

## On Preterism: A brief reply to 'What Is The Preterist View' by Edward E Stevens<sup>1</sup>

Many have written on this topic at great depth and with impressive elucidation. I have attached as appendices some brief articles that I believe are helpful.

I will just focus on a few of the main points raised by Edward Stevens.

My first reaction to both Preterist and Amillennialism<sup>2</sup> is that if our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) has returned and inaugurated the Kingdom of God (KoG); then he is making an absolute mess of things!

Two very obvious examples are the total lack of unity within the church (the 'Bride of Messiah'), evidenced by over 33,000 denominations; and the on-going holocaust of abortion.

Abortion must surely be the greatest violence that mankind has seen since the days of Noah. With over 60-70 million surgical abortions p.a. and many millions more chemical abortions; the murder of the most innocent of all human beings has reached a level that far exceeds any of the wars or great massacres instigated by evil men such as Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Mao Tse Tung, etc.

Also Preterism is a doctrine that twists that whole purpose of God as expressed in Dan 7:18; and Rev 11:15 and which was the mission of our Messiah (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:38 & 1 John 3:8). This is so well summed up by Anthony Buzzard:

*Such a view abandons the Gospel of the Kingdom, which promises the world a universal era of prosperity and peace when the Messiah comes back. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the scattering of Jews outside their homeland did not signal the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Luke 21:31). The Kingdom, when it comes, will produce peace in Israel and the restoration of Israel as the headquarters of the Messianic Kingdom (Luke 1:32-35; Acts 1:6; 3:21, etc.). To imagine that the coming of Jesus happened in AD 70 is to misunderstand the Kingdom of God and thus the Christian Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14).*

Now to some of the issues raised in the article:

Stevens starts by highlighting the errors of the last 150 years in 'Last Days' predictions. Here, I believe he is most correct in indicating the great many false predictions that Christians have made regarding the return of the Messiah. If the futurist approach has any merit, any predictions that have anticipated the physical return of Yeshua before today have been shown to be in error. This does not negate the potential for this approach to be successful in the future though.

He uses this failure as a basis to argue that alternative views or approaches should therefore be considered. This is certainly reasonable.

He also states that 'most Futurists do not really believe that Christ has been successful yet in fully establishing his Kingdom' and that Preterists believe '... the Bible prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ and the on-going expansion of His church'.

The corollary to the statement on the lack of success is to imply that Yeshua has successfully established the KoG (and in the view of Preterism has done so since 70 AD). It seems to me that only the blind or totally isolated could believe such a claim. This world continues to be full of evil and of disobedience to God. This world is not reducing crime or suffering or poverty or disease despite the incredible progress of science which has enabled the potential to almost totally eradicate poverty and disease. The church may be expanding in some areas but statistics show that on a world wide basis the church is more fragmented than ever and is actually losing significant ground to atheism and Islam in particular. Whole nations are inexorably moving to embrace Islam; nations that were founded on Judeo-

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<sup>1</sup> Edward E. Stevens, is President of the International Preterists Association.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.charismacomputers.com.au/Christian%20site/Amillennialism%20a%20brief%20reply.pdf>

Christian principles and people; nations such as England. At the same time what is left of the church is a huge divergent of doctrinal positions and practices with over 33 - 34,000 denominations.

Stevens then goes on to state his case regarding the scriptures that appear to argue for a great imminency in the prophecies relating to the return of Yeshua; an imminency that he argues is only satisfied by a return in 70 AD.

While it is true that many prophecies do appear to speak of a 'soon coming' fulfillment and even Yeshua's first words in public ministry as recorded by Mark suggest an imminency. **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."** Mark 1:15 (NKJV)

I believe an in-depth study of the Hebraic nature of this way of speaking about prophetic events reveals a very different understanding. A short study by Harley Pinon in the appendix addresses this issue well.

