sure **the whole** Word of Christ was completely revealed, taught, and written down—after which the canon would be closed.

Just before His ascension, Christ claimed that He had **ALL** authority [including canonical authority] in heaven and on earth, and therefore commissioned the twelve (and Paul later; see Rom 1:5 and Gal 1:1-16) to make disciples of **ALL** the nations and to teach them to observe **ALL** that He had commanded them, and that He would be with them **ALL** the days until the End of the Age (Matt 28:18-20; cf. Deut 18:18-19). Notice that the very authority (**ALL** authority in heaven and earth) which Jesus claimed to have, was the very authority Moses said that the prophet like him would have (Deut 18:19), and that the prophet like Moses would speak **ALL** that God commanded him to speak. Jesus said repeatedly to his disciples (Matt 11:27; John 3:35; 5:22; 13:3; 17:2) that the Father had given Him **ALL** the words and **ALL** the authority, and that He was now commissioning (authorizing) them to go and teach **ALL** the nations **ALL** that He had taught them. The King was sending out His authorized emissaries. Through the work of the Paraclete, Jesus passed **ALL** of His inspired words, as well as the authority (the authorization) to teach it and write it down and certify it as true, to Peter and the apostles. In addition to the great commission authority given generally to the twelve, Peter was also given the keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:19), which included canonical authority. Whatever Peter bound



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OBJECTION OVER

And So, All Israel Shall be Saved Romans 11:26f

Objection: “Paul writes in Romans 11:26f that Israel will be saved at the coming of the Lord. Israel was not saved in AD 70; therefore Jesus did not come in AD 70.”

In 1982 I participated in my first formal public debate. Assuming that my dispensational opponent would focus on the salvation of Israel, I prepared by studying with a renowned church of Christ scholar. When I asked about Romans 11:25f, he responded, “Don, all I can say is that you need to pray that your opponent does not go to Romans 11!” I was stunned, yet his uncertainty on Romans 11 is typical among amillennialists. Amillennialist Mac Deaver evaded my affirmative arguments on Romans 11 during our formal debate in 2008. In fact, when pressed, Deaver changed his position repeatedly during the course of the debate!¹

So, what is Paul’s meaning in Romans 11?² Does he predict a national restoration of Israel at Christ’s Second Coming? Does he teach the salvation of “all Israel,” i.e., every Jew living at the time of Christ’s coming, or the salvation of every person of the physical line of Abraham who has ever lived? Although we cannot address every detail of Romans 11, we will provide solid evidence to confidently affirm that Romans 11:26f was fulfilled at Christ’s coming in AD 70. To answer the objection above, we will examine Romans 11 in the light of these three issues:

1. The prophetic source of Romans 11:25f (For brevity we will only examine two of the three prophecies from which Paul draws—Isaiah 27 and Isaiah 59).
2. Romans 11:26f in light of Romans 11:7f.
3. The salvation of “all Israel” and the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14.

The Prophetic Source of Romans 11:26f

Although it is widely recognized that Romans 11:25f anticipated the fulfillment of Isaiah 27 and 59, and Jeremiah 31, the following is mostly ignored regarding both of the Isaianic prophecies:

The salvation of Israel promised in Isaiah 27 would come at the Day of the Lord, when He would judge the blood of the martyrs (Isa 26:21). Furthermore, this salvation would come “*When He makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten to dust . . . the fortified city will be desolate . . . Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, and He who formed them will show them no favor*” (Isa 27:9-11).

The Day of the Lord is always a two-edged sword including both salvation and judgment. Note that in Isaiah 25, the source of Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection at the salvation of Israel (cf. 1 Cor 15:55f and Isa 25:8-9), the Day of Salvation is

specifically posited as the time when the City would be desolated and the Temple turned over to foreigners (Isa 25:1-3).

The prophecy of Isaiah 59 likewise foretold the salvation of Israel at the coming of the Lord in judgment of Israel for shedding innocent blood (Isa 59:3-12). Three times YHVH accused Israel of shedding innocent blood, and said that her sin was mounting up to heaven. This is the “filling of the measure of sin” (cf. Matt 23:32f).

In Isaiah 59:15f, the prophet foretold the salvation of Israel at the coming of the Lord, when He would bring *salvation* for the righteous, but *vengeance* on His enemies.

