

Why Partial Preterism Is Also a Faulty Approach to Prophecy

The Partial Preterist approach views almost all prophecy as having been fulfilled by A.D. 70 although there is still to be a **future visible coming** of Christ at the end of the Millennium (**Post-Millennialism**) and followed by a visible **resurrection** of Christians and a **judgment**. This is a popular and growing belief and is taught by N.T. Wright the leading teacher in the Christian evangelical world.

Partial Preterism Is a Compromise

Indeed, Partial Preterism is a compromise between Consistent Preterism and a small amount of Futurism. However, the Partial Preterist version of Futurism is not the clear apostolic teaching that is today called Classical Pre-Millennial Futurism (Please see later chapters), but rather a Post-Millennialist understanding. The only parts of this approach that are yet future are: 1) a future return of Jesus after a symbolic 1,000 years and 2) a future first resurrection and judgment also after a symbolic 1,000 years. Nevertheless, the main emphasis of Partial Preterism is on a past fulfilment of prophecy.

FACTORS SIMILAR TO CONSISTENT PRETERISM

These are all noted and answered in the previous chapters, so that the interpretations and so-called proof texts are similar to those of Consistent Preterism:

- a. “The Beast” was Nero and/or the Roman Empire.
- b. “The Abomination of Desolation” was Jewish zealots or Roman generals or the corrupt Jewish leadership.
- c. The fleeing from Jerusalem occurred between A.D. 66 and 68.
- d. “The false prophet” was the Jewish leadership.
- e. “The great harlot/Babylon the great” was Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- f. The great apostasy concerned Israel only and was only up to A.D. 70.
- g. The term “Antichrist” describes this great apostasy.
- h. The last days/end of the age concerned first century Israel only.
- i. “This generation” applies only to the first century.
- j. The great tribulation ended with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There is to be no future great tribulation.
- k. The celestial phenomena of Matthew 24:29 are taken as symbolic of the end of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70.
- l. Christ’s *Parousia* was his invisible spiritual return which began in A.D. 70 when the five-month siege of Jerusalem started so that he directed the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem but he will also literally return at the end of a symbolic 1,000 years.
- m. Jesus’ coming on the clouds is symbolic of a reversal of fortunes in history and refers to his ascension to heaven.
- n. The Armageddon situation is not to be taken literally, but is just a symbol of the defeat of God’s enemies.
- o. The Millennium began at Jesus’ first advent. It is not a literal thousand years, but only a long and undefined period of time.
- p. Satan is currently bound.
- q. Replacement theology whereby Israel is completely replaced by the Church and has no further future.
- r. New Jerusalem is the church. The “*new heavens and new earth*” are already in operation because Christians are “*the new creation.*”

Some Partial Preterists have different interpretations to others concerning some of the details. For instance, some interpret the Abomination of Desolation as being the Jewish zealots, while others interpret it as being the actions of Vespasian when he was a general and of General Titus in A.D. 70.

Why These Interpretations Are Incorrect

Partial Preterism is a self-contradictory theory because it takes a time-frame of events which it views as concerning only the first century and says that all these events must have been fulfilled in A.D. 70, but then, according to some, negates that very time-frame by placing several of those events, namely, Jesus' second coming and the first resurrection, beyond the deadline that they have set for all the events. It does this by artificially dividing up Matthew 24 so that 24:4-31 concerns the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem, whereas 24:36-46 concerns the distant future events related to Jesus' second coming. This artificial break-point is supposedly when Jesus says, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows..." (vs. 36) as if the phrase "“But concerning” (*Gk peri de*) introduces a new topic. However, other than in the writings of Paul, the phrase is never used in this way but is always used for the resuming of a subject e.g., in Matthew 20:1-16 for the parable of the workers in the vineyard.

