

## ARTICLE FOR **FULFILLED! MAGAZINE**, Vol. 6, #2; Summer 2011

### **PERSPECTIVES: How the Core Preterist View of Biblical End-Times (Eschatology) Affects (or Should Affect) One's Daily Christian Walk**

As I pondered upon the theme of this installment of "Perspectives," the concept of *confidence* kept coming to the fore—confidence in two spheres of our existence, spheres I've dubbed *Personal Confidence* and *Interpersonal Confidence*. Regarding both of these spheres, I'm reminded of a saying I've heard and read quite often in my 47 years: "If a child of God doesn't convey a conviction of his own salvation, he shouldn't expect to convert anyone to their salvation." This principle is readily observed in action among salesmen; in fact, just ask any sales executive which of his representatives are the most successful in recruiting other representatives: the ones who exude assurance and enthusiasm about the business or the ones who don't?

I realize it's easier for a preterist than for a non-preterist to comprehend and appreciate what I'm about to say, but surely there are at least a few out there in Christendom who understand something of the preterist view and therefore know from where I'm coming when I say that it has been my experience that most who aren't of the fulfilled prophecy (preterist) persuasion, such as premillennialists and amillennialists, don't emanate the joy and confidence necessary to change their worlds; there's just too much pessimism involved in non-preterist paradigms of eschatology. As a former amillennialist and from my experience around others of the non-preterist persuasion, I can tell you that the daily lives of most folks are sadly laden with concerns of uncertainty about the past (what happened and what didn't), the present (their relationship with God), and the future (both the imminent and the distant). This not only negatively affects their personal lives, creating harmful mental and physical stress, but also—and perhaps more importantly—those around them. Why the latter? Because they mar what should be an appealing, positive "testimony" for Christ, thereby having part in the loss of souls, perhaps even those of their own families. Do we actually believe the New Covenant age that God spent so much time and effort bringing to fruition was meant to have effectively the same outlook on life that the Old Covenant age already possessed? What would be the point in that?

As preterists, we don't live in the wilderness of sin, suffering, and struggling, but in the renewed garden of a re-established relationship with our Creator—paradise restored, the new heaven and new earth. We don't live in an age of *more prophecies* and *more promises*, but in an age of *fulfillment* and *completeness*. After all, what would be "better" about a New Covenant age (as *Hebrews* teaches) that's so dark it needs light from the Old Covenant until the dawning new day *finally* arrives in still yet *another* age (cf. 2 Pet. 1:19)? And if this age, which had so much promise, has actually, merely turned out to be little different than the last one, what should we expect from the supposed next one? For there's no way to make the language any plainer than it was in the New Covenant Scriptures! Non-preterists should find it rather strange that God's new Israel is asked to gird up herself in preparation for yet *another* "end" (cf. 1 Pet. 1:13), begging the question, "When will it all *finally* end (or consummate)?"

Recall what Paul wrote to those suffering first-generation Christians: "It's high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:11-12a). Consider this:

Paul was inspired to write those words after only a *few* of "the last days" had transpired. So, after the passing of nearly 2,000 years, what adjectives and adverbs could we possibly employ to make things sound any more imminent today if, as many claim, the end is imminent? In other words, how much *more awake* can we become? Or how much *nearer* can salvation get? Besides, if "the day" of verse 12 is yet to arrive, wasn't Paul's language to his audience at least somewhat deceptive?

My whole point, of course, is this: There's *power* in the concept of eschatological completeness, that is in the absolute fulfillment of God's end-time promises; so—if we're truly persuaded of this—let's walk and talk like it! Surely we can see how living out our *confidence* in God's fulfilled promises would very positively affect our lives and the lives of those around us; so let's *feel* it, and thus walk and talk like it! (If you have access to a copy of Max King's *The Cross and the Parousia*, grab it and read pages 669 through 703 [or at least through 688] for more thought-provoking and encouraging material along these lines.)