So we see that in both Isaiah 27 and Isaiah 59 (the sources for Rom 11:26), the prophet said Israel’s salvation would be *when the Lord avenged the shed blood of the saints*.

In Matthew 23, Jesus undeniably posited Israel’s judgment for shedding innocent blood (*all the blood of all the righteous shed on the earth*, Matt 23:33f), at His coming in AD 70.³

This would be the fulfillment of the days of vengeance (Luke 21:22), which even millennialists agree occurred in AD 70!⁴ Here, then, is my argument:

Premise 1: The salvation of Israel in Romans 11:26f would be in fulfillment of Isaiah 27 and 59.

Premise 2: Isaiah 27 and 59 foretold the coming of Christ in judgment of Israel for shedding innocent blood.

Premise 3: Christ came in judgment of Israel for shedding innocent blood in AD 70.

Conclusion: Therefore, Romans 11:26f was fulfilled at the coming of Christ in AD 70.

Romans 11:7 and Romans 11:26

Romans 11:7 is one of the most overlooked verses in discussions concerning Israel’s hope: “*Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*” Paul says emphatically that, *when he wrote*, the elect, the righteous remnant, was obtaining that for which Israel sought! *Do you catch the power of that?*

Paul’s affirmation cannot be over emphasized or mitigated. However one defines the hope of Israel,⁵ Paul stated that the remnant was receiving it in the first century!

Millennialists seek to deflect the power of this argument by saying Paul was speaking of the spiritual promises made to Abraham, not the nationalistic promises. We cannot address this fully, but let me address one central tenet of millennialism. Millennialists claim that the Church was not predicted *anywhere* in the Old Testament. This means that the Church was not what Israel sought.

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OBJECTION: OVERRULED!



The millennialists argue that the hope of Israel was the kingdom. This means that Romans 11 destroys the millennial doctrine! Notice the argument:

Premise 1: The church was not the hope of Israel (according to Millennialism).

Premise 2: The Messianic kingdom was the hope of Israel.

Premise 3: Paul said the remnant was receiving the hope of Israel.

Conclusion: Therefore, the remnant was receiving the Messianic Kingdom, the hope of Israel.

Paul said he preached *nothing* but the hope of Israel found in Moses and the prophets (Acts 24:14f; 26:6f, 21f). What Paul preached was what Israel was looking for. Paul said the remnant was receiving the hope of Israel in the first century!⁶ Let's tie these concepts together:

Premise 1: That for which Israel sought in Romans 11:7 is the salvation promised in Romans 11:26f.

Premise 2: The remnant was already entering into that salvation when Paul wrote (Romans 11:7).

Premise 3: The salvation promised in Romans 11:26f would be completed (consummated) at Christ's coming in fulfillment of Isaiah 27 and Isaiah 59.

Premise 4: But, Isaiah 27 and Isaiah 59 would be fulfilled in the AD 70 judgment of Israel for shedding the blood of the martyrs (Matthew 23).

Conclusion: Therefore, that for which Israel sought, the kingdom and salvation, was completed, (consummated) at Christ's AD 70 coming in the judgment of Israel for shedding the blood of the martyrs.

All Israel and Revelation

Now to consider "all Israel" and Revelation, I must be ever so brief:

Premise 1: Jesus said His Parousia for the salvation of the elect would be "immediately (Greek *eutheos*) after" the Tribulation (Matt 24:29-31).

Premise 2: In Revelation 7 and 14, the 144,000 constitute the elect remnant of Israel.

Premise 3: The 144,000 would be saved at the Day of the Lord (Rev 16:14f).

Premise 4: The 144,000 would experience the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:14).

Premise 5: But, the 144,000 were *the first fruits of those redeemed to God from men* (Rev 14:2f, i.e., they were *the first generation of Jewish Christians!*).

Conclusion: Therefore, the Great Tribulation—and thus the Parousia of Christ for the

salvation of the elect—occurred in the first-century generation.

Regardless of one's concept of the Messianic Kingdom, *the remnant was receiving that kingdom in the first century*. Regardless of one's concept of the salvation of Israel, Paul wrote that it would arrive in fulfillment of the prophecies of the avenging of the martyrs—which, according to Jesus, was in AD 70 (Matt 23:34-36). Regardless of one's concept of what the Tribulation or the *Parousia* might be, John placed those events in the first century. The Objection is overruled!