Other Partial Preterists propose the idea that there are two second comings, an idea which is completely unscriptural as shown later. Furthermore, this idea is based on circular reasoning by making an assumption to support a failed theory. However, a straight reading of all of Matthew 24 highlights a number of aspects of the scenario that have not yet occurred, including the celestial phenomena which Preterists are then obliged to make allegorical. Furthermore, the entire passage from verse 4 concerns "the end of the age." So, according to Brock Hollett in his book *Debunking Preterism* (p. 123), the result of the Partial Preterist approach requires:

- 1) Two distinct last trumpets.
- 2) Two distinct comings of Jesus.
- 3) Two distinct judgment days.
- 4) Two distinct times of the end.
- 5) Two distinct gatherings of the chosen ones.
- 6) Two distinct arrivals of God's kingdom.
- 7) Two distinct dissolutions of two distinct "heavens and earth."

THE GRAMMATICAL MISTAKE BY PARTIAL PRETERISTS

With Consistent Preterists, Partial Preterists also propose that the following Greek words in Revelation are **chronological texts** i.e., soon/shortly (adverbs of time). However, the Greek terms used in Revelation: *taXu* (soon), *eggus* (near, at hand), and *melloo* (about to) are **not chronological markers** but are **qualitative indicators**:

SOON (*taXu*)

This means "speedily, quickly (adverbs of manner) and with speed (adverbial phrase of manner)."

NEAR AT HAND (*eggus*) and **ABOUT TO** (*melloo*)

The New Testament writers used these phrases in the same way the ancient Hebrew prophets did e.g., "For the day of Yahweh **is near** upon all the nations" (*Obad. v. 15*). Yet these types of prophecies were not fulfilled until a very long time after they were written. For the prophets the future was always viewed as imminent—they blended the near and distant perspectives so that their readers would take their message very seriously. John does the same. So, to say "the day is at hand" gives the reader a sense of tangibility. George E. Ladd explains this prophetic perspective:

"The problem is raised by the fact that the prophets were little interested in chronology, and the future was always viewed as imminent...Biblical prophecy is not primarily three-dimensional but two; it has height and breadth but is little concerned about depth, i.e., the chronology of future events. There is in biblical prophecy a tension between the immediate and the distant future; the distance is viewed through the transparency of the immediate." *A Commentary on the Revelation* p. 22.

For the Christian this was because 'the age to come' was already pressing into 'the present age' and they were to live in continual readiness for Jesus' return (Matt. 24:42). However, with either form of Preterism there is a misreading of Jesus' intentions in giving his Olivet prophecy. Indeed, it is imperative to recognize the divine perspective i.e., God's timetable (2 Pet. 3:1-13) as a *near* and *far* fulfilment ('**Inaugurated Eschatology**') rather than as a 'Realized Eschatology'.

DANIEL 9-12 AS THE BASIS FOR ESCHATOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

Preterists generally make the same mistake as historicists in their understanding of the prophetic schedule set out in Daniel 9:24-27. They fail to understand that there is a clear gap of time after the 69th

‘seven’ and before the 70th begins in the future. Please see chapters 18, 19, and 20.

1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS AND THE OLIVET DISCOURSE STILL FUTURE

The A.D. 70 invasion of Judea by the Roman army is noted by Jesus only in Matthew 24:2. The remaining verses concern events which have not yet happened as indicated by their parallels with the 1 and 2 Thessalonians end-times details and so must take place within the same future time frame in the following details:

1) PRELUDE TO JESUS’ RETURN

- “The Sacrilege which causes desolation” will be in the holy place (Matt. 24:15) / man of lawlessness in God’s sanctuary (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).
- Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21) / Retribution (1 Thess. 1:10, 2 Thess. 1:8).
- False wonders and signs (Matt. 24:24) / False wonders and signs from Satan (2 Thess. 2:9).
- False prophets and deceivers (Matt. 24:4ff) / False teachers and deceivers (2 Thess. 2:2).
- Rebellion precedes return (Matt. 24:10) / Rebellion precedes return (2 Thess. 2:3).
- Sense of complacency (Matt. 24:37-39, 48-51) / Peace and safety cry (1 Thess. 5:3).
- Destruction comes unexpectedly (Matt. 24:39) / Destruction comes unexpectedly (1 Thess. 5:3).

