

## Eschatology: The Second Coming, Resurrection, and Final Judgment

This morning will be reviewing several passages which give us a good picture and order of how the events of the last day will play out. We will also be looking at another belief system and their view of these last day verses. Lastly, we will critique this other view.

### What is Still Future

Most Christians believe the following prophecies are still future:

- The coming of Christ
- The resurrection of the dead
- The rapture of the living
- The (final) judgment

Let's look at some verses to see what Scripture says about each.

### The Coming of Christ

Christ's return will be personal, visible, and bodily.

*2 Thess 1:10* - when He **comes, in that Day**, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

*Acts 1:11* - "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come **in like manner** as you **saw** Him go into heaven."

*Hebrews 9:28* - so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will **appear** a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

**His return will be a *visible* return.**

**For you auditory learners:**

*1 Thess 4:16a* - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

### The Resurrection of the Dead

Just as Christ rose from the dead, so shall all mankind.

*1 Thessalonians 4:16b* - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

*John 5:28-29* - Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which **all who are**

**in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth**—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

**ALL who have died: believer AND non-believer will come forth.**

### **The Rapture of the Living**

The text is plain and clear that those who are living at the time of Christ's final return will be caught up to meet Him.

*1 Thessalonians 4:17* - Then we who are **alive** and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

### **The Judgment**

The great court of the final day will convene and judgment will be passed down and sentences will be given and immediately served.

*Romans 2:5* - But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in **the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.**

*Rev 20:12* - And I saw the **dead, small and great, standing before God**, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

*Jude 1:6* - And the **angels** who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

**Angels too will be judged**

### **Review**

These are the key events of the final day which have been affirmed throughout the history of Christ's church. As an example, the Apostle's Creed states:

"I believe... He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. He will come again to judge the living and the dead... I believe in ... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

## **Full Preterism**

So, we've mentioned preterism in the past, let's define it. In his book The Last Days According to Jesus, R.C. Sproul defines Preterism as:

“An eschatological viewpoint that places many or all eschatological events in the past, especially during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.”

Simple enough, right? But wait! There are two kinds of preterists: full and partial. Full preterists, who prefer to be called consistent preterists, while some of their critics prefer the title hyper-preterists, believe that all of scripture was fulfilled in 70 AD, when Jerusalem was destroyed. They build this doctrine primarily on the statement of Jesus recorded in Matthew 24:34: “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Because Jesus said *this*, they assert that the second advent must have happened before the last member of that generation died. A favorite statement among many full preterists is “time determines nature.” Since Jesus' time statement is clear, they say, we must interpret the nature of last days events in light of this.

The full preterist also sees this in:

1 Corinthians 15:51 - 52 Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We** shall not all sleep, but **we** shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

One full preterist comments that the apostle Paul must be speaking to and about those who are hearing his voice and not “to some hypothetical people living in some distant age of time, ... Why should he think of the distant future when it is certain that he considered Christ's coming to be imminent?”

### **Resurrection of the Dead**

Also, without taking the time to go into the details, the full preterist views the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:35-49) as spiritual.

This is by no means an full or fair presentation of the full preterist's beliefs, but these are the more foundational concepts upon which they build their case.

## Critique of Full Preterism

When it comes to the second coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment (the end of all history), the vast majority of Christians believe that these events will happen and that they are in the future. To be Orthodox, Christians believe in such things as the virgin birth, the trinity, Christ's resurrection, and, in the case of our study this morning, the events of the final day.

Remember that the word preter simply means "past." Events have happened in the past. All Christians are preterists of one sort or another when it comes to the fulfillment of prophecies like the flood of Noah's day, the deliverance of the Children of Israel out of Egypt, or that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. When it comes to the fulfillment of prophecy, we have been advocating partial preterism - that much has been fulfilled in the past and some prophecy is yet to be fulfilled in the future. But let's take a closer look to see why the views of **full** preterism should raise some eyebrows.

