

## A Response to Mr Zac Leon's Attempted Rebuttal of my article(s) on Preterism:

I have written a number of articles highlighting the error of both of the doctrines of Full and Partial Preterism. See:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Preterism.pdf>

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Prophetic%20Perfect.pdf>

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Christian%20site/Amillenianism%20a%20brief%20reply.pdf>

<https://luke443.blogspot.com/2012/12/matthew-24-foundational-preterist.html>

Mr Zac Leon, a confused Full or Partial Preterist and a self-described Amillennialist has tried to refute my arguments here - <https://testimonyofchristandgod.blogspot.com/p/rebuttal-to-paul-herring-preterism-is.html> (in particular he addressed the first of these in the list above).

Sadly, I find his attempt to be very superficial and lacking in depth as well as seriously failing to present my argument in any fair and accurate manner (and thus is mostly a 'straw-man' argument).

But, as I do still respect his efforts, I will address a few of his apparent 'rebuttals', especially for the benefit of those who may find them in some way convincing.

First, Mr Leon tries to deny that there are clear doctrinal positions labelled Full Preterism and Partial Preterism.

He instead tries to use Wikipedia (a seriously compromised site for any controversial and debatable issues) for his definitions and then to argue that *'No Christian I know of believes no prophecy at all has been fulfilled in history, therefore we are all at least partial preterists.'*

This is clearly a 'strawman' attempt to obfuscate and perhaps even deceive his readers regarding Preterism, as all the well-known Preterist sites created and maintained by avowed Preterists do actually define these two doctrinal positions and not try to hide the reality by simply stating that '... some prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled'. Even the most ardent 'anti-Missionary' and orthodox Jews would agree with this argument, so it is no argument or definition of a 'Christian' position at all!

In terms of these doctrinal positions here is a couple of quotes from some of the most well-known Preterist sites:

*"Full Preterism is the belief that the Bible teaches the Second Coming, judgment and resurrection of the living and dead took place at the end of the Old Covenant age in the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem and her Temple in AD 70 ..."* - <https://fullpreterism.com/what-is-full-preterism/>

*"Partial Preterism says that prophecies in Daniel, Matthew chapter 24, and Revelation (setting aside the last three chapters) have already been fulfilled. They believe that those prophecies played themselves out in the first century AD, specifically in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. ... That said, to the partial preterist, there are still some prophecies that were a long way off in the first century and are still yet to be fulfilled, such as those given in the last three chapters of Revelation: the visible, physical return of Christ in judgment, the final defeat of death and Satan, the resurrection of the living and the dead, and the coming of the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem.* – from <https://www.ligonier.org/podcasts/simply-put/preterism>

In terms of these common definitions, Mr Leon is to all intents and purposes a Full Preterist as he argues that we are now in the **New Heaven and New Earth** period of prophecy (despite his acknowledgement that no physical resurrection of the faithful has occurred).

As with any doctrine within Christendom (with 40,000+ denominations) there are some nuances in this positions and other subtle differences.

For example, *“Preterists believe that the promise of our Lord’s Second Coming began to be fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Some believe that the prophecies mentioned above were fulfilled in the Second Century AD at the time of the Second Jewish Revolt against the Roman Empire at the time of Emperor Hadrian. Some preterists hold that the prophecies were fulfilled during the first three centuries AD as God wages war on the enemies of the Church (which they argue include Israel and Rome!) resulting in the “Christianization” of the Roman Empire under Constantine. In the view of many preterists, the Lord returned “spiritually” at the times referred to above, and will return again physically in the future.*

*Preterists usually believe what is today popularly called “Replacement Theology.” They believe that the Church has replaced Israel and is now the recipient of all of God’s promises and covenants to Israel. They use the term the “people of God” and make no real distinction between believing Israel and the believing Church.” - David Hocking @ <https://preteristarchives.org/>*

Note, this quote is from a Preterist, who is happy to acknowledge that he believes in Replacement Theology. While I find this doctrine to be a grievous evil, I will not address it here as I have already done so in my book ‘**Doctrinal Pitfalls of Hellenism**’, and in this article on my main website:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Replacement%20Theology%20-%20an%20insidious%20and%20woeful%20error.pdf>

Mr Leon made a valid criticism of my articles that I have not always clearly defined the terms and doctrines being discussed. As my articles on Preterism were addressed to Preterists I had thought this was not necessary, but I now stand corrected.