2) JESUS RETURNS

- The sign of your coming (Matt. 24:3) / When the Lord comes (1 Thess. 4:15, 2 Thess. 2:1).
- Jesus is visible like lightning (Matt. 24:27) / Jesus visible in blazing fire (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).
- With angels (Matt. 25:31) / with angels (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

3) THE FIRST RESURRECTION/RAPTURE

- Son of man (Matt. 24:30) / Lord himself (1 Thess. 4:16).
- Clouds of the sky (Matt. 24:30) / In the air (1 Thess. 4:17).
- Great sound of a trumpet (Matt. 24:31) / The trumpet of God (1 Thess. 4:16).
- Gather together (Matt. 24:31) / Caught away together (1 Thess. 4:17).
- Know that summer is near (Matt. 24:32) / Times and the seasons (5:1).
- Marrying, then flood came (Matt. 24:38) / Safety then destruction (1 Thess. 5:3).
- Watch (Matt. 24:42) / Stay awake and keep our senses (5:6).
- Known in what watch the thief was coming (Matt. 24:43) / Thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:4).

Evidently Paul wrote about the same subject in First Thessalonians 4 and 5, and Second Thessalonians 2 that Jesus had earlier spoken of in Matthew 24, namely the time of the end with the return of Jesus and which culminates in the resurrection when Christians are gathered together by the angels to meet the returning Jesus.

When comparing all these details of Jesus’ and Paul’s words we can see that they are both speaking of the same future fulfilment of these events which will occur long after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Indeed, this comparison also militates against dividing the Olivet discourse anywhere after Matthew 24:29 or 36 as some Partial Preterists attempt to do.

REVELATION AND THE OLIVET DISCOURSE STILL FUTURE

There are some Partial Preterists who try to separate the Olivet discourse as having been fulfilled in A.D. 70 from the, as yet to be fulfilled, prophecies in the Book of Revelation. However, this, too, is not possible because:

- There is a tight connection between Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:29 and the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17 which is about the dramatic and miraculous darkening of the sun, moon and stars.
- This event in the Olivet prophecy is entirely literal in this prophetic context and so must be the same entirely literal event that is portrayed in Revelation 6. Yet Partial Preterists are reduced to **allegorizing** the details of Matthew 24 to make it fit their A.D. 70 theory. This event concerns the wrath of God and “the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16, 17). Partial Preterists reduce this wrath to only falling upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by means of the Roman army; whereas Revelation says: “I

will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on **the whole world** (Lit. All the inhabited earth)” (Rev. 3:10).

- The descriptions of these cosmic events were first recorded by a number of Old Testament prophets who linked them with “the day of Yahweh”—“the day of God’s wrath.” e. g. Isaiah 13:9-13, Joel 2:10, 11).

So, however Partial Preterists try to break up Thessalonian and Revelation prophecy data in their attempt to make the Olivet discourse refer to the A.D. 70 event, it just will not fit.

The Details Incorrectly Interpreted

THE BEAST - NOT NERO OR THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The explanation for why Nero is not “the Beast” is given in chapter 7 showing that the supposed application of the “number of the Beast” as 666 does not truly fit Nero. Later studies will show the “Beast” to be the future Antichrist as is the term “the Abomination of Desolation.” So, the beast also does not represent an apostasy that lasted up to A.D. 70.

Furthermore, the Beast could not have been the Roman Empire, because he is shown to be the Antichrist who is a specific individual (1 John 2:18; 2 John 7; 2 Thess. 2:3). All of this leads to a confused chronology. Legitimately the beast’s activities take place within 42 months (Rev. 13:5-10).