Let us begin by getting a visual of where the two camps stand:

	<b>Full Preterists</b>	<b>Full Preterists</b>	<b>Partial Preterists</b>	<b>Partial Preterists</b>
	A.D. 70	At the end of history	A.D. 70	At the end of history
Coming of Christ	yes	no	yes	yes
Resurrection and rapture	yes	no	no	yes
Day of the Lord	yes	no	yes	yes
Judgment	yes	no	yes	yes

This is a handy table from RC Sproul's book [The Last Days According to Jesus](#). This makes it clear that the full preterist has some explaining to do. They are saying that Christ has already come the second time, that the dead have been resurrected, the living have met with Christ in the clouds, that the day of the Lord was fulfilled, and that God has passed final judgment on the living, the dead, the angels and Satan.

To explain the Partial Preterist side of the table:

### **A.D. 70**

**A** coming of Christ  
**A** day of the Lord

**A** judgment  
The end of the *Jewish age*

## **Still Future**

**The** coming of Christ  
**The** day of the Lord  
**The** resurrection of the dead

**The** rapture of the living  
**The** (final) judgment  
**The** end of *history*

A full preterist says that Christ came, the day of the Lord took place, complete with resurrection of the dead and final judgment, and that this happened in a *spiritual* rather than a visible and physical manner. This is certainly not the belief of the partial preterist. So, now we will discuss some of these issues.

### **The end of the age** - Christ's comings

"While partial preterists acknowledge that in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 there was A coming of Christ, they maintain that it was not THE coming. That is the coming of Christ in AD 70 was a coming in judgment on the Jewish nation, indicating the end of the Jewish age and the fulfillment of A day of the Lord. Jesus really did come in judgment at this time, fulfilling his prophecy in the Olivet Discourse. But this was not the final or ultimate coming of Christ. The coming of Christ, in its fullness, will extend far beyond the Jewish nation and will be universal in its scope and significance. It will come, not at the end of the Jewish age [AD 70], but at the end of human history as we know it. It will be, not merely a day of the Lord, but the final and ultimate day of the Lord." - Sproul

### **The day of the Lord**

The dispute focuses on the meaning of the last day. For the full preterist, all references to the end and to the day of the Lord point to the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the only "second coming" of Jesus they allow for. Partial preterists make a sharp distinction between (1) Christ's coming in judgment to the Jews at the end of the Jewish age signified by the destruction of the temple and (2) His final coming at the end of history. For the full preterist the great resurrection and the rapture occurred in the past. For the partial preterist they remain in the future.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

Sproul views full preterism's greatest flaw to be its treatment of the final resurrection. In pressing the point that the writer of 1 Corinthians intended those hearing his voice to see the fulfillment of all the final events, a severe obstacle is the lack of historical record regarding a rapture of the living and the resurrection of the dead. The full preterist handles this objection by saying that the resurrection and rapture are spiritual in nature.

This answer does not do justice to the context of 1 Cor 15. Verses 20-26 make clear that our resurrection will be like Christ's resurrection, visible and bodily.

And how could the resurrection have happened only spiritually? We still experience

death. There can be no more death after the resurrection of the dead. Death, being the last enemy (1 cor 15:20-24), will be defeated before the resurrection.

## **The Creeds**

The historic creeds of Christianity affirm the future coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. This obviously doesn't carry much weight with full preterists, but one of our first thoughts should be that when we disagree with the WHOLE of historic Christianity on an issue, we stand on thin ice at best. Remember that the creeds are the result of serious challenges to Christian doctrine and are answered by equally serious church councils which produced answers and definitions of the doctrines of Holy Scripture in the form of creeds produced by those councils.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up:

- we looked at the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and, thus, the end of history.
- we saw some of what a full preterist believes.
- Lastly, we critiqued the full preterist's view and how it conflicts with scripture and the creeds of the church.

What an amazing and awesome event the last day will be. In its totality, it is beyond our comprehension but God chose to give us a glimpse of it for our minds to wonder at and cause us to be all the more in awe of Him. Amen!