

New Features on Prewrathministries.org

Now on the website we have categorized the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. All of the questions are grouped under subject headings which should make reviewing the questions much easier. Also, as the number of questions has grown, this has helped keep the page more manageable. If you haven't seen it in awhile - go try out the new format.

Near/Far Prophecy & The 7 Churches

One critical aspect of understanding Biblical prophecy is the recognition of what is called the Near/Far application of prophecy. This is a common aspect of prophecy throughout scripture. One of the clearest examples of this is found when Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah regarding Jesus' birth. God used Isaiah to make a prophecy to King Ahaz over 400 years before Jesus was born: **Isaiah 7:14** (NIV) "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. **15** He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. **16** But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste." This prophecy applied to the situation King Ahaz found himself in back in Isaiah's day. But then Matthew quotes this prophecy to apply to something much farther in the future. **Matt 1:22** (NIV) All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel--which means, 'God with us.'" There were several hundred years between these two

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Feature Article: The Preterist View

By Elbert Charpie

The word "preterist" is from the Latin "praeter" meaning "past" or "beyond." The Preterist view is centered on the concept that apocalyptic prophecy, especially in the book of Revelation, was culminated at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Now it must be said that as with other views there are variations within the Preterist camp, but there are two main views. Partial Preterism sees all prophecy being fulfilled by A.D. 70 except Jesus return and the resurrection of the dead. Full Preterism differs in that it sees even Jesus return and the resurrection of the dead happening by A.D. 70.¹ The Preterist view contains some strong arguments. Among these are the following: In Matthew 24—the Olivet Discourse, the discussion of the end times began with Jesus referring to the destruction of the temple. Of course, this happened in A.D. 70. Also, Jesus made the following comment in this passage... **Matt 24:33** (NIV) "Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. **34** I tell you the truth, *this generation will certainly not pass away* until all these things have happened." Here Jesus plainly states that the generation listening to Him (according to the Preterists) would not pass away until all the events surrounding His return came to pass. According to this view, New Testament writers fully expected Jesus' return within their lifetimes. For example: **Matt 16:28** (NIV) "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." **Rom. 13:12**, "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here." **I Cor. 7:29** and **31**, "The time is short. This world in its present form is passing away." **I Cor. 10:11**, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come." **Hebrews 10:37**, "In just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay." along with many other passages. The Preterists claim that the NT writers saw Jesus return as "near." Preterists claim that "near" is 30 or 40 years away, not 2,000 or 3,000 years away. Full Preterists believe the rapture happened in A.D. 70 and is evidenced by a lack of missionary activity and Christian writings for nearly a generation after A.D. 70.² Furthermore, they state that Josephus, Eusebius, Tacitus, and the Talmud all reference heavenly and angelic disturbances that surrounded the fall of Jerusalem.³ For Preterists the "end of the age" that Jesus referenced in Matthew 24, was the end of Biblical Judaism. Full Preterists see the current age as the "new heaven and earth" - only in a spiritual sense. It is new in the sense that Jesus reigns spiritually. They believe that this current age will last perhaps thousands of years and that we are not in the "last days" as futurists promote. Partial Preterists see the millennium as referring to the current age and not as a literal 1,000 years, but as an indefinite period of time.

Now, my problems with the Preterist view are as follows: first, the Preterist view has to approach scripture from an allegorical viewpoint. Even very specific passages in Revelation such as the beasts from the abyss that have such a detailed description could not have taken place before A.D. 70 without it becoming a major earmark of history. Therefore, it has to be an allegorical reference to something else that actually happened. Or, Preterists might assign it to a heavenly or spiritual event of which those on the earth would have no knowledge. It is significant that several times in the book of Revelation the

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The Preterist View *(Continued from page 1)*

judgments are proclaimed to be directed toward the “earth-dwellers.” This reoccurring theme would seem to make a problem for the assumption that many of these events happened in the heavenly realm. Furthermore, there are scriptures which indicate that there would be a span of time before the end of time would come. For example: **Daniel 9:26** (NIV) “After the sixty-two `sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue *until the end*, and desolations have been decreed.” This indicates that the destruction of the temple will not yet be the end. Also, **2 Peter 3:4** (NIV) They will say, “Where is this `coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” Here, Peter is implying that the Lord may tarry in His coming. Preterists also have a problem when dealing with the Antichrist. Had such a figure appeared on the scene, it would surely have been recorded in history. Preterists claim that Antichrist did not necessarily have to be an individual, but an antichristian spirit. Another problem for the Preterists is the date of the writing of Revelation. Most scholars date the writing in the mid 90's A.D. If this is so, then the Preterist view would be impossible. It would be prophecy after the fact! Preterists hold to an earlier date of right around 70 A.D. In this writer's opinion, if the book were written that close to the fulfillment of the events it described, what was the purpose of the book? No other prophecy in all of scripture was written so close to its fulfillment. The Preterists hold to the argument that the NT writers saw the return of the Lord as being “near.” And, this is true. But, even in the Old Testament, the prophets saw the Day of the Lord as also near. For example: **Isaiah 13:6** (NIV) “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. **Ezekiel 30:3** (NIV) For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near-- a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.,” **Joel 1:15** (NIV) Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.,” **Obadiah 1:15** (NIV) “The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.,” **Zephaniah 1:14** (NIV) “The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there.” These prophecies were written at least 400 years before Jesus was born! Luke was still looking for the Day of the Lord in **Acts 2:20** (NIV) “The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Last, the Preterist view seems to ignore the doctrine of the “Day of the Lord.” This teaching had become a concrete doctrine well before the New Testament was written. We know this because Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: **1 Thess 5:1** (NIV) “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” These readers were very familiar with the Day of the Lord. But the Day of the Lord is described as a day of judgment and devastation upon all the nations of the earth, and this definitely did not happen in 70 A.D. The Preterists might try to claim that the Day of the Lord is still a future event, but if that is the case, how can it be associated with the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff and 5:1-2? In human reasoning, the Preterist view makes a lot of sense, but when the whole picture of the Day of the Lord and the reason for its coming as explained in Daniel 9:24 is taken into account the Preterist view just doesn't make sense.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preterism>

² http://www.preteristarchive.com/Preterism/stevens-ed_p_01.html

³ <http://www.preterist.org/>

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fulfillments. Therefore, it was fulfilled in the near future in King Ahaz's time and in the far future when Jesus was born. This is a common occurrence in Biblical prophecy. So, the student of prophecy must be aware that there may be a historical and a future element to any given prophecy. I believe this to be the case when we read of the seven churches at the beginning of the book of Revelation. One cannot deny that these messages applied to the actual first century churches that existed in Asia Minor at the time the book was written. The Preterists would say that this is the only application. Even many futurists may agree. But many, and I believe correctly so, see that these letters to the seven churches have an application much greater also. There are three common views of the churches: 1) They are purely historical letters with no future application, 2) They are symbolic of ages of church history—and most that hold to this view see us presently in the Laodicean church age. 3) They are typical pictures of the general state of the church at the time of the end. After much study and consideration, this writer has come up with a fourth option. There are seven churches and seven seals. The seals depict what will be going on in the world during the 70th week up until the Day of the Lord begins. What if the seven churches depict what is going on in the church during the 70th week. If that is so, there would be some interesting parallels wouldn't there? I have a study on the Seven Churches which I plan to make available on the website in the very near future.