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION - NOT TITUS OR JEWISH ZEALOTS

This could not have been the Jewish Zealots (or Edomites A.D. 68) because their actions against the Romans occurred far too many years after the 69th ‘seven’ of years of the Daniel 9 schedule which ended in A.D. 33. This is far too great a gap until A.D. 70 because in Preterist thinking the final 7 years should follow on immediately after the 69th ‘seven’ of years.

Also, General Titus did not die in A.D. 70 but which should have happened according to Daniel 11:45b if he was the “abomination...”

Some have even suggested that the “abomination...” was the corrupt Jewish leadership but this is a grasping at straws and again does not fit the biblical schedule or other descriptions.

Furthermore, all these interpretations fail to show the involvement of “the abomination...” in the temple complex and specifically its sanctuary (Dan. 8:12-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Clearly, Partial Preterists have no agreement among themselves concerning the identity of “the Beast” or “the Abomination...”

OLIVET PROPHECY - NOT ABOUT FLEEING FROM JERUSALEM IN A.D. 66

Please refer to p.26 for N.T. Wright’s comment showing the impossibility of this scenario as happening between A.D. 66 and 70. However, there is a proposal that such fleeing would have taken place at the early time of November of A.D. 66 after the withdrawal of the armies of Cestius Gallus. However, this withdrawal was only from the temple area and does not mean that there was a free escape route for Jewish Christians just as Wright shows. Furthermore, this proposal would mean that Cestius Gallus was the “Abomination...” and would place him almost four years before the destruction of Jerusalem which does not fit the Daniel 9 pattern.

THE GREAT HARLOT/BABYLON THE GREAT - NOT JERUSALEM

It would be very strange to interpret Jerusalem, which is God’s city, as Babylon. The two cities pictured as women have been enemies throughout biblical history, so that God made many positive promises for Jerusalem and yet Babylon is shown as doomed in similar prophecies. Jerusalem (Israel) pictured as beautifully adorned (Rev. 12:1) is clearly an enemy of Satan (vs. 3) whereas Babylon the great sits upon the scarlet-coloured ferocious beast (Antichrist) that is blasphemous and adorned as a prostitute queen (Rev. 17:3) and rises from the abyss (Rev. 11:7). Clearly, the correct interpretation of a future Babylon the great would be of a pagan Gentile port city which are facts not pertinent to Jerusalem.

Although Jerusalem certainly was back-slidden she is prophesied to be restored to being a righteous city (Isa. 2:3, 62:7; Zech. 2:12, 8:3, 14:16-17; Matt. 5:35), whereas Babylon the Great is shown to be destroyed forever (Rev. 18:19, 20).

FIRST CENTURY WARS/EARTHQUAKES - NOT PROOF OF “THE END” THEN

Jesus shows that his words in the Olivet discourse concerning deception, persecution, wars and rumours of wars categorically do not signal “the end of the age.” This is because these types of

catastrophes have happened in every period of history. However, Jesus speaks of “the beginning of the birth pains” as an intensification of these wars and to include, specific famines, earthquakes, and pestilences (Matt. 24:4-8; Luke 21:10, 11). This intensification is proven by the descriptions of the first four seals of the sealed scroll given in the book of Revelation which sets these events within the first half of Daniel’s 70th ‘seven’ (Dan. 9:27). These run parallel with the Olivet discourse (Rev. 6:1-8). Indeed, because the Revelation was provably written in the mid-90s A.D. (see pp. 31-34), these events were to be long after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Furthermore, persecution of Christians did not cease after A.D. 70 but has continued until now. However, this general persecution is differentiated by Jesus from the coming “great tribulation/persecution” i.e., intensified persecution and as described in the fourth and fifth Seals (Rev. 6:7-11).