Stevens argues that *"Christ has conquered all His enemies and has given us the Kingdom"*. I agree that there is a sense in which this is true. In the same way that any pronouncement of God is fulfilled in the moment of its utterance because it can no more be prevented from occurring that that the universe can be frozen in time. The fiat of God in declaring the creation of this universe were true at their utterance but took many billions of years to be outworked. The plan of God at the very foundation of this world was that the Messiah would be slain and poured out as a libation on the Holy Hill<sup>3</sup> (*And bow before it shall all who are dwelling upon the land, whose names have not been written in the scroll of the life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;* Rev 13:8 - YLT). This plan took many many years to be enacted, yet it was as certain as the creation. Thus, our Messiah, in living the life that he did; in demonstrating the faith of Abraham and in accepting death on the cross has guaranteed that he will conquer all his enemies, but to suggest that this has already happened in to deny reality. The 'works of the devil' (1 John 3:8) are still very much a part of this present evil age. When the enemies of the Messiah are made his footstool (Ps 110:1), we will also see the chosen first born of God, the nation of Israel restored to their Husband and vindicated. (Deut 32:38, Ps 135:14, Ezek 36:23, etc.). The events in the Middle East at this time demonstrate most emphatically that this is not currently the case!

Revelation 1:7 and other verse tell us that at the return of our Messiah the whole earth, believers and non-believers will see and hear him.<sup>4</sup> There will be no mistaking his return when it happens. If this had happened in 70 AD it would have been of such historical significance that many would have written about it and we would still have access to these writings as we do to Josephus' books.

**(NIV Revelation 1:7) Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.**

Please find below a good article by Prof. Sir Anthony Buzzard and the short articles by Harley Pinon as already mentioned.

While I believe Amillennialism is a doctrine fraught with great difficulties and which flies in the face of the plain revelation of the world about us, Preterism requires an even greater suspension of common sense and reality.

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<sup>3</sup> See study on Psalm 2:6 on my website at [www.charismacomputers.com.au](http://www.charismacomputers.com.au)

<sup>4</sup> Check out articles such as <http://www.newwine.org/Articles/Preterism.htm> for more on this point.

## Appendix:

### 1) **This Generation** By Anthony Buzzard Focus on the Kingdom July 2002, Volume 4 Number 10

#### **“This generation will not pass before all these things take place” (Matt. 24:34)**

The text above is currently attracting attention. It is supposed to support the amazing idea that the Second Coming (Parousia), as described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24), took place in AD 70!

Such a view abandons the Gospel of the Kingdom, which promises the world a universal era of prosperity and peace when the Messiah comes back. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the scattering of Jews outside their homeland did not signal the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Luke 21:31). The Kingdom, when it comes, will produce peace in Israel and the restoration of Israel as the headquarters of the Messianic Kingdom (Luke 1:32-35; Acts 1:6; 3:21, etc.). To imagine that the coming of Jesus happened in AD 70 is to misunderstand the Kingdom of God and thus the Christian Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14).

The fact is that the New Testament, while maintaining an urgency in regard to the Kingdom, states that “the Son of God” himself “does not know the day or the hour” (Mark 13:32), and the disciples are not to know, according to Jesus’ parting words, even “times and seasons” (Acts 1:5-7) for the great event. This makes it impossible that Jesus had given them any kind of time limit for the coming of the Kingdom. The argument that he had declared that the end would come within at the most 40 years, a generation, must be mistaken, unless we charge him with a considerable confusion. If in fact “generation” is to mean 40 years in the famous text “this generation will not pass until all these things have happened” (Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32), then why only a couple of months later is Jesus saying that the disciples can have *no idea* about “spans of time or seasons” (Acts 1:7) relative to his return? Why is Peter later in the New Testament period telling us that days are as a thousand years with God? He seems undisturbed by any so-called delay of the Second Coming. Peter had indeed glimpsed the Parousia and Kingdom in his own lifetime when privileged to see it *in vision* (Matt. 17:9) on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16-19). Had Peter really been led to understand in AD 30 that Jesus would come within 40 years?

The term *genea* (generation) is the equivalent in the LXX of the Hebrew word *dor* which means generation or age. Many exegetes have noticed that in the New Testament *genea* can have the sense of “age” or “indefinite period of time.” The following is from the *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 1, p. 444 (“generation”):

“*Genea* — expresses the idea of kinship, those of the same lineage who are born about the same time...or more generally an ‘age’ or lengthened period of time...Finally (d) the word is used, as often in the OT (Deut. 32:5, 20; Ps. 12:7, 24:6, etc.), with a moral connection as in Phil. 2:15 and Acts 2:40. In the latter passage the word has an eschatological coloring. ‘This crooked generation’ is the present, swiftly transient period of the world’s history, which is leading up to the day of judgment and the New Age.”

