

Creedal Eschatology is Biblical Eschatology – Chapter 6

This chapter is primarily aimed at what is called full preterism or consistent preterism. Preterism comes from the Latin praeter which means “past” or “beyond.” Applied to eschatology, it means that prophecies were already fulfilled in the past.

Every Christian is a preterist on some level. They believe that there are prophecies that have been fulfilled in the past. For eg. Jesus birth as Messiah come to earth was based on prophecy and it has already occurred. It is past. Same with Christ’s suffering and death on behalf of human sin.

However, the great difference between full (consistent) preterists and all others has to do with their belief that all prophecy is complete. There is nothing left to be fulfilled.

Here is what a full preterist would believe.

1. All biblical prophecy occurred in 70AD.
2. Christ’s second coming refers to 70AD. At which time the final judgement occurred and He judged the living and the dead. Though it was unseen and therefore would not be recorded.
3. The resurrection of the dead referred to the raising to life in heaven of the dead OT saints. And the coming to life of NT saints and reigning in the heavenly tribunal though still on earth. This occurred in 70AD when Jesus returned, and it was not a bodily resurrection at all.
4. All enemies were defeated in 70AD, including DEATH, because the real enemy of Jesus and His Church were the Theocratic kingdom of the Jews. So DEATH was defeated because LIFE had been delivered to both the NT saint on earth and the OT saint in the grave.
5. Therefore, Jesus’ work is complete. He is no longer ruling from the right hand of the Father, because He has already given the kingdom back to the Father.
6. When believers die. That is it. They go to be with God in heaven. There is no future second coming. There is no future judgment. There is no future bodily resurrection. And Jesus is not ruling as King at the Father’s right hand.

The full preterist’ beliefs disagree with Orthodox Christianity:

The Nicene Creed confesses:

“The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.”

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The Athanasian Creed confesses:

He suffered for our salvation; he descended to hell; he arose from the dead; he ascended to heaven; he is seated at the Father's right hand; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people will arise bodily and give an accounting of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

The full preterist' beliefs are also biblically unsupported:

Hebrews 9:27-28

27And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Sandlin believes Jesus' second coming has to do with the Final Judgment, not to bear sin like Jesus did at His first coming. p.60

1 Corinthians 15:22-28

22For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Sandlin believes this passage proves that 1) Christ rose from the dead as the firstfruits of many that would rise. 2) That he reigns from heaven. 3) That he will come back to earth from there. 4) Then he will resurrect the saints. 5) Then the end will come at which time death itself will be vanquished. 6) Then Jesus delivers up the kingdom to His Father. 7) Then God will be "all in all." p.62

Sandlin writes, "It's obvious the "coming" mentioned is the Second Coming. Why? Because all Christ's enemies haven't yet been subjugated. Because the saints haven't yet been bodily resurrected as Jesus, their first fruits, was. Because death itself hasn't been destroyed. Because Christ is still reigning. To say this comind occurred in A. D. 70 means all these things have already occurred. That view is palpably absurd." p. 63

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Philippians 2:5-11

5Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Sandlin concludes, “We’re obliged to accept that Jesus is no longer the ruling King, despite the fact that Philippians 2 tells us that he will rule as Lord until every knee, not just every old covenant Jewish knee, bows to him.” p. 64

One additional Sandlin quote:

Sandlin writes, “This scenario is more bizarre than the most fanciful dispensational interpretation devised.” p.65

A couple of thoughts:

“It is interesting how smart people, if they truly want to, can look at something long enough and hard enough to make different sense of it.” - FG

“There is a brain-washing that must take place to leave God’s truth for any error. It goes something like this: Redefine a word or passage and read the text over again according to the new definition. Then repeat. Read it again, over and over, as many times as necessary until it makes perfect sense to your mind. Now it is time to fit in other passages to agree with the one you just became sure of.” - FG