



## WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL Volume 21 Number 31 August 19, 2026

### Five Millennial Views of Revelation *Part 5 - Preterism*

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#### Introduction

Just because of the nature of the type of literature, the book of Revelation is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret. In fact, over the centuries, different people have interpreted it in quite different ways. And because very few know much about the book, it remains rather confusing for most people. To top it off, it is also not uncommon for individuals to hear teachings of more than one approach, and, not knowing how to distinguish between them, end up having a very mixed up or hybridized understanding.

This article is part five of a five part series designed to give an explanation of the five major millennial views:

- Historic Premillennialism (<https://www.marketfaith.org/2026/05/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-historic-premillennialism/>),
- Dispensational Premillennialism (<http://www.marketfaith.org/2026/05/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-dispensational-premillennialism/>),
- Postmillennialism (<https://www.marketfaith.org/2026/06/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-postmillennialism/>),
- Amillennialism (<https://www.marketfaith.org/2026/06/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-amillennialism/>), and
- Preterism.

#### Definition and Explanation

Rather than a millennial view, Preterism is more accurately categorized as an eschatological view. It really doesn't focus on the millennium at all. It's focus is to assert that the prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled. The term "Preterism" derives from the Latin *preter*, and is a prefix that denotes something that is past, or beyond. There are two preterist interpretations – Full Preterism and Partial Preterism. Full Preterism (also referred to as Hyper-Preterism) considers that all prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled, while Partial Preterism asserts that only some of them, have been fulfilled.

#### Full Preterism

Those who believe in Full Preterism interpret their eschatology based on the belief that all biblical prophesy, both in the Old

and New Testaments, were completely fulfilled in the first century A.D. Full Preterists believe that the second coming of Christ has already happened, and that, in fact, Christ had already come when Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They see this judgment on Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the resurrection prophesied by Jesus. Full Preterists view Revelation, and actually much of the rest of the New Testament, as describing this forty-year transition between Christ's resurrection and His second coming.

To arrive at this interpretation, they interpret most of what is written in Revelation symbolically. Thus, they believe that:

- Christ has already come in judgment
- Satan and the Antichrist have already been thrown into the Lake of Fire
- The kingdom of God has already arrived
- Christ's resurrection was a spiritual event
- The Great Commission has already been fulfilled
- The old heaven and earth have passed away and the new has come
- The promised restoration has already come
- The world now continues as it is

At this point, it is important to understand that Full Preterists do take Scripture very seriously, but interpret it symbolically. They are not trying to read their beliefs into the text, but simply have their own unique interpretive methodology. They base their interpretation on verses such as:

- Matthew 10:23 - But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.
- Matthew 16:28 - Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.
- Matthew 24:34 - Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
- Luke 9:27 - But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

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Another important matter to resolve regarding this point of view relates to the actual writing of the book of Revelation. For Full Preterists, it could not have been written after 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed and the Jews were expelled from Israel. They interpret the destruction of the temple as the coming of Christ in judgment. Thus, they believe the book had to have been written sometime in the 60s A.D.

They consider Christ's resurrection to be spiritual rather than bodily. They additionally argue that the resurrection language in the New Testament is symbolic and refers primarily to Christ's vindication, exaltation, and enthronement, not the coming alive of Jesus' physical body. Vindication, to them, means that Christ was declared right, not that he was raised bodily. Exaltation, therefore, refers to His being raised to honor in heaven as a change in status, not a change in His bodily state. Enthronement represents the act of being metaphorically installed as king in heaven, and is not seen as a bodily resurrection. For them, Christ now reigns in heaven, but purely in a spiritual sense. There was no physical resurrection.

And in order to explain away Christ's post-resurrection appearances, they interpret them as a visionary accommodation to first-century expectations, similar in nature to the prophetic visions of such people as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Paul, rather than as actual physical encounters. They contend that the disciples experienced real encounters with Christ, but they were not physical meetings with a physically embodied Jesus.

Rather than a bodily resurrection, they view Christ's resurrection as symbolic and representative of the end of the Old Covenant (Law/Temple system) and the inauguration of the New. Further, they see Christ's resurrection as the firstfruits of this covenantal transformation, not as a foreshadowing of a bodily resurrection for individuals at the end of history.

Concerning Jesus, they do believe that He was incarnate in real human flesh, suffered physically, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died a literal, biological death, and that His death was substitutionary, atoning, and once-for-all. So they do not deny the historical crucifixion nor physical death of Jesus. However, they also believe that His body remained dead. The resurrection was purely spiritual, not physical.

This also holds implications for human beings, as there can also be no bodily resurrection for believers. For Full Preterists, the

death of believers results in immediate spiritual entrance into heaven. The soul does not await reunification with a body.

Additionally, this has profound implications for people still alive in the present age. In Full Preterism, the current age is the final state of redemptive history. This present age exists for people to live out the fully consummated New Covenant, experience realized salvation, enjoy direct access to God, and spread covenantal life through the gospel. There is nothing climactic left to happen in history. Eschatology is complete, redemption is fully accomplished and applied, and history continues only as the arena of lived-out redemption.

