

JESUS IS NOT RETURNING INVISIBLY

If someone came to me and said, “Did you know that Jesus came back last week?” I would say, “You have got to be crazy. You don’t know the Bible whatsoever.” The same would be true if someone said. “Jesus came back in 1914,” like the Jehovah’s Witnesses have claimed; or that the rapture would take place in 2011, like was predicted by Harold Camping. The list of false predictions is endless.

Jesus said, *“For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man”* (Matthew 24:27). When Jesus ascended back to Heaven and the disciples were still looking up into the sky, two angels spoke, *“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).

We should not believe any view that suggests that when Christ’s Second Coming takes place the majority of people won’t even know that it has happened and life will go on as normal for them.

What if people come claiming that Jesus returned in 1148 or 785 or 82 or 55 AD? We would immediately reject such claims. Yet how is it then that the claim that Jesus returned in 70 AD has been accepted by a small minority of people who weren’t even alive back then but now they think they have found the year Jesus returned? This is a delusion, just as much as the other predictions have proved to be delusions.

HERE ENTER “THE PRETERISTS”

The belief that Jesus returned in 70 AD is called the preterist view. There are

modifications of this, such as partial-preterism, but it is only a mild attempt to explain some of the obvious contradictions they face in defending their interpretation of Scripture.

Full-preterists teach that all things including the resurrection and judgment were fulfilled by AD 70. Most theologians still view the Book of Revelation as having been written after 70 AD. Preterist scholars quickly recognized that the traditional dating of the book as 96 AD utterly destroys their theory. Therefore, they must challenge church history, which is an extremely poor beginning to start with.

But let’s say that an early date for the Book of Revelation is correct and that it was written in the AD 60’s. Can we be expected to believe that the greatest prophetic book in the Bible was only unfulfilled for a few years before 70 AD? Were Christian leaders then teaching the preterist view because they had experienced the return of Christ? Certainly not!

We are told by the apostle Paul that the man of lawlessness would be destroyed at the coming of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Partial and full preterists often say that the Antichrist was past and many of them hold that Nero was the Beast. Yet, Nero died on June 9, 68, not in 70 AD. No matter who they select as the man of lawlessness, he was not destroyed in AD 70. The claim of Nero being the final Antichrist is a false message that is unhelpful and deceiving for people today.

Attempts to point Nero as being the final Antichrist have included the argument that the letters of his name add up to 666. You just have to look at how many people’s names can be made to add up to 666 and you see how flawed this theory is. It has also been claimed that because Nero had his head on the currency of

his time that this was the mark of the beast. What grasping at straws!

Preterists unwisely point to how 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege of Jerusalem. This clearly shows that the Book of Revelation was not fulfilled in 70 AD. The Book of Revelation talks about 200,000,000 troops who slaughter a third of mankind (Revelation 9:13-18). What happened in 70 AD is a type of what is yet to happen, but it was only very small in comparison.

All nations of the world (Revelation 16:14) did not come against Jerusalem in 70 AD, only Rome. The nations coming against Jerusalem are yet to be destroyed. Zechariah 12 proves that 70 AD was not it.

We are told that Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in. Then we are told that Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-26). Jesus said, “For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Matthew 23:39). When we look at the facts of the world today it is clear that Israel has not seen the Second Coming of Christ.

Any view that demotes Israel’s last-days significance is dangerous. Preterists often downplay the significance of Israel coming back to their land in 1948, yet this event is a significant part of Biblical prophecy (Isaiah 11:11-12; 66:8; Ezekiel 20:34; 37:21). Israel is prophetically spoken of as being a fig tree (Hosea 9:10), which some preterists try to deny.

In commanding His followers to make disciples of all nations, Jesus said, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20). Where does this leave us if 70

AD was the end of the age? Keep in mind that Matthew 24 was Jesus answering what must happen before His return and the end of the age (Matthew 24:3).

A balanced understanding of Matthew 24 shows that 70 AD was not the time of the abomination of desolation, the final fleeing of the Israelites, the time of great distress never to be equalled again (WW II was a greater distress than AD 70), or that the end had come because the gospel had been preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

Preterists give preference to “this generation” in Matthew 24:34 while ignoring the obvious fact that many of those things simply did not happen in 70 AD. When Jesus speaks of “this generation” or “this wicked generation” we have to ask if this is prophetic or not? It is obvious that it is spoken of in connection to prophecy.

Therefore, do not get stuck on an idea that all of Jesus’ prophetic words had to be fulfilled within 40 or 50 years. In its prophetic connotation it cannot mean that all of Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation had to be fulfilled by 70 AD. The preterist views are subtle denials of what prophecy really is.

If Jesus Christ has already returned we would no longer be needing to celebrate the Lord’s supper: *‘For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’* (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The apostle Paul claimed that God would bring about the Second Coming of Christ “in His own time” (1 Timothy 6:13-16). This proves that Paul did not expect Jesus to come back in the next few years after writing his epistle to Timothy. Many scholars estimate that 1 Timothy was written around 62-66 AD.

‘Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come’ (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2). This also means we should not believe some report that Jesus returned in 70 AD. The destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD was a fulfilment of one prophecy, but 70 AD is not some kind of amazing key to understanding all end-times events.

CONCLUSION

The preterist view is a heresy that has to be rejected by the church. It has always been rejected by the majority of Christians but there are the stubborn ones who refuse to let it go. When every Preterist sees the true return of Christ how silly they are going to think their 70 AD theory was. Please prepare for Christ’s Second Coming so that you may stand before Him unashamed, as the apostle John has warned you (1 John 2:28).

One of the false teachings that Paul had to combat was the claim that the resurrection had already taken place. This false teaching was destroying the faith of some of the believers (2 Timothy 2:17-18). We need to be absolutely clear that Jesus has not yet returned. The resurrection has not yet taken place. The rapture has not yet happened. We are not yet in the Millennium. But all the same, if Jesus did come back today I would be ready for Him. What about you?

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JESUS CHRIST DID NOT RETURN IN 70 AD

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets” (Acts 3:19-21).