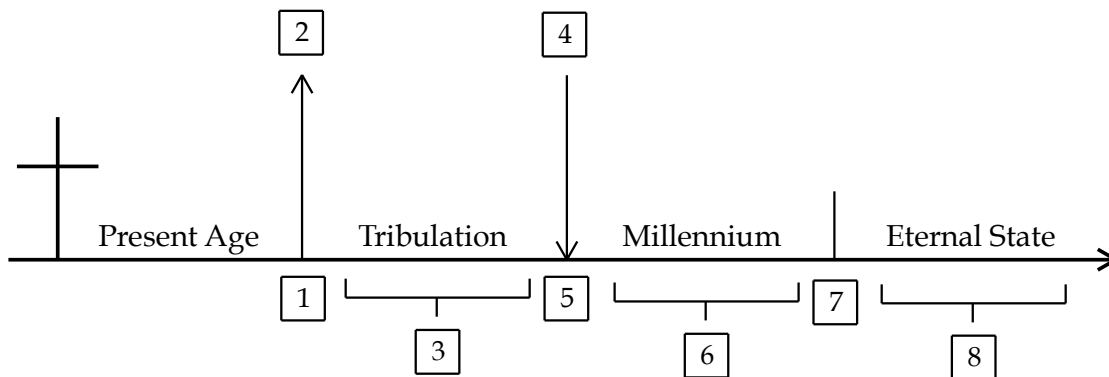


Entrust Eschatology The Return of Jesus Christ 1/18/24

I. Introduction to the Return of Jesus Christ

- The 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ is no minor truth and event. At least 18 books of Scripture mention it:

Ps. 2:1-9; 24:7-10; 96:10-13; 110
Isa. 9:6-7
Jer. 23:1-8
Ezek. 37:15-28
Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14
Hosea 3:4-5
Amos 9:11-15
Micah 4:7
Zech. 2:10-12; 12; 14:1-9
Matt. 19:28; 24:27-31; 25:6, 31-46
Mark 13:24-27
Luke 12:35-40; 17:24-37; 18:8; 21:25-28
Acts 1:10-11; 15:16-18
Rom. 11:25-27
2 Thes. 2:8
2 Peter 3:3-4
Jude 14-15
Rev. 1:7-8; 2:25-28; 16:15; 22:20.



1. The Imminent Rapture of the Church
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ
3. The Seventieth Week of Daniel
- 4. The Second Coming of Christ**

5. The Divine Restoration of Israel
6. The Millennial Reign of Christ
7. The Final Judgment of Unbelievers
8. The Final State of Eternity

➤ KEY EVENTS AT THE SECOND COMING:

- 1) The Destruction of the Wicked (Rev 19:19-21)
- 2) The Judgment of the Nations (Matt 25:31-46)
- 3) The Binding of the Devil (Rev 20:1-3)
- 4) The Resurrection of the Martyrs (Rev 20:4-6)
- 5) The Establishment of the Kingdom (Rev 20:4-6)

II. The Second Coming of Christ in Matthew 24:29-31 29

- Prior to his crucifixion, Jesus said the following in regards to his return:

“²⁹But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

A. The Timing of His Coming (v. 29a)

“But **immediately** after the tribulation of those days”

B. The Circumstances of His Coming (vv. 29b-e)

1. The Darkening of the Sun (v. 29b)
2. The Darkening of the Moon (v. 29c)
3. The Falling of the Stars (v. 29d)
4. The Shaking of the Heavenly Powers (v. 29e)

C. The Appearance of His Coming (v. 30a)

“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky”

D. The Mourning of the Tribes (v. 30b; cf. Zech 12:10)

“and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn”

E. The Observation of His Coming (v. 30c)

“and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory”

- Daniel 7:13-14 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”

F. The Sending of His Angels (v. 31a)

“And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET”

G. The Gathering of His Elect (v. 31b)

“and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

III. The Second Coming of Christ in Revelation 19:11-21

- Revelation 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
- Revelation 19:17-18 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."
- Revelation 19:19-21 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

THREE PROGRESSIVE STAGES:

A. The Glorious Arrival of the Conquering Warrior (vv. 11-16)

*Consider the contrast between Christ's first and second Advent

1. The Majestic Description of the Warrior (vv. 11-13)

- His Faithfulness (v. 11b)
 - “He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True”
- His Righteousness (v. 11c)
 - “and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”
- His Omniscience (v. 12a)
 - “His eyes *are* a flame of fire”
- His Royalty (v. 12b)
 - “and on His head *are* many diadems”
- His Transcendence (v. 12c)
 - “He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself”
- His Vengeance (v. 13a)
 - “*He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood”
 - See also:
 - Isaiah 63:2-3 Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ³ “I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment.
 - Revelation 14:20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.
- His Deity (v. 13b)
 - “and His name is called The Word of God.”