For those who do not receive Christ, most Full Preterists hold that there is no future judgment day, no resurrection to judgment, and no final judgment of all humanity. Thus, death results in entry into a post-death state that is often described as "Separation from God," "Outer darkness," and "Non-participation in covenant life." There are differing conceptions as to what that means specifically, but common notions include: No bodily punishment; No final judgment event; and No world-ending reckoning. Judgment is understood to be individual and immediate, not future and universal. Accordingly, "everlasting punishment" refers to permanent exclusion from God's presence and is not ongoing conscious torment. Hell is conceived of as non-physical, non-eschatological, and already fully realized in history.

As for the end of the world, according to Full Preterism, the world will not end at all – eschatology is finished. The world does not end, history does not culminate, and creation is not brought to a final resolution. Things just continue as they are, and when individuals die they are transported to their final destination.

In Full Preterism, Christ is actually reigning in heaven, but as a non-bodily, heavenly Lord – rather than as the bodily resurrected God-man affirmed by historic Christianity. According to the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:12, Full Preterism is a heretical point of view. According to him, the general resurrection will indeed be experienced bodily, and there is no such thing as a physical death along with a non-physical resurrection.

## Partial Preterism

Partial Preterism is often referred to as Orthodox or Classical Preterism. While this

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view considers that some biblical prophecies have already been fulfilled and others have not, it hedges its bets concerning which is which.

More in line with Full Preterists, some believe that most of the eschatological prophecies, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the coming Day of the Lord with Christ coming in judgment, were fulfilled either in 70 A.D. or during the persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero.

There are other Partial Preterists, however, who believe that the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the coming Day of the Lord with Christ coming in judgment have not yet been historically fulfilled, but will be future events.

By the same token, some Partial Preterists identify "Babylon the Great," mentioned in Revelation 17 - 18, with the Roman Empire, while others identify it with the city of Jerusalem.

Concerning the identity of the "Beast," most interpretations identify Nero as the one represented by that symbol. They interpret the stamped image of his head on every coin of the Roman Empire as the "Mark of the Beast." There are others, however, who believe the Book of Revelation was written after Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D. Those interpreters identify the "Beast" as the Roman Emperor Domitian in 95 or 96 A.D.

One of the other distinctives of Partial Preterism is that the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment have yet to occur. They do believe, though, that Christ came back in judgment on Israel by destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It was that judgment which signaled the end of the "Jewish Age" and ushered in the "age to come."

Thus, in Partial Preterism, even though the Scriptures only speak of one return (see Acts 1:10-11 and Hebrews 9:27-28), they do believe there are two returns of Christ – one local in 70 A.D. and one universal which has yet to come.

In line with Full Preterism, Partial Preterism considers that the Old Testament prophecies in Daniel, as well as the New Testament prophecies in Matthew 24, and Revelation (except for the last three chapters) have already been fulfilled. They see those prophecies having been fulfilled in the first century A.D. when Rome destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. Thus,

they view most of the message of the book of Revelation as representing already fulfilled prophecy – as the story of turmoil and conflict that happened during the first century.

The reason for interpreting the book of Revelation the way they do is because of the explicit statements in Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 ("that these prophecies must soon take place") and in 1:3 and 22:10 (that the "time is near").

Where Partial Preterists most strongly differ from Full Preterists is that they believe there are still some prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled based on the last three chapters of Revelation. These include the visible and 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.

## *The Place of Revelation in Preterism*

Preterists emphasize that Revelation was written to first-century believers about near-future events in their own time based on Revelation 1:1 ("the things which must soon take place") and Revelation 1:3; 22:10 ("for the time is near"). Thus, the majority of Revelation's prophecies are believed to have been fulfilled in the first century.

There is a particular focus, in this interpretation, on Jerusalem and Rome. Revelation's visions are often linked to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and/or the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians. Thus, the "Beast" (Revelation 13) is identified with Nero Caesar (whose name corresponds to the "666" in Hebrew numerology). Also, Babylon the Great (Revelation 17 - 18) is interpreted as either the apostate covenant community of Jerusalem or the imperial persecutor Rome.

Preterists also vary in their interpretation of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-6). Full Preterists consider that the Millennium represents either the period between Christ's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., or a completed symbolic reign of the saints. For Partial Preterists, the Millennium is symbolic of the Church Age that began after Christ's resurrection (similar to Amillennialism and Postmillennialism).

## *Underlying Philosophy of Preterism*

The underlying philosophy of Preterism is built upon the idea that biblical prophecy

refers primarily to events that occurred in the first century rather than what will happen in the future. There are several interpretive principles that it is built upon.

1. Preterism takes literally time indicator words in Scripture such as “soon” (Revelation 1:1), “at hand” (James 5:8), and “this generation” (Matthew 24:34). It assumes that in Scripture, God communicated specifically to the original audience who received it so that the prophecies would have relevance for them.

2. Preterists consider that since the Bible was written first to its original readers, prophecy must be read in its historical and cultural context. For example, the “Beast” in Revelation is often identified with the Roman Empire or Nero, not with a future Antichrist.