As part of the introduction of Mr Leon’s attempted rebuttal he writes: *“... I have no doubt there will be a heavy focus on full preterism which is a heterodox view that comprises very few people.”*

This attempt to somehow separate himself from ‘Full Preterism’ (which he acknowledges here is an actual doctrinal position) appears to be another attempt to obfuscate as he has repeatedly made many statements that indicate his position is very consistent and common with the a number of the main arguments of Full Preterism.

Some examples (you may find these confusing as well as he sadly contradicts himself):

*“The old covenant land promises were totally fulfilled.”*

*“Fulfillment of the promises to the fathers was in Christ, not in any future land.”*

*“New heavens and earth in my understand is this age, the church age. As opposed to the old covenant age. We know this because it is described as the time when Yahweh will be our God and we will be his people. A time when he will dwell in us.”*

*“The only conclusion possible is that the new heavens and new earth is the new covenant age, the kingdom. The one Peter was looking forward to... It was not far off, as Peter lived when the old was being dissolved and the new was coming in, the demarcation line being the final and total closing of the old heavens and earth in the 70AD destruction of the temple and the city as prophesied in Daniel.”*

*“All of it fulfilled in the ekklesia of God. The faithful. The same that went into covenant with him at Horeb. The church is here today, and it was there too. Assembly = church.”*

*“They were scattered around the “land” not the whole globe.” (- referring to Israel)*

*“You can either find fulfilment in the return from exile, or in even the regathering of the faithful Church in the New covenant and the heavenly mount Zion, the new Jerusalem.”*

*“And there has been no people replaced. The ekklesia of God today is God’s faithful multi ethnic people, and the same was true at Horeb.”*

*“(The Apostle) Paul being torah observant doesn’t help your case one bit pal, because he was living in the time when the old was passing away and the new was dawning. I’m sure he would quite happily keep Mosaic law (at least when he was with Jews, it would help win them to Jesus) because the jots and tittles had not passed from the law till all*

*was fulfilled (the destruction of the symbol of the old earth and covenant, the temple in 70AD)."*

*"So the church IS Israel, the ecclesia of God. "*

*"So Israel IS God's church."*

*"Where "Israel" is the faithful assembly of God."*

*"I never said the church of God is Israel!"*

*"I don't think the church replaced Israel because my definition of Israel in this context is the faithful people of God ...".*

So judge for yourself. While Mr Leon may see himself as not entirely a Full Preterist, it appears that in terms of their main doctrinal positions he most certainly is. But I would argue he is very confused as well!

In his attempted rebuttal he states that:

*"... and one of the very worst perspectives is that there are 2 separate plans for 2 distinct people of God. Ethnic Jews and non-jews. This is a major plank of dispensationalism and in my opinion is the most poisonous doctrine that has ever entered the church at large.*

*And I would like to pre-empt Herring's denial that he's a dispy (I don't use the word out of disrespect but only for ease of typing) by saying that your view of various rapture events is unimportant as to whether or not you identify as a dispy, as they can't agree amongst themselves the order of events. The critical grievous error is the two gospels (and I know dispy's who have used this term freely), one for Jews and one for non-Jews. Dispys comprise some of the most narrow minded and restricted perspectives in the entire population of professing Christianity."*

Here is just another of his 'Straw-man' arguments (which is one of his common approaches), as I denied I was a Dispensationalist and gave explicit reasons as to my rejection of this doctrinal understanding.

I admit I find it hard to take Full Preterism seriously, as for example when Mr Leon makes this statement: *"Herring obviously believes there is no peace around the world at the moment. The bible doesn't seem to think so."*

A view of the Bible's teachings that is so far out of touch with reality makes it very hard to see how such a person should be taken seriously. Perhaps they are so isolated from the world outside their house that in their imagination anything is possible. This becomes even more incredulous when we read of the amazing blessings and conditions that will exist in the New Heavens and New Earth, which Full Preterists and Mr Leon argue exist now!

