



Square Halo Books

The Problems With Preterism

WHAT IS PRETERISM?

Preterism is an eschatological viewpoint that places many or all eschatological events in the past, especially during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There are two variations of preterism, full preterism and partial preterism. Full preterism considers the biblical text fulfilled and says there will be no future second coming of Christ. Partial preterism asserts that the Lord came in judgment on an apostate Jewish religion in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by a Roman army. This view differs from full preterism by continuing to look for a future second coming. Most who hold to partial preterism and many others view full preterism as a heretical theological position because it denies the visible future return of Christ, says there is no future physical resurrection of believers' present mortal bodies, and teaches that the final judgment of all men has already taken place (in 70 AD).

PROBLEMS WITH PRETERISM

While a number of very intelligent and biblically sound teachers hold to preterism, there are severe problems when you look carefully at how the Gospels, Daniel and Romans are interpreted in the Preterist view.

I. Just about everything in Matthew 24 is taken by Preterists to be hyperbole because none of the descriptions in Matthew 24 literally fit the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. This would be acceptable as an interpretive method if the hyperbole exaggerated something that in its literal form truly occurred in a non-hyperbolic way. However this is not true in Matthew 24.

One element in the hyperbole within this passage, according to the Preterists is that there is a great urgency to leave the specific city of Jerusalem. This urgency is so severe that a man on his roof would not have time to stop to go into the house to retrieve belongings. The urgency is such that it would appear that the window for a person to leave Jerusalem is a single day (that would be the only explanation for praying that one's flight would not be on a Sabbath). Not only is there no such literal urgency in 70 AD, there is no urgency at all. Lacking any urgency, the very idea of hyperbole cannot be sustained. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD involved the Roman armies leaving Jerusalem for in excess of one year (while Vespasian was getting himself made emperor).

Another element of hyperbole in the text, according to the Preterists, is the nature of the destruction. Jesus quotes almost verbatim from Daniel 12 in speaking of this time as a time of distress such as has never been seen before and will never be seen again. Now it is clear that the Roman attack on Jerusalem was destructive, as nearly all attacks are, but was it even close to a time of distress such as has never been seen before and will never be seen again among city destructions? It would seem that the destruction was less severe than, for example, the Roman destruction of Carthage where the city was dismantled and salt was plowed into the ground to prevent any future planting in the area. It also appears that the conquest of Jerusalem was less severe than other destructions like Jericho, or other cities where all the inhabitants were killed. It was less severe than cities where all the people in the city were in some way or other maimed (like what almost happened in Jabesh Gilead in I Samuel 11). Likewise, it would be hard to compare the 70 AD destruction to modern attacks on cities like Dresden, Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

Because the descriptions in Matt 24:15-22 do not fit the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem, Preterists interpret the passage non-literally. Details within the text, that in a literal interpretation would seem significant, can be ignored by Preterists because those portions of the text are not literal. However, to justify the presence of hyperbole in the text, the hyperbolic portions of the text should have a historical context that the hyperbole exaggerates. A careful examination of the historical records show that there was no urgency to leave Jerusalem between 66 and 70 AD that would justify language like "pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on a Sabbath". Preterists cannot believe the urgency to leave was time sensitive as is described in the text. In a rather inconsistent way, they even suggest with Luke 21 that the urgency to leave was after the city was surrounded by armies. But Luke has no comparable urgency in chapter 21, and the suggestion to leave after Jerusalem is surrounded by armies only makes sense in the Lukan non-urgent context. That is because when the Romans withdrew in 68 AD, the Jews in Jerusalem who were wise left the city. There was no urgency because they had more than a year to pack their belongings, say goodbye and leave. This is in stark contrast to Matthew 24 which does not mention Jerusalem being surrounded by armies and does point to a possible need to leave on a particular day of the week.



Another area where Preterists believe the text uses hyperbole is in the statement that if the days had not been cut short no one would have survived. Again it is supposed to be an overstatement of reality. Some would have survived but the language is supposed to show that the destruction of Jerusalem would be harsh. The problem is that there is nothing in the reality to justify the hyperbole. There was never any indication that the Romans would kill all or most of the Jews in Jerusalem, much less many of the Jews in the region.

Preterists have difficulty explaining why the elect would care if the days were cut short. The elect who were familiar with Jesus' teaching would have fled to the mountains so why would they care if the days of Jerusalem's destruction were cut short? How is it a benefit to the elect that the days are cut short? Why would the destruction of the temple and the apostate people in Jerusalem be something that the elect would ask God to limit for their own sake?