“THIS GENERATION” - NOT APPLYING ONLY TO THE FIRST CENTURY

This aspect of Preterism is answered fully on page 12 of chapter 4 showing that the Greek term refers to a block of mankind with certain common characteristic (mostly evil) and so can rightly be rendered as “the society of the age” and so running all the way until the return of Jesus. Scholar Brock Hollet provides a comprehensive explanation of the meaning of the term “this generation” on pages 89-99 of his book *Debunking Preterism*.

THE END OF THE AGE - NOT THE END OF THE OLD COVENANT SYSTEM

This period could not apply **only** up until A.D. 70 because all descriptions in the letters of Paul, Peter, James, and John (the last hour) concerning those days are not stated to concern national Israel only. Preterists misconstrue these events by linking the destruction of the second temple with the end of the age. However, Daniel 9 separates these events so that the destruction of the city and the sanctuary (second temple) are noted in 9:26 in the undetermined period of time between the end of the 69th ‘seven’ and the beginning of the 70th ‘seven’ (9:27) as the end of the age scenario with the desolation of the third temple as also noted in Daniel 11:31, 45 and 12:1-4, 6-12. Indeed, the desolation of this third temple does immediately precede Jesus’ second advent. Nevertheless, these events could only be understood in retrospect after the A.D. 70 event to show that this did not fulfil the entirety of the Olivet prophecy. The reason these temple structures are not numbered is because the disciples understood these as continuations of the original temple built by Solomon as shown in Haggai, saying, “*Who among you survivors saw the former splendor of this temple? How does it look to you now? Isn’t it nothing by comparison?*” (Hag. 2:3).

“THE LAST DAYS” - NOT THE LAST DAYS OF THE JEWISH SYSTEM

This is the same as the points made about the end of the age. Additionally, the Apostle Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 to show that the last days encompass not only Pentecost of A.D. 33, but the end-times scenario of “the great and spectacular day of the Lord” with its literal darkening of the sun and moon etc (Acts 2:16-21). Furthermore, Peter connects “the end of the days” with “the promised arrival [of Jesus] to be king” (2 Pet. 3:3, 7). So, this Partial Preterist proposal is a further clutching at straws.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION - NOT IN A.D. 70

The A.D. 70 event was also far too late to fit as being the great tribulation. Additionally, this tribulation is described by Jesus as, “*unequaled by anything that has happened since the beginning of the world until now, or will ever happen again*” (Matt. 24:21). This is not the case with the events of A.D. 70.

Some Partial Preterists propose that the “days of vengeance” and exile of Jews spoken of by Jesus in Luke 21:20-24 occurred in A.D. 70 and was the centuries long exile. However, this is a failure to recognize that the Great Tribulation is unprecedented and that it corresponds to the future “trampling of Jerusalem” for 42 months (Rev. 11:2, 3) by entire nations (not simply the Roman army). It will also be a relatively short exile that is within that 3½ year period and linked with the “trampling of Jerusalem” during the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

CELESTIAL PHENOMENA - NOT SYMBOLIC, BUT LITERAL EVENTS

The event of the darkening of the sun with the moon being turned to blood and the stars falling from the sky occurs “*immediately after the great tribulation*” and so showing a logical sequence to these events in Matthew 24:29. Therefore, these celestial phenomena cannot be taken as symbolic. Indeed, they cannot be symbolic of the end of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 or as the collapse of a political-religious order as taught in Preterism. Furthermore, the very multinational military invasion of Israel is understood as quite literal by all commentators as are other parts of the Olivet discourse. So, it appears that, because of

the literal very great earthquake earth's atmosphere will be filled with dust and debris sufficient to cut out most daylight.

However, this Matthew 24:29 scenario does not mean that what we now call stars (giant gas-balls) will fall to earth, but rather it will likely be such things as meteors or asteroids burning as they enter earth's atmosphere.

Further proof of the literalness of these events comes from Jesus' words in the parallel of Luke 21:25 where he speaks of "the roaring of the sea and the waves."