Yet, to further illustrate his confusion, further on in his blog post he states: *"Wicked people are doing wicked things in the world, nations come and go, and God either allows it or he has a more active hand in it."*

In trying to understand how this two seriously conflicting statements can be held by one person, I think the answer is that Mr Leon sees the 'peace around the world' as the internal, spiritual 'peace' that Christians should feel as an integral part of their faith, and that this total spiritual, and in no way physical aspect, is how he reads the whole Bible. This is a very Platonic and Hellenistic perspective.

What has made this potential perspective of Mr Leon's clearer to me (as he has not articulated it directly as far as I can see), in his recent declaration the Rev 21:4 is a reality we now live in, though by verse 8 he is acknowledging a future time (though he seems unwilling or unable to articulate where the break between his 'now' and his 'future' time occurs i.e. which verse from 5 to 7?).

*Rev 21: 1-8*

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.[c] 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

*5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."*

I discuss the future Kingdom of God and the even more future, 'New Heavens and Earth' in a number of comprehensive articles such as these:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Christian%20site/KoG%20Restoration%20Fellowship%20speech%20Part%201%20Aug%202012.pdf>

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Christian%20site/Heaven%20Booklet%20April%202007.pdf>

Mr Leon states in his attempted rebuttal:

*"Yes, I believe the kingdom of God was brought to the world by Jesus Christ in the 1st century. Yes, I believe Jesus rules in the midst of his enemies. But, no, I do not believe the final judgement at the end of world history has occurred, or the physical resurrection, or the age to come after that (which I don't think we know much about)."*

You will note here (compare with the quotes I provided above) that he is seriously confused about the New Heavens and Earth, having stated that we are now in this 'age' and here in this quote, stating that it is still to come!!

His lack of clarity and consistency makes it hard to even comprehend what he actually professes as it seems to change like the wind.

So I appreciate that he may accuse me of also using 'straw-man' arguments, which is actually possible, as it seems very hard to gain a clear perspective on how he can hold to such contradictory concepts that surely are causing him serious 'cognitive dissonance'.

However, my rebuttal here is an attempt to add further detail and evidence to support the claims made in my Preterism articles rather than to argue directly against the shifting and contradictory sands of Mr Leon's doctrinal position.

Perhaps this comment helps explain his perceptions (or lack thereof): *"Most people in general have a very carnal, fleshly view of bible prophecy so they will always crave physical evidence. This will always lead to error as the kingdom doesn't come with observation."*

It appears to me that he is stating (to paraphrase): *"We can't observe his truth, it's all spiritual, it's all in your heart, the world is really a 'shadow' as per Platonic and philosophical musings, aka the philosopher David Hume."*

Clearly, Mr Leon embraces a seriously Hellenistic and Gnostic perspective when reading and interpreting the Bible, despite the abundance evidence of its Hebraic nature!

His many confused and often irrelevant comments in his attempted rebuttal demonstrate a serious lack of appreciation of the Hebraic Perspective of the NT and specifically the use of the Prophetic Perfect tense (<http://circumcisedheart.info/Prophetic%20Perfect.pdf>) when addressing events prophesied to occur. Along with the flawed attempt to 'spiritualize' everything this appears to be a major failing of Mr Leon's doctrinal position.

Addressing some of his specific arguments:

In response to: *'... It (Preterism) may be a doctrine in some sense birthed out of Judaism, but the 'parent' doesn't even seem aware that it has this 'child'.'* Mr Leon wrote:

*'Of course, I agree that the view (not doctrine) is birthed from Judaism because ancient Jews believed some prophecy had been totally fulfilled. They also believed that prophecy was being fulfilled in their exact time. And also, that some*

*prophecy would be fulfilled in the near future “the time is at hand”. And some prophecies further into the future, like the final judgement etc.*

*The parent (Judaism) is fully aware of the child, as fulfilled prophecy, like Israel receiving its promised messiah, was the main hope they were hanging onto for centuries! And they knew the exact time window (see Dan 9)’*

Mr Leon seems to imagine that the arrival of Yeshua was the main hope of Israel, but this is not Biblical. Their ‘main hope’ in the first century CE was the restoration of self-rule to Israel and this was the question that were still asking after the Resurrection of Yeshua: *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra’el?”* – Acts 1:6 (CJB)

The more significant feature of the Messianic hope was always for the role he would play in restoring Israel and in ushering in the Kingdom of God, the Olam HaBah (Coming Age).