One possible solution for preterists is that the elect who escaped from Jerusalem might be concerned for family and friends who chose not to join them. The difficulty here is that such an interpretation of the text suggests that some who deserve to be judged would be shown leniency because of the intervention of certain members of the elect. That does not appear to be the intention of the text. There is no group mentioned in the text on behalf of whom the elect are interceding. There is no biblical model for saving the lives of some who deserve judgment and are resistant to the gospel because they have elect friends or family who desire for their lives to be spared.

2. Explaining the vision in Daniel 10-12 creates a major difficulty for Preterists. At first glance they seem to have an excellent way of understanding the passage. The king of the North is the Seleucids and the king of the South is the Ptolemys. However, there are major problems with this view of the Daniel 10-12 vision.

The first problem is that Daniel introduces the vision by saying that it concerns a great war (10:1). No matter how it is justified, there is no way to literally describe the minor squabbles between the Seleucids and Ptolemys as a great war. Perhaps it is hyperbole.

The second problem is that Daniel has an extreme reaction to what he sees in most of the visions at the end of Daniel. His reaction is clearly excessive if the visions relate to the time of the Seleucids and Ptolemys and particularly to Antiochus Epiphany. The visions in Daniel 7-12 are connected to one another by shared terminology and Daniel's common reaction to the visions. In Daniel 7, Daniel reacts to the vision he has seen by being deeply troubled and having his face turn pale. In Daniel 8, Daniel concludes the vision by being exhausted and laying ill for several days. In Daniel 10, Daniel mourns for 3 weeks based on the vision which he introduces as relating to a great war (note the singular). The various interpretations of the visions that

are thought to relate to Antiochus fail to consider how reasonable this interpretation is in light of Daniel's reaction.

Daniel faced lions and the text does not mention him fainting, becoming sick or showing any significant fear. Daniel was living in a time when there was no temple. He was in Jerusalem when it was destroyed and he knew that the temple would not be rebuilt for 70 years (see Dan. 9:2). It must be considered how this would compare with Daniel seeing a vision that suggested a king would defile the temple and prevent Jews from entering it for 3 years. It does not seem at all comparable, yet Daniel reacts by being made sick by three of the visions. It might be more expected that Daniel would rejoice knowing that the Jews being kept out of the temple for 3 years would have a temple in which to worship at the end of that time.

Is it reasonable to suggest that Daniel would react as he does in Daniel 7, 8 and 10 because of what Antiochus did? Antiochus killed a few Jews. He defiled the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar. Antiochus denied the Jews access to the temple from December 25, 167 BC until it was reconsecrated December 25, 164 BC. So is it reasonable to suggest that Daniel could have turned pale and been made sick at the thought that the temple would be closed for 3 years and defiled when he had seen it totally destroyed and knew that it would not be rebuilt for decades? It would not seem so. A man who faced lions and saw God's temple destroyed without fainting is made of sterner stuff.

The preoccupation with Antiochus is completely out of proportion. Yes, he sacrificed a pig. Yes, that was not good. But in reality, Antiochus is a minor despot who closed the temple for 3 years. On what basis can anyone make his actions the focus of a major part of Daniel's writings? And if Daniel is not writing about Antiochus, then he must be writing about the end of the world. The vision concerns a great war—not the squabbles between the Seleucids and Ptolemys. The vision describes the time of wrath and the time of the end (Dan 11:27, 35, 36, 40). The last king in the vision sets up the abomination that causes desolation referred to by Jesus as a future event in Matt 24:15. The vision concludes with the time of distress almost directly quoted by Jesus in Matthew 24 and the resurrection of the dead (Dan 12:1,2).

There is no transitional language that would encourage the view that there is a sudden and dramatic change, in the midst of Daniel's vision in chapters 10-12, from the history of the Seleucids, to the history of some future events that clearly appear to include the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:2f). In Scripture, it can be observed that such changes, mid-stream in the text, are normally commented upon. So in Luke 21, the description of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD in verses 12-24 breaks into the description of events at the end of the world. That section is introduced with the phrase, "But before all that..." which clarifies that Jesus is detouring from the



primary point of his teaching to discuss events that precede the events he was describing.

Likewise Psalm I, which has a Chiastic structure, has an obvious hinge.

- A. Blessed is the holy man
- B. He delights in the law
- C. Whatever he does prospers NOT SO THE WICKED
- C. They are like chaff the wind blows away
- B. They cannot stand in the face of the law
- A. The way of the wicked will perish

Psalm I goes from discussing the holy man to discussing the wicked man and the transition is made clear by the NOT SO THE WICKED hinge. There is no hinge in Daniel, no transitional statements, and the context makes it most natural to understand the vision in terms of a series of chronologically related events.