2. The Accompanying Armies of the Warrior (v. 14)

- The Origin of the Armies (v. 14a)
 - “And the armies which are in heaven”
- The Clothing of the Armies (v. 14b)
 - “clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean”
- The Horses of the Armies (v. 14c)
 - “were following Him on white horses”

3. The Divine Purpose of the Warrior (v. 15)

- His Imminent Destruction of the Nations (v. 15a)
 - “From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations”
- His Future Rule of the Nations (v. 15b)
 - “He will rule them with a rod of iron”
 - See also:
 - Psalm 2:7-9 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸ ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ ”
- His Fierce Wrath Toward the Nations (v. 15c)
 - “and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty”

4. The Absolute Authority of the Warrior (v. 16)

➤ He is King of Kings (v. 16b)

- “And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS’”

➤ He is Lord of Lords (v. 16c)

- “LORD OF LORDS”

B. The Ominous Declaration of Certain Victory (vv. 17-18)

1. The Sovereign Assembly of the Birds (v. 17)

- “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God”

2. The Divine Purpose of the Assembly (v. 18)

- “so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.””

C. The Decisive Conquest of the Divine Enemies (vv. 19-21)

1. The Assembly of God’s Enemies for War (v. 19)

- “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”

2. The Capture of the Beast and False Prophet (v. 20)

➤ The Seizing of these Enemies (v. 20a)

- “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image”

- The Sentencing of these Enemies (v. 20b)
 - “these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone”

3. The Defeat of the Kings and Their Armies (v. 21)

- The Killing of these Enemies (v. 21a)
 - “And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse”
- The Consumption of these Enemies (v. 21b)
 - “and all the birds were filled with their flesh”

PARALLEL PASSAGES:

- Zechariah 12:1-9 The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. *Thus* declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him, ² “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. ³ “It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. **And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.** ⁴ “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ “Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ ⁶ “In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. ⁷ “The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. ⁸ “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. ⁹ “And in that day I will set about to **destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.**

- Zechariah 14:1-5 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. ³ Then the **LORD will go forth and fight against those nations**, as when He fights on a day of battle. ⁴ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. ⁵ You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him!

IV. The Full Preterist Denial of the Second Coming

- Based on the Latin word *preter* (“past”), preterism is the view that most eschatological prophecies have already been fulfilled in the past, more specifically at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction in A.D. 70.

A. The Case for Preterism

- To support their view, preterists point to various time indicators in the New Testament – such as “soon,” “near,” and “quickly.”
- They argue that this proves a first-century fulfillment of the prophecies they qualify.
- But these modifiers do not demand that the prophesied events happen within a short period of time but rather they convey the concept of *imminence*:
- “Since no one but God knows when the tribulation period will occur, every generation should live with the imminent expectation that these events could break forth at any moment” (Vlach).
- One of the most common arguments for preterism comes from Matthew 24:34, where Jesus says: “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”
- This is said to indicate that many or all of the events in Matthew 24 – including the coming of Christ in verses 29- 31 – must have occurred in the first century (i.e. withing that generation listening to Christ’s words that day).

- But in Matthew 24:34, Jesus is projecting his listeners into the prophetic future and simply saying that the very generation who sees the various signs described in Matthew 24 will also see the coming of the Son of Man, since these signs will *immediately* precede His return.
- Darrell Bock: “Jesus says that when the signs of the beginning of the end come, then the end will come relatively quickly, within a generation.”
- Preterists also argue that the Book of Revelation was written in the mid-60s and that the events described therein took place in the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- If it can be demonstrated that Revelation was written post-A.D. 70, then the assertion that the Tribulation occurred at that time cannot be held (as many non-premillennialists do) .
- History demonstrates that Revelation was almost certainly written ca. mid A.D. 90s +/- for the following reasons:
 - The consensus of church history is that Revelation was written in about A.D. 95
 - In the 2nd-century, the church leader, Irenaeus, asserted that it was written near the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (who ruled from A.D. 81 to 96).
 - Later writers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus (who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on Revelation), Eusebius, and Jerome affirm the Domitian date.
 - The spiritual decline of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation (chpts. 2-3) also argues for the later date. Evidence suggests that those churches were strong and spiritually healthy in the mid-60s, when Paul last ministered in Asia Minor. The brief time between Paul’s ministry there and the end of Nero’s reign was too short for such a decline to have occurred. The longer time gap also explains the rise of the heretical sect known as the Nicolaitans (2:6, 15), who are not mentioned in Paul’s letters, not even to one or more of these same churches (Ephesians)
- Michael Vlach: “If Revelation were written after AD 67, which is highly likely, all forms of preterism collapse.”

B. The Types of Preterism

- There are two main types of preterism, *partial* and *full* preterism, the former being much more common (and less concerning) than the latter.

1. Partial Preterism

- According to partial preterism, most biblical prophecy was already fulfilled in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- However, partial preterists also hold to:
 - a future return of the Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:16-17)
 - the resurrection and judgment of all mankind will occur at the Second Coming (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Matt 25:31-46; 2 Thess 1:6-10)
 - and the new heavens and earth is seen as a future reality (Rev 21-22).

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Thomas Ice and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Great Tribulation: Past or Present? Two Evangelicals Debate the Question*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999.

2. Full Preterism

- Also known as “hyper-preterism,” full preterism affirms that *all biblical prophecy has already been fulfilled*, including prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Christ, the future resurrection and judgment, and the advent of the eternal state.
- According to full preterists, believers have already been resurrected (spiritually) and are currently living in the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21-22.
- This view is more rare today.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Keith A. Mathison, ed., *When Shall These Things Be? A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004.