Mr Leon then goes on to offer another ‘straw man’ argument:

*“... and one of the very worst perspectives is that there are 2 separate plans for 2 distinct people of God. Ethnic Jews and non-jews. This is a major plank of dispensationalism and in my opinion is the most poisonous doctrine that has ever entered the church at large.*

*And I would like to pre-empt Herring’s denial that he’s a dispy (I don’t use the word out of disrespect but only for ease of typing) by saying that your view of various rapture events is unimportant as to whether or not you identify as a dispy, as they can’t agree amongst themselves the order of events. The critical grievous error is the two gospels (and I know dispy’s who have used this term freely), one for Jews and one for non-Jews. Dispys comprise some of the most narrow minded and restricted perspectives in the entire population of professing Christianity.”*

Because of his narrow perspective and limited understanding he mis-labels and mis-characterizes my viewpoint as Dispensational. Having explained numerous times that I disagreed with a number of their doctrinal arguments such as the Rapture, he continues to proffer this ‘straw man’.

He continues in this false vein with: *‘... normally when people are heavily plugging adherence to the “old ways” but also cling to Jesus they identify as “messianic Jews” or “noahides”.*

Here he is, on the one hand, arguing *that ‘I’m going to have to assume that Mr Herring does not identify as Christian at this point’* and then seeming to state that I *‘cling to Jesus’* (sic) and must be either a Messianic Jew or Noahide. I am neither and have denied this and explained it to him numerous times.

But more significantly, note that rather than address the issues he continues to make it all about the person. He clearly is not aware that this is the logic error known as the *‘genetic fallacy’* and in the manner he often employs it is also the logic fallacy *‘ad hominem’*.

But rather than continue to address these logical fallacies that he makes and refute them point by point, I will instead turn to the specific issues in his attempt at defending Preterism.

He quotes the ESV version of Romans 14:17 and writes:

*‘Romans 14:17 ESV For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

*This should prove to any Christian that indeed the peace of the almighty covers the entire world in the form of the church, which is present in every nation on earth.’*

This is perhaps as clear as any example of how flawed and seriously distorted his view of the Bible is! The Bible comes to us from a very Hebraic perspective. This perspective is very much a tangible, physical perspective, and as a result, the language used here is not symbolic and purely spiritual, but a comment about a physical reality. But worse, Mr Leon takes this passage totally out of context to then apply a seriously false and misleading interpretation to it.

Without going into too much detail a few portions of an article on the whole chapter may help set the proper context:

(Tim) Hegg notes, (wrt Romans 14:14):

- First, Paul is convinced that his teaching is correct because it agrees with Yeshua's teaching and manner of living.
- Second, we know from v. 20 that Paul refers to food when he says "nothing is unclean of itself." *'Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.'* (Rom 14:20)
- Third, the added "... in itself" means that meat designated by God as clean cannot be made unclean by man-made laws or traditions.
- Thus, Paul's meaning is: "nothing God has declared to be clean is unclean in itself."
- Paul does not want those strong in faith to coerce those weak in faith through pressure of rejection.
- Rather, he wants each person to be fully convinced in his own conscience as an exercise of genuine faith.
- Thus, if one cannot eat a particular food because they lack assurance that God permits it, then it is better for them to abstain – to consider it unclean for himself.
- What he is not allowed to do is to make his own opinion or preference the rule for others.