It should be noted that the only basis for suggesting that mid to late Daniel II becomes difficult to interpret is that it does not fit the Seleucid/Antiochus framework. An alternate interpretation could be that the events described by Daniel have not already happened and that they refer to a future king/antichrist. Just because early Daniel II sounds like it could refer to the Seleucids and preterists believe they have a detailed fulfillment in that portion of the text, it does not permit an overlooking of important elements in the text such as the resurrection of the dead at the beginning of chapter 12. Since there is no way to make the Seleucid/Ptolemaic conflict fit the entire text in context, to include the resurrection of the dead, it should be clear that the vision is not describing that conflict.

3. In summary, Daniel's reaction is out of proportion to the things Antiochus did. Antiochus' time was never called the time of the end or the time of wrath. The abomination is future from Jesus and so cannot have anything to do with Antiochus who lived more than 100 years before Jesus. The vision clearly concludes with the resurrection of the dead, and the vision is presented as though the events are chronologically connected events related to a great war.

This clarification should allow the student to put aside Antiochus, the minor despot, and deal with the text in its context as a unified whole, as Daniel's other visions and all of God's word should be handled.

Preterists ignore the Old Testament context of the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of in Daniel. They do this in two ways. First, they attempt to assert that Daniel 9 is the passage to which Jesus is referring. This is not reasonable. Daniel 9 does not explicitly speak of the abomination of desolation. It says there will be desolations and regarding one who makes desolate, but it does not use the phrase abomination of desolation as can be seen below.

Dan 9:26 *And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Dan 9:27 *And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,*

Dan 11:31 *And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.*

Matt 24:15 *Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation", spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...*

Now it could be argued that there is no need for the precise phrase used in Daniel to be imitated by Jesus if He is referring to Daniel 9. However, it would seem that there would be an immediate preference for a passage in Daniel where the exact phrase used by Jesus is found. It is intuitive that the passage using the exact language would be more likely to be the passage to which Jesus was pointing. In the absence of any other evidence the chapter 11 reference would appear to have precedence. An argument could be made for Daniel 9 either by suggesting that Jesus is referring to both the Daniel 9 and 11 passages or that other evidence in Daniel 9 shows an explicit connection with Jesus' words in Matthew 24. In fact, there is evidence of such a connection, but it is in Daniel 11 and 12, not in Daniel 9. Daniel 9 has a reference to a war and desolations but Daniel 12 actually contains the passage almost directly quoted by Jesus in Matthew 24.

Dan 12:1-3 *At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.*

Matt 24:21 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Any objective observer will acknowledge that Daniel 11 and 12 contain language much closer to what Jesus said in Matthew 24 than anything from Daniel 9. The only reason to prefer Daniel 9 is a predisposition to prefer Daniel 9. Because Daniel 11 and 12 clearly conclude with the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead, they cannot be reconciled with Antiochus time or with 70 AD.



Second, Preterists attempt to make Daniel 10-12 a reference to Antiochus using a careful chronology as they work through Daniel 11 until they arrive at verse 31. In verse 31 the king sets up the abomination of desolation, and Preterists relate this to Antiochus. But it cannot be Antiochus because Jesus said the setting up of the abomination was future to him. So then Preterists assert that Antiochus is a type of some future king possibly in 70 AD. Because the passage clearly includes Daniel 12:1-3 which describes the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead, with no transition or change, the future king would have to live at the very end of human history, not in 70 AD. The passage could provide the basis for a full preterist argument, but it denies the partial preterist view.

The last king is described in Daniel 11:21-45. He sets up the abomination that causes desolation in Dan. 11:31 and comes to his end in verse 45. The very next verse says, "at that time" and speaks of the time of distress mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24. It continues "at that time" and speaks of multitudes being delivered by the resurrection of the dead (Dan 12:1,2). So the context of the king who sets up the abomination and comes to his end is the time of the resurrection of the dead. This inconsistency will not inconvenience full Preterists, but is devastating to the partial preterist position.