¹ Deaver vs. Preston Debate—March, 2008, Carlsbad, NM. The debate is available from me in MP3 at JaDon Management, Inc. 1405 4th Ave. N.W. #109, Ardmore, OK, 73401. Price is \$24.95 + \$4.50 postage.

² For a fuller discussion of the issues of Romans 11 see my seven lesson audio presentation, "All Israel Shall Be Saved." Also, see my book *Seventy Weeks Are Determined . . . For the Resurrection*. Available from my websites: www.bibleprophecy.com and www.eschatology.org

³ In April of 2002, Ed Stevens and I debated two Amillennialists. I presented a major affirmative on Romans 11 and the Resurrection. The material visibly stunned our opponents and they literally said not one word in response. That debate is available from my website: www.eschatology.org

⁴ Thomas Ice says of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70: "Luke notes that God's vengeance on His elect nation 'is in order that all things that are written may be fulfilled.' Jesus is telling the nation that God will fulfill all the curses of the Mosaic Covenant because of Israel's disobedience. He will not relent and merely bring to pass a partial fulfillment of His vengeance." Thomas Ice and Kenneth Gentry, *The Great Tribulation: Past or Present, A Written Debate* (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1999), p. 98.

⁵ In my upcoming book on 1 Thessalonians 4:13f, *We Shall Meet Him in the Air: The Marriage of the King of Kings*, I extensively catalogue the hope of Israel under several headings.

⁶ This falsifies the millennial contention that the Messianic kingdom offer was postponed.

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House Divided

House Divided: Imminent Redemption in Luke 21:27-28 and Romans 8:18-23

The Abandonment of the Analogy of Scripture

The Westminster Confession of Faith states that “the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”¹ J. I. Packer understands this to mean “that we must give ourselves in Bible study to following out the unities, cross-references and topical links which Scripture provides.”² There is nothing controversial within the Reformed community about the above principles. Reformed believers all strive to be faithful to the principle of “the analogy of Scripture.” This being the case, why then are there so many differing opinions within the Reformed community when it comes to the question of how to form a sound eschatology? There are perhaps as many differing interpretations of eschatological texts as there are denominations. Clearly, there is a need to bridge the gap and bring healing to this eschatological division within Reformed and Protestant churches.

What is the cause of the division? It is widely assumed that the cause is the enigmatic nature of the texts in question. While I agree that there are difficult eschatological texts, I submit in this article that the problem lies not in the vagueness of Scripture but rather in our unwitting betrayal of the principle of the analogy of Scripture.

Reformed eschatology has a strong Preterist tradition, which argues that the New Testament’s eschatological statements of imminence must be taken literally because there are no contextual indicators leading us to interpret them in any other way. As Gary DeMar states, “any student of the Bible who does not interpret these time texts to mean anything other than close at hand is in jeopardy of **denying the integrity of the Bible.**”³ To put a finer point on it, R. C. Sproul suggests that any eschatology which denies a literal interpretation of the New Testament’s time texts has adopted a liberal or neo-orthodox view of God and time: “When F. F. Bruce speaks of faith making the time be ‘at hand,’ this sounds all too much like Rudolf Bultmann’s famous theology of timelessness, which removes the object of faith from the realm of real history and consigns it to a super temporal realm of the always present *hic et nunc* [here and now].”⁴ Sadly, this same view is so commonly articulated among Reformed and Evangelical believers⁵ that few seem to recognize its liberal and mystical implications or its exegetical lack of support. In the interest of preserving eschatological futurism, many have compromised the

principle of scriptural analogy by sweeping away the plain and obvious meaning of the imminence texts. In so doing, conservatives are unwittingly handling the Scriptures like Bultmann.

In an effort to mitigate this liberalism, some have become partially Preterist, suggesting two returns of Christ, one in AD 70 and another yet-future final coming and resurrection. The obvious problem with this view is that “Paul looked for one climactic future event, the return of Jesus Christ, the blessed hope.”⁶ The Partial Preterist side of our “house divided” understands that in the AD 70 return of Christ (accomplished in *His* generation) God “gathered” and “redeemed” His church. Jesus was straightforward and clear that “all these things” were going to take place in His generation. Thus, Partial Preterists swim bravely against a strong tide of “newspaper exegesis.”