And from Mark Nanos 'a historical perspective on the rhetorical implications from the letter':

*In the formal opening of the letter, Paul introduces himself in language that would make little sense to a Greco-Roman person apart from learning the story of Christ within the context of the Jewish communal narrative, one that can be developed from Jewish Scriptures but not elsewhere. He not only cites Jewish Scriptures, which he will continue to do in the letter more than any other extant letter, some fifty-plus times, but he alludes to these Scriptures many more times--apparently assuming that the recipients would be competent to follow his line of thought. Yet copies of these Jewish texts, at this time written on scrolls that were expensive to acquire and apparently not well known outside of Jewish communities, would presumably not be readily available. Moreover, most of his audience would probably only know the letter when read aloud, since most people of Paul's time, some eighty to ninety percent being the normal estimates, could not read. **How then would they know the Scriptures upon which his arguments were based--apart from being socialized into Jewish communal life and its symbolic system for making sense of reality, or for that matter, of spirituality?***

*If these non-Jews attended Jewish communal meetings, they would hear the Scriptures read, translated, and interpreted in sermons, a regular, weekly event based on cycling through the Pentateuch and texts linked to it from the Prophets and other Writings...*

*Although we cannot be certain of the historical audience's relationship to the larger Jewish community from the fact that many of his arguments require at least some familiarity with the Jewish community's master narratives, Paul's audience is approached throughout the letter as if familiar with many concepts that would be foreign to non-Jews.*

By the revelation of the power of the Risen Messiah within him, and by studying his TaNaKH carefully and afresh—with eyes opened by the Holy Spirit—Paul had come to the realization that the Kingdom of God was much bigger than just native-born sons of Jacob. God was bringing those from the Nations not just into a very special unity with his Only Unique Son, but also into a practical, working relationship with the People of Isra'el. The high moral standards of the Kingdom of God would require that believing Jews and Gentiles put aside their "petty" differences over table fellowship and come together to "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." Contrary to popular Christian opinions today, this does not require the setting aside of the ritual aspects of Torah (such as the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) so that "everyone at the local Church potluck can now have ham sandwiches with their crawdad gumbo and enjoy them without feeling judged." Hitting the "reset button" on

HaShem's standards of "clean and unclean" animals cannot be the solution that Paul is suggesting. Nor is he advocating a congregational superficiality in regards to "accommodating" other people's dietary scruples, all the while harboring disdain and resentment against the "other" for making you "go out of your way" just to meet their special culinary needs. Paul doesn't want the Jews and Gentiles of Rome to just "put up with one another" merely for the sake of "saving face."<sup>1</sup>

While the whole article is worth a read (with some great quotes of the important work of Prof. Mark Nanos included), the historical context here for verse 17 should now be clear.

Those wishing to enter the coming Kingdom of God need to live by its future precepts today and this involves rejecting conflicts over what we eat and drink, by recognizing the much greater importance of '*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*', that is, a practical unity of faith as both Jew and Gentile work together in living Torah-centric lives; seeking and proclaiming the Coming Age.

To suggest as Mr Leon does, that these arguments and contentions in the Roman 'church' that the Apostle Paul was addressing somehow indicates that the Kingdom of God is/was already present is seriously out of touch with the historical reality of the time. And it should also be abundantly clear that the situation has not improved over the last almost 2000 years! In fact, the divisions and contentions are surely much worse now!

In my Preterism article that Mr Leon attempted to refute, I wrote: 'They (referring to Rabbinic Judaism and the 'proto-Judaism' of the first century of the Common Era) have always understood the Tanakh to teach that this Kingdom of God will be ruled by a very special man, a descendant of King David.'

Mr Leon responded:

*"And indeed, it is ruled by that man Jesus. For anyone doubting this simply read Psalm 110.*

*Psalm 110:1–2 (ESV): 1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!"*

So incredibly, Mr Leon thinks Ps 110 has been fulfilled (since sometime in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE) as 'Jesus' is (supposedly) ruling in the hearts and minds of Christians' means he is ruling in the midst of (his/our) enemies! This is such fanciful thinking that it really is hard to take seriously and respond accordingly.

As I will highlight even further, somehow Mr Leon thinks that all that really matters is some internal mental and spiritual imaginary 'peace' and all is right with the world regardless of what pain, suffering and evil may be being inflicted on the faithful people of God. Also, if Mr Leon read on to verse 5 and 6 of Ps 110 he would read:

*'5 O Lord, at your right hand he strikes down kings in the day he unleashes his anger.*

*'6 He executes judgment against the nations. He fills the valleys with corpses; he shatters their heads over the vast battlefield.'*

These very literal prophecies must be interpreted by Mr Leon in a totally symbolic and spiritual sense. But how he can see many 'dead' (corpses) in a symbolic sense after some symbolic battle is very hard to visualise!