4. Matt 24:34 is supposed to be Jesus promising his return in this generation. But this cannot be for 2 simple reasons. First, the phrase "all these things" in verse 34 is supposed to refer to the return of Christ. So this generation will not pass away until "all these things" (presumed to include Christ's return) take place. But in the previous verse the very same phrase, "all these things", is used in a context where it cannot include the return of Christ because the text says when you see "all these things" you are to recognize he is near (i.e., all these things are a sign of the imminent return of Christ and so cannot include the return of Christ). Second, in verse 36 (two verses after verse 34), Jesus says he does not know the day and hour of his return. Preterists have, in some cases, argued that this form of speech should be taken very literally even though that is not the natural way to understand it. This is quite inconsistent after taking all of the early prophecies as hyperbole. So Preterists argue that Jesus meant that he knew the generation of his return but not the day or hour of his return. Six verses later, verse 42 says to be alert because you do not know the day of Christ's return. Again the text supposedly has identified the generation of Christ's return but not the day. Then two verses later, (vs 44) the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect him. Using the same method of interpretation, the text tells us the generation when Jesus is coming but while one might expect Him at perhaps 5:00, He is actually coming at 11:00. Is this what this passage means? Of course not. The Preterists don't

interpret it that way. Why not? Because it is obviously saying that Jesus is coming at some future time when we do not expect him. It is not to be understood literally and the Preterists agree. And so the house of cards falls. It is inconsistent to take the passage in verse 36 in an absolutely literal way but accept the same form of speech as non-literal 8 verses later. When Jesus says he does not know the day and hour of his return, he cannot later limit his return to a period within the next 40 years. Some will insist on tailoring their interpretation to their needs, saying Jesus knew the generation but not the year or month, but an objective observer will see this is ridiculous. Jesus is saying He does not know when He is coming back, so He cannot have said when He was coming back two verses earlier.

5. While Luke 21:12-24 clearly does speak of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, different language is used than that found in Matthew 24. Luke does not describe the same urgency, and what he describes comfortably fits 70 AD. Actually, the language in Luke is different in every area except the description of how dreadful it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Of course, any war, at any time, would be dreadful for vulnerable people like the pregnant and nursing mothers. A careful examination of Luke 21 shows that verse 12 begins, "but before all these things..." So before the events described in verses 8-11, the destruction of Jerusalem will occur. Verses 25ff continue where verse 11 stopped. The great signs in heaven in verse 11 are described in some detail beginning again in verse 25 after the brief detour in verses 12-24 to describe what will happen before all these things. Luke 17:22-37 does contain the urgency and language of Matthew 24 in its description of the day the Son of Man is revealed, and would be unnecessary if Luke 21:12-24 was talking about the same thing.

6. Preterists emphasize how the text speaks of the imminent return of Christ. However, many parts of the text in the gospels emphasize that Jesus is not coming soon. Note particularly Luke 21:9 (the end does not come right away), Matt 24:6, 8, 14 (wars and rumors of wars are not the end, famines and earthquakes are the beginning of birth pains and the gospel will be proclaimed throughout the world and then the end will come). The parables of Matthew 25 emphasize that the Lord will be away a long time before his return (Matt 25:5f - the bridegroom was delaying and came at midnight, Matt 25:19 - the master came to settle accounts after a long time).



7. A lot of people, particularly Preterists, emphasize that faithful believers, regardless of their racial identity are true Israel. They base this on Romans 2:28f where Paul says a true Jew is one who is inwardly circumcised in heart. As a result they assert that God is done with Israel, he has divorced Israel and there is no longer a racial Israel.

But an examination of Romans 11 clarifies that racial Israel continues to be recognized and blessed by God even after the end of the sacrificial system. God clearly says through Paul that He will never completely reject national Israel. It is obvious that God would not reject spiritual Israel because they are the redeemed people of God. What is surprising in this passage is that Paul is making the point that God maintains a continuing relationship with a people hardened against Him.

The chapter begins with Paul saying God has not rejected his people and lest we think that he is speaking of spiritual Israel, Paul points out his racial lineage as an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people (national Israel) whom he foreknew. Then in verse 11 Paul says they (national Israel) did not stumble so as to fall. It is clear that he is speaking of national Israel because he describes those who have stumbled (vs 9) having eyes that don't see and ears that don't hear. Paul says, may it never be (that those who have stumbled have completely fallen). Verses 12-24 compare Gentiles believers and national Israel which has rejected Christ and points out that the difference is God's kindness to those who believe and his ability to restore those who no longer remain in their unbelief.

Then vs 25-27 describe a temporary hardening of national Israel that will end when the fullness of the Gentiles have come in. This is connected with Luke 21:24 which speaks of Jerusalem being trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled. It is also connected with Revelation 11:2 which speaks of the Gentiles trampling the holy city for 42 months (a period that appears to equate to the 1260 days and the times, time and half a time).

Finally, vs 28f speaks of national Israel as enemies of the gospel BUT from God's perspective as those beloved for the sake of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc). Immediately after this, in a context where Paul is speaking of national Israel and Gentiles, Paul says God's gifts and his calling are irrevocable. This must mean, in context, that God's calling of national Israel is irrevocable and so the eventual restoration of Israel to faith should be anticipated. This is not a restoration to a failed sacrificial system, but to the true Messiah who died for them.