3. Preterists generally view prophecy as tied to the shift in covenants from the Old Covenant that was centered on Israel and the temple system, to the New Covenant that was centered on Christ and the Church. Thus, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is considered to be the judgment of God that confirmed the New Covenant and ended the Old.

4. Preterists believe that most, or all, of the eschatological events that have been predicted in prophesy have been realized in history, rather than projecting them into the distant future. They consider that Christ’s kingdom is a present reality that is currently being manifested in history, and not something that will be played out in future end times events.

5. Preterism considers that the apocalyptic language in the book of Revelation (for instance the images of beasts, stars falling, earthquakes, etc.) is mostly symbolic in a way that corresponds to Old Testament prophetic imagery – particularly that found in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

6. Preterism considers that prophecy is not about predicting what is going on in modern times, but about revealing how God acted in biblical times.

### ***Preterism Storyline***

Preterism is a particular way of viewing redemptive history that tells the story of how Jesus introduced His kingdom, judged Old Covenant Israel in 70 A.D., and established the New Covenant as a continuing reign that expands throughout history.

The story begins with Christ’s first coming, with a focus on His incarnation, earthly ministry, death, and resurrection. This first coming brought God’s Kingdom into world history by fulfilling the Law and the Prophets and inaugurating the New Covenant. His resurrection (even though not physical) demonstrated that He had power over sin and death.

The story continues with the Apostolic Age that lasted from 30 - 70 A.D. During that period, the gospel spread rapidly, especially throughout the Roman Empire. During that time, the apostles announced that the “last days” had arrived. In Preterism, the last days correspond to the end of the Old Covenant, not the end of the world. Also, the Church faced heavy persecution, both from unbelieving Jews and from the Roman government.

Next, in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, in His Olivet Discourse, Jesus prophesied the coming judgment on Jerusalem. In Revelation, Christ predicted the conflict that would occur between the Church and the Roman government, and between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant system (the Jewish religious system). In the Revelation story, the “Beast” is understood to be Rome or emperor Nero, and the “harlot” is apostate Jerusalem.

The climax of the story occurred in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem. In that historical event, emperor Vespasian’s son, Titus, led the Roman armies that destroyed the Jerusalem Temple. That is understood to fulfill the prediction Jesus made in Matthew 24:2 that “not one stone here will be left upon another.” That event spelled the end of the Old Covenant age as God’s judgment on Israel for rejecting Christ. With that, the Church emerged as the true people of God.

After 70 A.D., the New Covenant is interpreted to be fully in force. From there, Christ is understood to rule from heaven, and His kingdom began its advance on earth through the spread of the gospel. From that point, Revelation 21 is interpreted to symbolically represent the renewed covenantal order as the “new heavens and new earth.” In Full Preterism, this is not considered a physical remaking of the cosmos, where in Partial Preterism it may be interpreted to be so.

It is at this point that Partial and Full Preterism part company. Full Preterists believe that all prophecy, including the resurrection of the dead and judgment, were fulfilled in the first century. For them, history will continue on under Christ’s reign. Partial Preterists believe that Christ will one day return bodily, raise the dead, and consummate history.

### ***Preterism Timeline***

#### Full Preterism Timeline

1. Old Covenant Age from Moses to Christ - During that time period, the Law of Moses governed Israel. After Christ’s death, that age continued alongside the early church until 70 A.D., at which time the Old Covenant was fully abolished.

2. Christ's First Coming (30 - 33 A.D.) - Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension inaugurated the New Covenant. Following that, Pentecost marked the outpouring of the Spirit and the start of the end-time fulfillment.
3. The "Last Days" (30 - 70 A.D.) - The entire apostolic generation constitutes the "last days" of the Old Covenant world. During that time, the apostles preached the gospel to the nations, there was tribulation and persecution from Jews and Romans, and false teachers and antichrists arose within the Church.
4. The Great Tribulation (66 - 70 A.D.) - The Jewish War with Rome fulfilled Jesus' Olivet Discourse where Jerusalem was surrounded by armies and believers fled to Pella.
5. Parousia/Second Coming (70 A.D.) - Christ came covenantally and spiritually in judgment through the agency of the Roman army. This was the "coming on the clouds" like Yahweh's Old Testament judgments, and was the sign of the Son of Man's visible judgment against Jerusalem.
6. Resurrection & Judgment (70 A.D.) - The Resurrection occurred corporately and spiritually. The righteous dead were raised into God's presence and received eternal life. The wicked dead were judged and cut off from God.
7. New Heavens and New Earth (After 70 A.D.) - After the fall of Jerusalem, the New Covenant fully replaced the Old. The New Heavens and Earth symbolize the new creation in Christ and the everlasting kingdom of God. Now, the Church is the New Jerusalem where God dwells with His people.

## Conclusion

This article is the last of our explanation of the five interpretive approaches to the book of Revelation. It is my greatest hope that this deep dive into the various interpretive approaches will be a great help in your personal understanding of Scripture and of a biblical worldview.

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