Mr Leon writes:

*'We need to realise that there was a judgement, resurrection and age to come that was realised in the 1st century. The judgement on Jerusalem and the wicked Jews who crucified the Lord Jesus, the spiritual resurrection of Christians when we are saved, and the church age that was inaugurated in the apostles' day. Again, these are things that no Christian can deny.*

*Yes, I believe the kingdom of God was brought to the world by Jesus Christ in the 1st century. Yes, I believe Jesus rules in the midst of his enemies.*

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1 [https://www.tetzetorah.com/romans-14-unplugged#\\_ftn42](https://www.tetzetorah.com/romans-14-unplugged#_ftn42)

His attempt at trying to implicate all Christians with his totally spiritualized version is a disappointing attempt to enlist support where it clearly does not exist. And there are a number of other errors here. For example, it was the Romans who crucified Yeshua not the Jews, and why the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE appears to be a judgement on the Jewish People, we can not be sure as to why such judgement was enacted. It may have been as a result of the rejection of Yeshua by the authorities, but it seems more likely that it was, as Judaism itself generally believes, a result of an internal lack of brotherly love within the community of Israel and the Jewish People. This lack of brotherly love may well have extended to a lack of love for Yeshua by the authorities, so it may well also indicate that their rejection of Yeshua was a part of the reason for their extremely harsh judgement, but we can not know this for certain at this time.

As for arguing that Yeshua *'rules in the midst of his enemies'*, if this were true then it is a very impotent rule in that the world continues to be filled with great evil such as the massive worldwide murdering of the most innocent of all humanity in the deliberate abortions of unborn children (some 50+ million pa)! To suggest that the true faithful followers of Yeshua alive at this time can somehow have a total 'peace and joy in the holy Spirit' while surrounded by such evil and depravity is a blindness and heartless understanding.

While we may have some sense of peace and joy in knowing that HaShem will ultimately exercise judgement over this evil world, if we have truly circumcised (open and sensitive) hearts and are aware of being surrounded by such evil we can not be truly at peace, but rather deeply grieving at the injustice and depravity we witness.

When faced with such a reality, here is Mr Leon's typical response: *'Abortion is a terrible abomination before God <<but>> offering a number like 50+ million is not helpful as there is such a huge population of the world in this age. The question to ask is this....is the world better or worse from the time of the 1st century?'*

How quickly he introduces a 'but' and tries to dismiss this criticism of his doctrinal position by suggested that 50+ million is not that many because the population of the world is so great! The deliberate murder of just one of the most innocent of humanity should be offensive to those of faith, but to so quickly dismiss the annual murder of over 50 million is shocking!

And then to suggest that this can be ignored because he somehow imagines things were worse in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE as a way to deflect this evil is also damning in my opinion. We really don't know a lot about the degree of evil that was present 2000 years ago, but we do know society today is a lot more irreligious and immoral and this lack of ethics and strong moral foundations coupled with medical advancements and technology have enabled a much easier ability to exercise the evil of forced abortions as a form of birth control.

In trying to defend his argument that Yeshua is ruling over the world today, Mr Leon writes:

*'Remember, a government can only rule over its subjects, not over those who reject its authority. A king rules over his subjects. So, yes Jesus rule covers the earth as the church is all over the earth, in every nation, but he must rule in the midst of his enemies, therefore there will always be those who are on the outside.....until they are all made his footstool.'*

Mr Leon does not appear to even understand typical political and governing realities. All governments rule over all the subjects of their nation, including those who reject their authority. The governments of our Western democracies use their financial control, and their police and military forces to enforce subjection to their regulations (many third-world countries are far worse). This should be even more blatantly obvious with the extreme tyrannical approach of most nations and governments since the Covid19 plandemic.