On the other hand, Evangelical and Reformed theologians who reject Partial Preterism are nevertheless faithful to the principle of the analogy of Scripture when they link the imminent “gathering” in Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27 to Paul’s “gathering” and “catching away” (“rapture”/ resurrection) in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1. When they tie the imminent “redemption” in Luke 21:28 to the “redemption of the Body” and of “the creation” in Romans 8:18-23, they rightly reject the exegetical breaking asunder of Scriptures that are thematically one.

The remainder of this article offers a brief examination of these texts as well as a response to the “house divided” approach of Keith Mathison and his co-authors in their critique of “Hyper-Preterism” titled *When Shall These Things Be?* (hereafter *WSTTB?*).⁷ Mathison and his co-authors are a microcosm of the Church. Though they enjoy unity in the belief of a yet-future “second coming” and resurrection of the dead, their eschatological house is divided. Some believe the eschatology of the Bible is mostly fulfilled. Others believe it is mostly or wholly unfulfilled. Their disagreements with each other are not rooted in the difficulty of the texts, but rather in the rejection of the sure foundation of sound scriptural analogy. In setting aside the plain sense of thematically congruent Scriptures, they have constructed their eschatological house on exegetical sand, and it therefore “cannot stand.”

Restoring the Analogy of Scripture

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these

*Michael Sullivan offers
“House Divided,” a co-
“When Shall the*

Michael Sullivan



things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:27-28). Appealing to the principle of the analogy of Scripture, John Murray and other Reformed theologians understood Paul, in Romans 8, to be building upon the “redemption” that Jesus discussed in the Olivet discourse: “Now in Luke 21:28 . . . [t]his word ‘redemption’ (*apolutrosin*), when used with reference to the future, has a distinctly eschatological connotation, the final redemption, the consummation of the redemptive process (cf. Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:14; 4:30). Hence *analogy* would again point to the eschatological complex of events.”⁸ We cannot brush off Murray’s comments lightly when he connects these texts to the resurrection and redemption of Romans 8, but is it exegetically sound to say that the redemption of Romans 8:18-23 occurred in Jesus’ generation?

According to most Reformed eschatological paradigms, Romans 8 is teaching a biological resurrection and molecular transformation of our corpses and of the entire universe during the return of Christ at “the end of time.”

However, when we consider the Preterist side of Reformed and Evangelical eschatology with regard to the restoration of creation in the various related texts (Matt 5:17-18; 24:29, 35; Eph 1:10; 2 Pet 3; 1 John 2:17-18 and Rev 21:1), we soon discover that, *in context*, these passages are

referring to the temple’s destruction or to the civil and religious worlds of men—either Jews or Gentiles.⁹ The civil and religious rulers of the Old Covenant system or world, along with the temple, were the “sun, moon, and stars,” which made up the “heaven and earth” of the world that perished in AD 70.¹⁰

In context, the time was “at hand” for the “elements” to be burned and for the world of righteousness to take its place (1 Pet 1:4-12; 4:5, 7, 17; 2 Pet 3). Peter was describing a change of covenantal worlds. As John Owen and John Lightfoot taught, Peter was not referring to a future return of Christ for the purpose of destroying the planet.¹¹ He was describing a transformation that was to be accomplished at Christ’s Parousia in AD 70. Kenneth Gentry and James Jordan also understand the passing of the “world” and the first heavens and earth (1 John 2:17-18; Rev 21:1) as referring to Christ’s return to end the Old Covenant system in AD 70. It is also understood within Reformed and Evangelical theology that the “times of fulfillment” to reconcile things in “heaven and on the earth” (Eph 1:10) is referring not to the planet earth and angels, but to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. This was the “mystery” of the gospel in which the “whole family” of God, in heaven and on earth, would participate. When we combine the exegesis from some of the best Reformed and Evan-

gelical theologians, we quickly see that none of the New Testament de-creation passages are dealing with planet earth, but are references to the Old Covenant or its people.¹²

Lightfoot associated the “earnest expectation of the creature” and the “whole creation groaning” with the mind and heart of man, and not with planet Earth—not even poetically.¹³ He referenced the “vanity” and “decay” of the creation (Rom 8:20) to the groaning from the “corruption” of sin found in the hearts and minds of mankind (2 Pet 1:4; 2 Cor 11:3; 15:33).¹⁴ Lightfoot is on solid ground here; not only is there lexical evidence to interpret “vanity,” “corruption,” and “decay” as ethical and moral putrefaction in the heart and mind of man, but contextually the passage has nothing to do with hydrogen or oxygen molecules, or with squirrels longing for a better day when they won’t get hit by cars.