CHRIST'S PAROUSIA - NOT IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Although Jesus was and is present in spirit with his disciples from the time he sat down on God's throne in heaven after his ascension, there is nothing in the Scriptures to show a post-resurrection ascension invisible "coming" that fulfils Jesus words about his return. Indeed, his actual future return is described as very visible—like lightning (Matt. 24:27, Luke 17:24) and "with power and great glory" in the literal sky (Matt. 24:30). We are also told that, "every eye will see him" (Rev. 1:7) a statement written after A.D. 70 (see Chapter 6). Although, Partial Preterists accept this future coming, their proposal that there was an earlier invisible return in A.D. 70 has no biblical basis and is founded upon the mistaken writings of the Jewish historian Josephus. Furthermore, Jesus stated that the visible sign of his coming would be the literal supernatural celestial phenomena of the darkening of the sun and moon etc., which did not happen in A.D. 70.

JESUS' COMING ON THE CLOUDS - A LITERAL FUTURE EVENT

Some Partial Preterists teach that Matthew 24:30 does not refer to the second coming of Jesus. In fact, N.T. Wright claims that it was "a symbol for a mighty reversal of fortunes within history and at the national level" (quoting Caird) and so simply meaning that the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem was the sign that Jesus was now enthroned in heaven as Israel's Messiah by means of his ascension.

Also, a further "coming" is proposed concerning Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem and being hailed as King by the crowds. So, the dilemma for Preterists is that they are presenting three returns/comings of Jesus:

- 1) He comes physically into Jerusalem and was acclaimed as King.
- 2) He comes in the clouds to the Father at his ascension.
- 3) He comes invisibly in A.D. 70 leading the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem.

This leaves little room for any Partial Preterist notion of a literal future return of Jesus. However, throughout the book of Revelation there is only one "coming" (*Gk erchomai*) of Jesus and it is future as the literal and visible glorious return of Jesus.

For "coming" #2 in Preterist thinking there are problems of mistranslation and misreading of Daniel 7:13, 14 which does not say that the Son of man went up to the Ancient of Days but that he "came to" or "reached" Him. In fact, this picture is reframed for us in Revelation 4 and 5 concerning the future throne room of God. Nevertheless, this does not concern God's permanent throne to which Jesus ascended i.e., "ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph. 4:10; Heb. 4:14), but it refers to God's temporary and movable throne used for judgment (Dan. 7:9; Ezek. 1:15-28). It is this throne that Jesus will come up to in the future so that he may receive both the Kingdom in Daniel 7:9, 13b, 14 and the seven-sealed scroll for dominion in Revelation 5:7-13. However, Daniel 7:13a, concerning "with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man came" is being referenced by Jesus in Matthew 24:30 which unlike the Preterist interpretation of this text is evidently referring to Jesus' literal and visible glorious return like lightning in the future (Matt. 24:27, Luke 17:24) and not to his ascension.

ARMAGEDDON - NOT SYMBOLIC, BUT A LITERAL EVENT

Although the book of Revelation does contain many symbols there are also many aspects that are quite literal, especially regarding end-times prophecy which parallels the prophecies of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. Furthermore, the other descriptions of the time-of-the-end battle of Armageddon in the Hebrew Scriptures are clearly quite literal such as the battles described in Zechariah 12 and 14. So, a careful study of all the passages related to Armageddon shows that they are not merely a symbol of the defeat of God's enemies (Rev. 19:11-21).

THE MILLENNIUM - NOT SYMBOLIC, BUT A LITERAL 1,000 YEARS

As with other timing events there is no need to turn the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 into a symbolic number. Indeed, all the early second century Christians understood the 1,000 years in the plain sense as a quite literal time period. These were: Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus,

Commodianus, Methodius, and Lanctantius. Furthermore, the turning of this into a symbolic number creates several contradictory events in making things happen and not happen at the same time, for instance: Satan cannot simultaneously, “**deceive the whole world**” (Rev.12:9) and “**deceive the nations no longer**” (Rev. 20:3) at the same time as in the faulty Amillennialist interpretation used by Partial Preterists.