A number of times Mr Leon argues that the *'... the kingdom doesn't come with observation.'* (quoting Luke 17:20)

*"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." – Luke 17:20 KJV*

This serious mis-interpretation of a verse in the NT is used by Mr Leon to try to argue that the Kingdom of God is here because you can't see it is here (ir at least, only he and his fellow Preterists/Amillennialists can)!

A significant number of scholars have presented the understanding that "... when he said, "the kingdom of God cometh not by observation [that is, calculation] . . . for, behold, the kingdom of God is among [not within] you" (Luke xvii. 21, Syriac version), he meant, "It does not come through rebellion or by force" (see Jew. Encyc. iv. 51, s.v. Christianity)."<sup>2</sup>

In Luke 17:21 we also often read the mis-translation that the KoG is 'within you', or something similar, rather than 'in your midst'. Many scholars have addressed this mis-interpretation and mis-characterization of this verse. For example:

*"Furthermore, Christ's kingdom could not be within them since the Scripture always portrays people entering the kingdom (Matt. 5:20; 23:13; John 3:5) rather than the kingdom entering people. Besides, regarding this notion of the kingdom being inside God's people, we might ask, does Christ perfectly reign in the hearts of the believer today? If so, why are there consistent commands given in the New Testament epistles against grieving (Eph. 4:30) and quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19)? The mere existence of these prohibitions implies that believers today have the capacity to commit these sins and consequently inhibit the reigning influence of Christ in their hearts. Believers must have some sort of capacity to allow sin to reign within them or else why would Paul exhort the Christian, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts" (Rom. 6:12)?*

***In addition, this frequent rendering of ("the kingdom of God is within you") converts the kingdom into a spiritual reality only. However, a terrestrial, geopolitical element is always included in the Old Testament's presentation of the kingdom.***

***Such an abrupt change from understanding the kingdom as encompassing this physical reality to solely a spiritual reality is tantamount to hermeneutically changing horses in midstream.***

*Why would Christ, or any of the New Testament writers for that matter, introduce such a radical transition without any in-depth commentary explaining that such a transition was underway?*

*Also, if Luke 17:20–21 evidences the fact that Jesus set up a present, spiritual form of the kingdom during His First Advent, then why is His earthly ministry subsequent to these verses characterized by perpetual promises of a future, earthly kingdom? For example, in Matthew 19:28, Christ promised His disciples, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In Matthew 26:29, He similarly told His disciples, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Even Christ's closest companions understood His teaching as conveying a future, earthly kingdom. Not only did the disciples believe that Christ was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6), but the mother of James and John also requested that her sons be given places of prominence with the earthly kingdom's establishment (Matt. 20:20–21). Because the request in Matthew 20 and the inquiry of Acts 1 both transpired late in Christ's ministry, it is unlikely that the disciples had a mistaken understanding of the kingdom at this point. Also, the penitent thief on the cross obviously saw the kingdom as a future reality when he exclaimed, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" (Luke 23:42). Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy disciple of Christ in whose tomb Christ was eventually buried, also understood Christ as teaching a future kingdom. Mark 15:43 says, "Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (italics added).*

*In sum, rather than translate Luke 17:21 as "the kingdom of God is within you," it seems better to follow the translation of the New American Standard Bible, which translates verses 20–21 as follows:*

*Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (italics added).*

*"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed." Observation of signs is only pertinent if an event is gradual rather than something instantaneous. Thus, once the kingdom comes people will not say, "Look, here it*

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2 <https://www.studylight.org/encyclopedias/eng/tje/k/kingdom-of-god.html>

*is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst'" (Luke 17:20–21). This instantaneous, futuristic arrival of the kingdom is corroborated by the surrounding context, which analogizes Christ's Second Coming to sudden flashing of lightning (Luke 17:23–24), and to the flood waters that rapidly came upon the world in Noah's day (Luke 17:20–28), as well as to the fire and brimstone that came suddenly upon Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot (Luke 17:29–33). Thus, unbelievers will be caught off guard by these events as they are then ushered into immediate judgment (Luke 17:34–36). This overall futuristic context is most likely why the future tense of the verb is employed in Christ's statement, "nor will they say, 'Look'" (Luke 17:21; italics added). Here, the word translated "will they say" is the future tense verb of the Greek word legō. Thus, after examining the futuristic context in Luke 17:20–37, Craven appropriately asks the following question concerning the announcement of the kingdom given in Luke 17:20–21: "Does it not become manifest that this passage, so far from teaching the doctrine of a present establishment of the Basileia, must be numbered amongst those that connect the establishment with the Second Advent?"<sup>3</sup>*

This quote should illustrate the serious mistake being made by Mr Leon in claiming that he can 'observe' the Kingdom of God as being here, while the rest of us can't. This argument is akin to stating that he does not need any physical evidence only the 'spiritual' evidence in his fertile mind!