Still, one might object that the “redemption” associated with the coming of Christ in Luke 21:27-28 has a clear time text (“this generation”) associated with it (v. 32), but the “redemption of the body” in Romans 8 does not; therefore, one might conclude the two passages are not necessarily parallel. Those who argue this way suggest that the redemption in Luke 21 might simply refer to relief from persecution and nothing more. The premise of their objection, however, is false. There is an imminence text associated with the redemption of the body in Romans 8. Verse 18 reads, “*For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed in us*” (YLT; cf. NSRV, AV, & WEY: “*soon to be manifested*”). It is important to note that the Greek word corresponding to the phrase “about to be” is *mello*. Reformed Partial Preterists such as R. C. Sproul and Kenneth Gentry understand the word *mello* in the book of Revelation to refer to Christ’s return in AD 70. Sproul also writes that it is not unreasonable to apply the imminence indicators found in Romans 13:11-12 (“*. . . for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness. . .*”) to earlier chapters in Romans that do not have explicit time texts.¹⁵

If *mello* is a time indicator that needs to be honored, and if we can apply the time texts in Romans 13:11-12 to earlier chapters, then we cannot ignore this approach in Romans 8. Moreover, claims that the teaching of “the” judgment and resurrection of the living and the dead were not given with imminence indicators tied to them directly are simply not true. Acts 24:15, 25 reads, “*Having hope toward God, which they themselves also wait for, that there is about to be a rising again of the dead, both of*

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House Divided (from p. 11)

righteous and unrighteous. . . . But when he dealt with the subjects of justice, self-control, and **the judgment which is soon to come**, Felix became alarmed . . .” (cf. Acts 17:31, YLT/WEY; WUESTNT; emphases added).¹⁶

In *WSTTB?* (p. 200), Mathison expresses willingness to concede that the imminence in Romans 13:11-12 was fulfilled in AD 70.

. . . it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand . . .

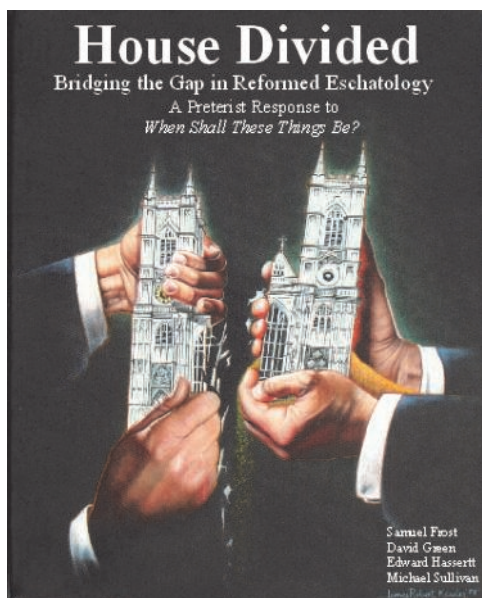
Yet *The Reformation Study Bible*, of which Mathison is an editor, harmonizes Romans 13:11 with Romans 8:23, correctly teaching that “salvation” in that verse is not merely deliverance from persecution (as Mathison theorizes in *WSTTB*): “**salvation**. Here in the sense of future, final redemption (8:23).”¹⁷ The connection between these two passages is made even stronger when we allow the Greek word *mello* in Romans 8 to be translated the way it is predominately used in the New Testament.

In regard to the phrase “*the sufferings of this present time*,”—and as much as I can relate to R. C. Sproul, Jr., losing his hair and gaining some weight around his midsection (*WSTTB?* p. ix)—his appeal to the “sufferings” and “the redemption of the body” in our text have nothing to do with those kinds of issues. The *context* of the “groaning” of these first-century Christians can be found in the previous chapter.