So also the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. 1, p. 639: “That *genea* (rendered generation) does express ‘the current age’ of ‘the world period’ is obvious in the Gospels (Luke 16:8, Matt. 24:34 and less clearly Matt. 23:36).”

**One can add: In Matthew 23:35 Jesus says that “you” killed the prophets of the Old Testament. He speaks in the next verse of “this generation,” and the generation he has in mind apparently reaches back 400 years to the murderers of Zechariah. They are all the same wicked “brood.” They are all included in the corporate “you.” Jesus then looks forward to the Parousia when “you” will say, “Blessed is he who comes...” Thus *genea* takes in a wide sweep of people, belonging to the present evil age, belonging to the same genre, society as organized in opposition to God.**

Note also the sensible comment of Cranfield (*Gospel of Mark*): He points out that *genea* renders the Hebrew *dor* = seed, family and people. “Probably here — ‘whoever is ashamed of me in this adulterous and sinful generation’ (Mark 8:38) — generation means ‘age,’ ‘period of time,’ which is the primary meaning of the Hebrew *dor*, the word it most often represents in the LXX, and a possible meaning of *genea*. The whole phrase, ‘this generation,’ is contrasted with ‘when he shall come with his holy angels’ and so is roughly equivalent to ‘in this time’ (10:30) which is contrasted with ‘in the coming age.’ The time meant is *the time before the Parousia*. But it is not thought

of simply as a period of time; the thought of the men living in it and of their character is also present and prominent — hence the adjectives adulterous and sinful” (p. 284).

Note also Psalm 102:18: “This will be written for the *genea* to come that a people which will be created may praise the Lord.” This contrasts the present time with the “generation to come,” millennial in this passage. Note also Psalms of Solomon 18:6: “Blessed are those born in those [future Messianic] days, to see the good things of the Lord which He will do for the coming generation...a good generation living in the fear of the Lord.” This shows that generation can mean a “group of people with common characteristics.”

When Proverbs 30:11-14 says that “there is a generation (*genea*) of those who curse their fathers...There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes...There is a generation whose teeth are as swords,” the meaning is “a class of people identified by a common characteristic.” So also in Psalm 24:6, “the generation of those who seek God.”

In Luke 16:8 Jesus remarked that “the children of this *age* are wiser in regard to their *generation* [people belonging to the same class and age as they] than the children of light.” The contrast is between two groups of people, those touched by the Kingdom Gospel and those not. It is clear that “generation,” used generally in a pejorative sense in the New Testament as “wicked society this side of the second coming,” does not have to be restricted to a period of 40 years.<sup>[1]</sup> In an eschatological setting such as Matthew 24 Jesus contrasts the two ages.

It defies common sense to believe that Jesus set an almost exact date of 40 years in [Matthew 24:34](#), when soon after he denied that any knowledge of times and seasons is available to us (Acts 1:7) in regard to the coming of the future Kingdom (Acts 1:6).

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[1] Cp. *T.D.N.T* (single volume) which defines *genea* as “manner” in Luke 16:8.

## 2) A Study of "Quickly", "Speedily," etc. by Harley Pinon

**It is my contention that the Bible uses the expressions "quickly," "speedily," etc., in a different way than we do. Some have been so insistent on making the Bible "quickly" the same as our quickly that they have made an entirely new and different interpretation of even when the end of the word will be, etc. In fact, they even contend that that the resurrection has already happened, and that all of Revelation has been fulfilled including chapters 20 - 22.**

**The following is more of a word study and verse comparison without too much commentary, but I provide it for your consideration.**

### MEANINGS OF THE GREEK WORD τᾰχος "TACHOS" AND ITS USE IN THE N. T.

From Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Hebrew/Greek Dictionary we find the following definitions for the Greek word τᾰχος, "tachos":

5034. tachos, takh'-os; from the same as G5036; a brief space (of time), i.e. (with G1722 pref.) in haste:--+ quickly, + shortly, + speedily.

Thayer Definition: τᾰχος tachos 1) quickness, speed

Thayer Definition: ταχύς tachus 1) quick, fleet, speedy

Below we have some verses that contain the words translated from that Greek word "Tachos". The words in bold letters in the following verses show some of the ways that the word "tachos" is translated in the New Testament.