To highlight even further how fanciful Preterism and Mr Leon's understanding is he writes: *"Don't think there are eyewitness accounts of the sign of, or even the actual son of man Jesus Christ coming in the clouds in 70AD? Think again!"*

There is simply no historical evidence that Yeshua returned via the 'clouds' or in any other manner in 70 CE. If he had, he would most surely have returned to save his People, Israel from the barbarism of the Romans. No such salvation occurred, though we could argue that his warnings some 4 decades earlier may have saved some who heeded his call and fled Jerusalem before the destruction.

The number of flawed interpretations that Mr Leon presents seems to mount up with his every utterance. For example, he also writes: *"... the 6 requisite items of the messiahship in Daniel 9:24 starts with the OT, and the NT shows fulfilment in Jesus. I see the prophecies and I see fulfilment in the time window specified. Simple approach really. If I see fulfilment in the 1st century why do I need to look thousands of years further? So yes, I have a preterist view of Dan 9 and the Olivet discourse. There is no doctrine there, it's simply seeing prophecy fulfilled."*

While the reference to Daniel 9:24 shows a limited view of what the eschatological Messiah's role will be as well as what prophecies will come to pass to illustrate who he is and when he comes in power<sup>4</sup>, let's briefly consider verse 24.

*Dan 9:24 "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, (1) to finish the transgression, (2) to put an end to sin, and (3) to atone for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal both vision and prophet, and (6) to anoint a most holy place. (ESV)*

Transgression(s) and sin are still very much with us. Yeshua has brought atonement, but it is far from final. Righteousness is very rare in our present day and clearly was not common in the first century CE either. And there can only be a 'sealing' of the vision and the prophet when the inauguration of the Kingdom is complete (and Mr Leon actually agrees that it is not complete). Finally, the 'most holy place' (the Temple) has clearly not yet been built. There are a great many prophecies that make it clear that this is a physical and not purely spiritual rebuilding of the Temple. See for example Zec 14:20-21 which describes the reality of life after the Coming Age has fully arrived:

*"20 And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to Yehovah." And the pots in the house of the Yehovah shall be as the bowls before the altar;*

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3 <https://www.gracegospelpress.org/is-the-kingdom-really-within-you-luke-1720-21/>

4 I discuss the prophecies of the Messiah in this article:  
<https://circumcisedheart.info/The%20Messiah%20from%20an%20Hebraic%20perspective.pdf>

*21 and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Yehovah [i.e. The Temple] of hosts on that day."*

In the specific version of one of my articles on Preterism that Mr Leon has attempted to refute, I outline some of the characteristic of the Coming Age, the Kingdom of God. These lists were presented to show how life will be much more fulfilling in this future time, not to suggest that none of these significant characteristics are not present today to some greater or lesser degree. Rather than try to detail each and every error that Mr Leon makes here in his reference to these characteristics, I present a summary link that highlights them with links to more in-depth articles that expand on these characteristics. I therefore leave it up to the reader to decide if he or she feels all these amazing characteristics are currently present and central in their lives at this time:

<https://globaltruthinternational.com/2021/03/09/the-new-heavens-and-the-new-earth-life-in-the-coming-kingdom/>

While my response here is far from complete, I hope it will give the reader sufficient evidence and explanation to be able to effectively discern the significant errors that Mr Leon has made in his attempted refutation of my article and his promotion of either Full or Partial Preterism along with Amillennialism.

If there is still some point that I have missed or you feel I have not addressed comprehensively enough please get in touch and I will endeavour to address any and all oversights if they exist.

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