SATAN - NOT CURRENTLY BOUND

The binding of Satan is recorded in Revelation 20:1-3 which states:

“Then I saw an angel descending from heaven. In his hand was the key to the abyss and a huge chain. ²He seized the Dragon—the ancient Serpent, who is the Devil and Satan—and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the abyss, then locked and sealed it over him so that he couldn’t deceive the nations anymore, until the one thousand years were completed. After this he must be released for a short time.”

The Partial Preterist position is taken because of their mistake of interpreting “the one thousand years” as symbolic. So, please see above for proof of the literalness of “the one thousand years.”

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY IS A FALSE APPROACH

Because all Preterists claim that Jesus’ prophecies concerned the end of the Jewish age they propose that God has no further purpose for Israel—a teaching that Israel is **permanently excluded** from any future role in God’s purpose. The initial details leading to this teaching were first presented in about the year 144 C.E. by the heretic Marcion because of his hatred for all things Jewish. The teaching was later developed and taught by Origen and then by Augustine in conjunction with his allegorical interpretation of prophecy, all of which became early orthodox Catholic teaching concerning Israel and became known also as *supercessionism*. The supposed basis for this teaching concerns Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:38, where he said concerning Israel that, “*Your **house** is left to you desolate!*” and so taken to mean that there is no further future for natural Israel in God’s purpose. This is viewed as **an irrevocable divorce decree**, indicating that God has no further interest in literal Israel or even a remnant of it. However, Jesus’ words here were directed to “the scribes (teachers of the Law) and Pharisees;” i.e., the religious leaders of Israel and not Israel as a nation. Furthermore, Jesus continued by saying: “*For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’*” (Matt. 23:39). Indeed, the use of the phrase “until you say...” by Jesus has left the door open for these literal Jewish religious leaders to repent. So, this is not an irrevocable divorce decree for Israel, but rather it is a conditional statement. It is parallel to Jeremiah 3:8 where God gives Israel a certificate of divorce, but appeals to her saying: “*Come back to me, wayward Israel...for I am merciful...I will not be angry with you forever*” (vs.12). Additionally, the Apostle Paul likened the ‘body of God’s people’ to a cultivated **garden olive tree** from which some Jewish branches could be “broken off because of their unbelief” and to which some Gentile branches could then be grafted in (Rom. 11:16- 22). Then, he asks Gentile Christians in Rome, whom he classifies as individual branches from a wild olive tree:

“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either” (Rom. 11: 17-21).

Indeed, the Christian “body of Christ” has not permanently “replaced” the individual Jews. The reason is explained by Paul, saying:

“And if they [the Jewish branches] do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you [Gentiles] were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!” (Rom. 11:23-24 NIV).

Furthermore, the prophecies for Israel should not be allegorized as is done by Partial Preterists. However, neither Jesus nor any of his emissaries allegorized these prophecies especially in view of his answer to the question, “*Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?*” (Acts 1:6) Jesus did not tell them that they asked about a wrong subject, but only that they were not to know the time for the

restoring of the kingdom to Israel.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul did not allegorize natural the prophecies concerning Israel. He made it very clear that Israel is not permanently rejected by God when he asks the rhetorical question, saying: “*I ask, then, did God reject **his people**? By no means! I am an **Israelite myself**, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel” (Rom. 11:1-2 NIV).*

Conclusion

Although Partial Preterists correctly acknowledge that Jesus’ return is a future visible return along with a future resurrection /rapture, they fail to realize that the **great tribulation, return of Jesus, and the attack upon Jerusalem are foretold to be in relatively close proximity of time.**

Indeed, to realize the faultiness of these Partial Preterist views and to grasp what is biblically true so as to know what signs to look for will guard against our falling for the growing deception that proposes that Matthew 24 has already been fulfilled and with the even more extreme view that Jesus has already returned.

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