So far I've emphasized what people see in us as we live and share our Christianity with them. But there's another very important aspect to our confidence around others that I'd like to emphasize, and it specifically involves what we have to share with those with whom we disagree. See, as preterists we possess the greatest tool (viz. the preterist paradigm itself) for dealing not only with the disseminators of humanly-devised models of *unfulfilled* biblical prophecy (despite numerous passages such as Luke 21:22), but also with the detractors of Christianity in general (Muslims, Jews, atheists, et al.), most of whom employ those humanly-devised models (e.g. amillennialism and premillennialism) against Christians in an attempt to prove that Jesus and His disciples were false prophets, because, according to those commonly held models, their claims of imminency never reached fruition. So are we ready to contend for and defend the true Gospel—the real, *bona fide*, actual Good News (Jude 3)?

There's one last significant detail to consider: In the realm of politics, no one has the upperhand that the preterist has when it comes to making our world—especially our own country—better! Just our biblical understanding of old (physical) Israel and new (spiritual) Israel has the potential to have a major affect on foreign policies concerning the modern-day State of Israel. This would go a long way in avoiding wars, in saving billions of dollars, and perhaps even in provoking others to reconsider their biblical, and consequently political, position. I've contemplated this to the point that it seems to me an almost Garden of Eden of political peace on our planet is within reach if we could just get the world to see that we have this colossal mess today in large part due to our having been fed false religious information concerning Israel for many generations now!

So how does (or should) our preterist view affect our daily lives? It should afford us a previously unexperienced confidence, one that provides us with an assurance of our personal religion and which in turn would attract people to us so that we can share our way of life in Christ with them (see this principle in 1 Pet. 3:15), providing them something better than they have ever expected!

As I'm sure you can tell, this was written as an informal open letter of inspiration and stimulation primarily to/for fellow full prets; but if you're one who has yet to embrace this view of biblical eschatology, I hope and pray that these words of encouragement to my fellows will in turn motivate you to consider even more seriously the truths found in true preterist theology. [Tony E. Denton, a full-time minister since 1982, author of *Hebrews: From Flawed to Flawless Fulfilled!*, may be reached via [www.ASiteForTheLord.com](http://www.ASiteForTheLord.com).]

## **CHRISTIAN LIVING IN THE CONSUMMATE KINGDOM'S CONTINUOUS AGE**

Back in 2011, for the summer issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine, Brian Martin asked if I would do a write-up for the "Perspectives" section related to how the core preterist view of biblical end-times should affect our daily Christian walk; since that is pretty generic, and I only had so much space allotted, I chose to focus on one specific part of our lives following the consummation of all things. (That article, which I ask you to please read before continuing with this one since it sets the stage so well, may now be found at [FulfilledCG.com/Site/images/Issues/2011\\_Summer/Fulfilled-Summer.2011-small.pdf](http://FulfilledCG.com/Site/images/Issues/2011_Summer/Fulfilled-Summer.2011-small.pdf).) I, perhaps like Brian, had forgotten about that article when I was asked about writing this one; so, since this one approaches the topic from a slightly different "perspective," just consider this essentially a supplemental to the one of five years ago.

In that previous article I mentioned the terms "light" and "walk" (this latter term referring of course to our conduct in life). When it comes to the topic under consideration here, I know of no other terms better to search for in order to find any teachings related to life after "all things fulfilled" (something we fulfilled-prophecy believers are asked for quite often). I did not do this, but I am certain that if you were to check a concordance for the terms "light" and "walk," the main passage that normally pops into our heads (viz. Romans 13:11-14) would be right there at the top ... and rightfully so, for (to the saints of the generation prior to accomplished soteriological-eschatology) Paul (more literally from Westcott and Hort) wrote: "Knowing the appointed time, it is already [i.e. past] the hour for you to be awake from sleep. [Why?] Because our salvation is now nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, and the day has drawn near. We should put off therefore the deeds of the darkness, and we should put on the weapons of the light. As [though living] in the day, we should walk well-behaved: not [involved] in revelries and drunken bouts, not [involved] in acts of licentiousness and lewdness, not [involved] in strife and envy. Rather put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not be making provisions for the lusts of the flesh."