The sufferings Paul had in mind here were eschatological—the birth pains that were to precede Christ’s return in AD 70 (Matt 24:8; Rom 8:22). They had to do with man groaning under the inescapable tyranny of sin brought about by being condemned in Adam under the Law of God. For Paul, this produced a “death” but it was not a physical death—for how is it that a dead man writes a complex legal treatise such as Romans? Death in these chapters (Rom 5-6) had nothing to do with the idea of the fleshly corpse of man dying biologically as a result of Adam’s sin.¹⁸ “Bondage,” according to the immediate context, had to do with spiritual death and groaning under the condemnation of the Law (cf. Rom 7:2, 7, 15). The sufferings in Romans 8, then, referred to the eschatological persecutions that preceded Christ’s return (Dan 7:21-22; Matt 24:9, 27-31; 10:17-23) and not to present-day Christians suffering the traumas of birth defects, aging, cancer, etc.

Conclusion

The “salvation” and “redemption” associated with Christ’s Second Coming in AD 70 entailed much more than a physical flight to the wilderness of Pella, as some commentators have proposed. Christ’s Parousia in AD 70 was a redemptive and soteriological event that occurred “in” and “within” the minds, consciences and hearts of the Church, when God consumed by fire the Adamic world of Satan, Sin, Death and Condemnation, consummately purging His church of sin through the Cross of Christ (Rom 8:18-23; 11:26-27; 13:11-12; Heb 8-10). The “redemption” of Luke 21:28 is the “redemption of the body” in Romans 8:18-23. Both the imminence of the time texts and the spiritual nature of their fulfillment require this interpretation.



Olivet Discourse & Luke 17	Romans 8
Sufferings to come (Matt 24:9)	Present sufferings (vv. 17-18)
Christ comes in glory (Matt 24:30)	Were “about to” receive & share in Christ’s glory (vv.17-18)
Kingdom will be realized “within” at Christ’s return (Luke 17:21-37; 21:27-32)	Glory will be “in” them (v. 18)
Redemption & salvation—resurrection (Luke 21:27-28; Matt 24:13, 30-31)	Redemption & salvation—resurrection (vv. 23-24; cf. 11:15-27; 13:11-12)
Birth pains of the tribulation (Matt 24:8)	Pains of childbirth (v. 22)
This would all happen in their “generation” (Matt 24:34)	This was “about to” take place (v. 18)

¹ Westminster Confession, I. ix.

² J. I. Packer, “The Interpretation of Scripture” in *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), pp. 101-114. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/packer1.html>

³ Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, 4th edition (Atlanta: American Vision, 1999), p. 393; emphasis added.

⁴ R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days according To Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), pp. 108-109; emphasis added.

⁵ For example, see Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 126.

⁶ Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), p.130; emphasis added.

⁷ Keith A. Mathison, Kenneth L. Gentry, Charles E. Hill, Richard L. Pratt Jr., Simon J. Kistemaker, Douglas Wilson, and Robert B. Strimple, *When Shall These Things Be? A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004). David Green, Edward Hassert, Jesse Corti and I are currently co-authoring a response to this book.

⁸ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray 2: Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Publications, 1977) , p.389. Unfortunately Murray was inconsistent when it came to Jesus’ teaching that all things in His discourse would be fulfilled in His generation. Had Murray faithfully followed the analogy of Scripture in this regard, he would have seen two things: (1) Christ’s coming on the clouds and the de-creation language in the discourse was metamorphic language describing the fall of religious and civil powers, as John Owen and other reformed theologians have understood; and (2) the coming of Christ, the passing away of “heaven and earth,” the redemption, the resurrection of the dead and the judgment were all “about to be” fulfilled in Jesus’ generation (Rom 8:18-23; Acts 17:31, 24:15 YLT WEY).

⁹ John Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, 3 vols. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Publications, [1852] 1967), Vol. 1, pp. 170-174. H. T. Fletcher-Louis in *Eschatology in Bible & Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, K. E. Brower and Mark W. Elliot, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), pp. 145-169.

¹⁰ Fletcher, *ibid.*, pp. 145-169; DeMar, *ibid.*, pp. 141-154.

¹¹ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Publications, 1972), Vol. 9, pp. 134-135; John Lightfoot, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), Vol. 3, p. 452.