Luke 18:8 (NKJV) "I tell you that He will avenge them **speedily**. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

I understand "when the Son of Man comes" as being the end of this world as we know it. This hasn't happened yet.

Romans 16:20 (NKJV) And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet **shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Has Satan been crushed under our feet? Obviously not, yet nearly 2,000 years have passed, yet this is called "shortly." We are still waiting for the fulfillment of this promise.

Revelation 1:1 (NKJV) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants; things which must **shortly** take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

"things which must **shortly** take place." Some things that related to the seven churches of Asia did take place in a relatively short period of time, but other things in the book haven't happened yet.

Revelation 22:6 (NKJV) Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must **shortly** take place.

"the things which must **shortly** take place." -- see note above for Rev 1:1

## **FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE "IT IS A LITTLE WHILE"**

(Haggai's prophecies were written sometime between 520-505 B.C.)

Haggai 2:6-7 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (**it is a little while**) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 'and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.

*Hundreds of years after the prophet Haggai wrote this, (after the destruction of the temple that was standing when Haggai wrote this prophecy) the Hebrew writer, quotes this verse as being still in the future, even though Haggai said: "it is a little while" when he wrote the prophecy.*

*Hebrews 12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

*"it is a little while"* took hundreds of years to take place. In fact, I don't believe this shaken has happened yet.

## **THE TIME IS NEAR**

**God has wanted every generation to feel the expectancy of His coming and to be prepared for His coming.**

The prophet Zephaniah wrote his prophecies around 630 B.C., yet he uses the same kind of urgency in his message to the people of his day that John uses in the book of Revelation.

Zephaniah says: *"the great day of the LORD is near and hastens quickly" and "He will make speedy riddance."*

Zephaniah is speaking of the same "great day of the LORD" that John is writing about in Revelation, hundreds of years later.

Amos 3:7 says: "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

Zephaniah 1:14-18 - 2:3 (NKJV)

*The great day of the LORD is near; **It is near and hastens quickly.** The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers. "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse." Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord's wrath; **But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance** Of all those who dwell in the land.*

*Zephaniah 2:1 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the Lord's anger.*

"**It is near and hastens quickly**", but read the description that follows. Some of this sounds like the end of the world to me. "**But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy,**" Has this happened yet?

### **My Reply to Preterists March, 2005**

Note: I was on a forum with many preterists. After being on the forum for many weeks, I posted this response.

#### To the List from Harley Pinon

Since I have come on this forum I been told the following:

1,000 means vastness of numbers, but one thing it doesn't mean is 1,000.

Dying doesn't mean dying except in the spiritual sense that we die to sins in baptism.

Judgment is not future, it's already going on now. What happened to the day of judgment? My Bible says, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **THEN He will sit on the throne of His glory.** {32} "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." (Mat 25:31-32 NKJV) If the judgment is already taking place, what is this verse talking about?

Jesus is now at the **right hand of God** "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, **sat down at the right hand of God,** {13} from that time **waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**"(Heb 10:12-13 NKJV) God is on the throne and Jesus is at his right hand, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. How is He reigning in the full sense of the word? What is He waiting for? Could it be the day of judgment?

On this forum, I hear: "Saints are reigning and the apostles have already reigned."

I don't mean to be rude or disrespectful, but may I say that in my judgment the apostles did not have much of a reign, if they have already reigned. What kind of reign is it when you are imprisoned, stoned, and crucified? Isn't that what happened to the apostles? If that is what reigning is all about, who would want to reign like that?

What truly bothers me is that we accuse the denominational world of twisting the Bible, and making it say what it doesn't say. Are we truly any different when we have our own interpretation for words that are in common use and understood in the usual way by everyone else? How can we expect to win the world to Christ when we teach that the Bible doesn't really mean what it says?

Why doesn't reigning denote power and authority?

Why doesn't dying mean the end of life?

Why doesn't a 1,000 mean a 1,000?

What has happened to "We speak where the Bible speaks"? I know some say they are, but are we if we have to translate the words of the Bible into new meanings that the ordinary citizen would never have come up with?

Just some thoughts.

**Harley Pinon** From [http://www.harleypinon.com/a\\_study\\_of\\_quickly.htm](http://www.harleypinon.com/a_study_of_quickly.htm) Date Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> Aug 2008.