Wow! What a passage chock full of sermon material! Note the three main contrasts: asleep versus awake; dark versus light; and night versus day, with "the day" being preeminent. And what was "the day" Paul had in mind? The day, that is "the appointed time" or the "hour" of their "salvation" (v. 11). And what did he mean by "salvation"? Well, the answer seems pretty obvious because Paul was encouraging them to live "as in the day" or as though they had already attained to that age of salvation. And since he correlated holy living with that age, then this was a salvation of/in/to the genuine, perfect, everlasting righteousness prophesied in Daniel 9:24 and 2 Peter 3 ... the righteousness belonging to Jesus that was credited to His people at His return (cf. Rom. 4:24 & Gal. 5:5) from out of the true most holy place, into which He had gone to fulfill His high priestly duties, thereby completing salvation (Heb. 9:28) and thus the purified, consummate kingdom-temple in which our holy God resides. So...

With the fulfilled kingdom being a purified place of residence, Paul could (and did) therefore pit that (eternal) "day" or age of the kingdom—in which its people would (and do) walk in the light—against the preceding (temporal) age of the kingdom when people walked in darkness. The implication seems clear: Since we now live in the con-

summum kingdom age (of which Paul spoke in Romans 13 was then upon our first-generation brethren), then it is obviously presumed that we today who have been accredited with the righteousness of Christ are walking "in Him" as He Himself walked and would walk "well-behaved: not [involved] in revelries and drunken bouts, not [involved] in acts of licentiousness and lewdness, not [involved] in strife and envy," and so on.

If one were to continue consulting passages with the terms "light" and "walk" in the New Testament in an attempt to find other teachings to aid in seeing what God was and is expecting of those who claim to be His and in His kingdom today, he/she would come upon another passage by the same apostle, namely Ephesians 5:2-14 (found in the midst of the greater section of 4:17—5:21). Just as Paul talked about "love" just prior to the Romans passage just considered, so here in Ephesians 5:2-14 he did the same: "Walk in love as Christ has loved us...." Yes, though we don't see the word "light" until verse 8, we see the word "walk" immediately here (as well as six other times in this letter), and it is directly connected to the greatest word of all—"love." In fact, besides "light" and "walk," I firmly believe the term "love" fits right in there with those two as the top three terms to employ in a search for teachings related to the topic of what life in the consummate kingdom is all about. God is light, and God is love; so if we are in (fellowship with) Him, then we, citizens of His kingdom, are (to be) walking in light and love. See, though in this age it may no longer be about ceremonialism and ritualistic forms of individual or corporate worship, it is still all about our treatment of others and living a virtuous life out of gratefulness to our Savior-God who, through His Son, made us truly righteous in His sight, thereby repairing our relationship to Him, our Creator.

In this letter as well Paul spoke of completed salvation being in their near future, most notably in 1:13-14: "Having believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." In 2:22 and 4:15-16 (all in the present tense for them at that time) Paul wrote of their being built up into the Lord's residence, for (as Paul wrote in 5:23ff) they were in the process of being purified for (to be) God's dwelling which would occur only after they as His temple (2:21) were anointed as His most holy place (cf. Dan. 9:24) once the old temple with its temporal most holy place was demolished for all time in AD 70. So, after writing to them about being and acting like children who walk in love toward one another (5:2-7), he wrote to them as well about being and acting like children of the light instead of the darkness and being awake instead of asleep (5:8-14), doing the same thing here relative to bringing up "the time" in which they were living: Instead of living a life of indulgence (cf. Rom. 13:14), Paul encouraged them to live so as to redeem the short time they had left by understanding what the Lord's will was in that respect (5:15-18; cf. 1 Cor. 7:29 & Rom. 9:28). So...

I want to encourage all who read this brief article to consider this a mere springboard in getting you started in a more comprehensive study of this topic, feeling free to share with me any other passages and/or conclusion to which you may come in the process (because there actually are quite a few more passages than are touched on here). I also encourage you to finish this article off by reading, if not all of Ephesians, at least 4:17—5:21 from this light-love-walk perspective of life after all things fulfilled. *[Tony E. Denton, a full-time minister since 1982, author of Hebrews: From Flawed to Flawless Fulfilled!, may be reached via ASiteForTheLord.com or TEDenton64@Hotmail.com.]*