¹² John Owen, *ibid.*, Volume 9, pp. 134-135; John Lightfoot, *ibid.*, Vol.3, p. 452; John Brown, *Discourses*, Vol. 1, pp. 170-174; John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, Volume 2 (Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 617-618; R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days according to Jesus*; Kenneth Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion* (Tyler TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), pp. 363-365; Kenneth Gentry in *Four Views on the Book Of Revelation*, C. Marvin Pate, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), p. 89 (cf. 43 for 1 Jn. 2:17); Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness*, pp. 68-74, 141-154, 191-192; James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1998), pp. 269-279; H. T. Fletcher-Louis in *Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, K. E. Brower and Mark W. Elliot, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), pp. 145-169; Peter J. Leithart,

The Promise of His Appearing: An Exposition of Second Peter (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2004); Keith A. Mathison, *Postmillennialism: An Eschatology of Hope* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999), pp. 114, 157-158; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 345-346; N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 645, n. 42; Hank Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), pp. 84-86.

¹³ “. . . this vanity is improperly applied to this vanishing, changeable, dying state of the creation. For vanity, doth not so much denote the vanishing condition of the outward state, as it doth the **inward vanity and emptiness of the mind**. The Romans to whom this apostle writes, knew well enough how many and how great predictions and promises it had pleased God to publish by his prophets, concerning gathering together and adopting sons to himself among the Gentiles: the manifestation and production of which sons, the whole Gentile world doth now wait for, as it were, with an **out stretched neck**.” John Lightfoot, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, Volume 4, p. 157; emphasis added.

¹⁴ Lightfoot, *ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁵ Sproul, *The Last Days according to Jesus*, pp. 99, 138-140.

¹⁶ Gentry argues that “when used with the aorist infinitive—as in Revelation 1:19—the word’s predominant usage and preferred meaning is: ‘be on the point of, be about to.’ The same is true when the word is used with **the present infinitive**, as in Rev 3:10. The basic meaning in both Thayer and Abbott-Smith is: ‘to be about to.’ (*Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Biblical Economics, 1989], pp. 141-142; emphasis added.) Gentry is correct. The problem, however, is that when the word *mello* refers to the resurrection and judgment of the living and dead in Acts 24:15 and 24:25, it is used with the *present infinitive*. So Gentry boldly ignores the word in those texts.

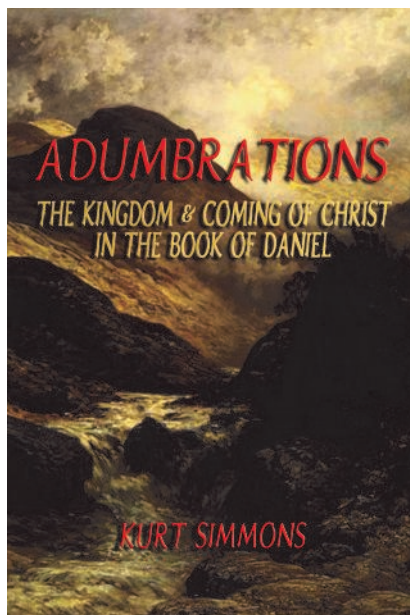
¹⁷ *The Reformation Study Bible*, R. C. Sproul, General Editor, and Keith Mathison, Associate Editor (Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005), pp. 1, 636.

¹⁸ Tom Holland, *Contours in Pauline Theology* (Fearn, Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2004), pp.85-110. Holland is a Reformed theologian who sees Paul’s “body” of flesh, sin, and death not referring to our physical flesh but to the corporate body of Adam as contrasted to the corporate Body of Christ—the Church. He counters Gundry’s individual views of *soma* in Paul’s writings. He also argues for “consistency” in Paul’s use of corporate terms. I recommend this book to any serious student of Reformed theology.

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Ad-um-brate (ad um’ brāt, ad’em brāt’) 1. To give a faint shadow or resemblance of; to outline or sketch. 2. To foreshadow; prefigure. 3. To darken or conceal partially; overshadow.



Many readers write us asking if we know of any Preterists in their area. Although we do our best to connect those who are willing to share contact information, we have fallen behind in the task. Therefore, we are pleased to inform readers of Michael Fenemore’s “Locate Preterists” map. This web-based map visually allows you to locate Preterists and allows you to decide how much contact information to provide (an email address is required).

In your web browser go to: www.preterism.info and click on the “Locate Preterists” link in the right-hand column. Then just follow the instructions!

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Ed Stevens (from p. 7)

or loosed on earth was to be considered as being bound or loosed by Christ himself in heaven. But that authority was not passed on to succeeding generations of church leaders after Peter.

Christ sent the Paraclete to be with the apostles “**ALL** the days” (of their lifetime) to enable them to complete the great commission before the End of the Age. The Paraclete’s presence with them, and His work in and through them, would continue to the End of the Age. If the End of the Age is still future, then the Roman Catholic idea of apostolic succession must be true. However, it seems clear from Jesus’ use of the phrase End of the Age in Matthew 24:3 that “the end” refers to the end of the Jewish age in AD 70. This means that the disciples would have completed the proclamation of the gospel before the End of the Age in AD 70. Both the apostle Paul and Eusebius affirm that it was accomplished:

... [the] gospel ... **has been made known to ALL the nations.** . . . (Rom 16:25-27 NASB95, cf. Rom 10:18; 15:19)

... the gospel which has come to you, just as **in ALL the world** also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing (Col 1:5b-6a NASB95)

... the gospel that you have heard, which was **proclaimed in ALL creation under heaven** (Col 1:23 NASB95)

At that very time, indeed, the voice of his holy apostles “**went throughout ALL the earth, and their words to the end of the world.**” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.8.11 – Kirsopp Lake translation)

The exclusive authority to *deliver* Christ’s one true distinctive gospel was given *only* to the first-century apostles and prophets. Jesus gave Peter the keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:19), so that whatever he bound or loosed would be authoritative for **ALL** generations to come (“*once for ALL delivered to the saints*” Jude 3, emphasis mine). Whatever else this binding and loosing authority might have meant, it at least included the authority to write, collect, and certify the canon of Scripture. So if Peter allowed or disallowed

something, it was considered as having been bound or loosed by Christ Himself. Evidently Peter recognized (canonized) James and Jude as inspired witnesses of their risen brother Jesus, the same way he recognized (canonized) Paul as an inspired witness of the resurrected Christ. According to tradition, Mark and Luke wrote under the supervision of Peter and Paul respectively. Jude 3 affirms that Peter and those whom Peter canonized did *deliver* (i.e., write, collect, and certify) that inspired canon faithfully:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to **write you** about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to **write to you** appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for ALL handed down [delivered] to the saints.** (Jude 3 NASB95)

The canonical authority which Peter possessed was not passed down successively to each new generation of church leaders. After the passing of Peter and the other apostles from the earthly scene, no one has the authority to write, collect, or certify the canon because they are unable (neither inspired nor empowered) to do so. The Roman church failed to realize that the inspiration and empowerment was not passed down successively to each new head bishop of the Roman church. That failure raises a whole host of historical issues that need to be analyzed by Preterists as we continue the process of Reformation and Restoration.

Evangelical Christians affirm that the first-century apostles were inspired and their writings were canonical. But we have not all taken the next logical step to conclude that the *only* ones who could infallibly decide which books were canonical were those who had been divinely inspired to write them in the first place. The apostles, and Peter specifically, accomplished that *writing, collection* and *certification* of the canon before they left the earthly scene.

In future articles, we will look more closely at each of these three steps in the process of delivering the canon to the saints: writing, collecting, and certifying. The burden of those holding the *apostolic canonization* view is to demonstrate that all three steps occurred during the lifetime and under the oversight of the twelve apostles (and Peter especially) in the first century before AD 70. ❌

It was at this point that I began to ask myself just why *any* of the books of the New Testament needed to be put after the fall of Jerusalem in 70. As one began to look at them, and in particular the epistle to the Hebrews, Acts and the Apocalypse, was it not strange that this cataclysmic event was never once mentioned or apparently hinted at?

John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p. 10

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In this issue:

Henry Hammond on 2 Peter

The New Testament canon
written before AD 70

All Israel shall be saved

House divided—reformed
eschatology

Locate other Preterists!

Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

It's about the time Jesus told His disciples that He would return—*this (His) generation!*

It's about the time the New Testament authors told their readers Jesus would return—*soon, near, at hand, shortly!*

It's about time for a scriptural explanation other than delay!

It's about time for a “last days” view that doesn't conjure up gaps and parenthetical ages!



Preterism . . . *maybe it's about time you looked into it!*