8. The various texts that describe the return of Christ create the same problem for Preterists that they do for premil/pretrib. How do you distinguish the 70 AD return from the return at the end of

history? We could ask why we even need to propose a "third coming". The answer is, a preterist view with only a second coming (full preterism) is heretical. So instead of rejecting the view in its entirety, Preterists use the same device that makes premil/pretrib unacceptable. They add another coming of Christ. So which of the verses describe 70 AD and which describe the "third coming"? It has been proposed that I Cor. 15 describes the coming of Christ at the end of human history. I Cor 15:50ff describes this return of Christ. However, how is this different from the descriptions in Matt 24? In Matthew 24:31 God sends his angels with a loud trumpet call to gather the elect. In I Cor 15:52 the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable. How are these different? Or consider I Thes. 4:16. The Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. There is that trumpet again. Perhaps the same trumpet that was in Matt 24 and I Cor 15? There is no obvious way to distinguish one passage from another. The basis for a distinction appears to be found through people coming to the text assuming a 70 AD return of Christ and based on the pre-existing view they force the text to fit their predetermined views. There is no reason to distinguish these passages from each other. And while many have said that the gospel passages all have to be referring to events surrounding 70 AD, with the exception of a portion of Luke 21, this simply is not true.

9. The idea that a passage has two fulfillments is seen in the New Testament, however, dual fulfillment is not the norm nor is it always easily identified. The only way to know that "out of Egypt I call my son" applies to both Israel and Jesus is because Matthew, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says it is a double fulfillment. Look at the passage. One would never have asserted that Jesus fulfilled that passage without Matthew. Similarities would have been noted, but based on the Old Testament context there could not have been a certainty that the passage was a double fulfillment. This same problem exists in all double fulfillments. People (certainly dispensationalists but Preterists as well) propose double fulfillment as a normal process in Scripture to solve their problems. But that is not normal biblical interpretation. Double fulfillment is only known to exist in Scripture when someone speaking under the influence of the Spirit says a passage is doubly fulfilled. There is no problem with proposing a double fulfillment after having built a theological case from the biblical text, in context, for a particular view without resorting to double fulfillment. But any theological position that bases any of its foundational arguments on a required double fulfillment is doomed to failure.



10. The preterist interpretation of Revelation denies any future elements by assigning much of the imagery to relatively contemporary figures. So the beast that has the number 666 is held to be Nero. This is done by using gematria, a practice of assigning each letter of the alphabet a numeric equivalent. The use of gematria was common in the New Testament period and it is reasonable to think that the 666 represents some person, the letters of whose name add up to 666 in the gematric system.

With respect to Nero, in Latin, originally his name was NERON, unlike the English spelling NERO. Secondly, his title was not pronounced as it is pronounced in today's English-Caesar, but differently. At that time the province where Jesus was crucified, was called Caesarea, but at that time Jews pronounced it "KEYSAREA" - and Caesar was "KEYSAR". This spelling was also found among Dead Sea scrolls. Hebrew doesn't have the letter "O", but uses the letter "V" instead. The Hebrew script has fewer letters than a Greek form because the Hebrew form does not put vowels (vocals) in the words. The vowels are supplied by the reader as he reads the document.

So, the form proposed by the preterists is NRVN KSR. Nun = 50, Resh = 200, Vav = 6, Nun = 50 for Nero and Kof = 100, Samekh = 60, Resh = 200 for Caesar. The numbers for these letters equal 666.

However there are some problems with arriving at this 666 total. The second "N" in NERON in some gematria systems does not equal 50. An end form of the letter "N" could be expected, in those systems, to have a different numeric value - 700, so the total would be 1316. And that is not the only difficulty.

Mounce observes that while 666 is the numerical equivalent of Nero Caesar, what is not generally stressed is that this solution requires a rather extraordinary series of steps. Proponents of this view require the calculation of a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, with a defective spelling (One must omit the yod from QYSR—for KAISAR—a defective spelling attested in a Qumran document dated by reference to "Nero Caesar"). A shift to Hebrew letters is unlikely in that Revelation is written in Greek and there is nothing in the text to indicate it requires a conversion to another language. Also, the ancient commentators, in spite of the fact that his zeal in persecuting Christians made him a model of the antichrist, apparently never suggested Nero's name. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

One writer comments that the gematry most adopted by the scholars is NRVN QSR which confirms the hypothesis of the Nero redivivus. He goes on to point out that this view is significantly inconvenienced by a number of factors. The form used is a Hebraic gematry, which opposes the language in which the book was written. While the author is a Jew, this specific handling of gematria requires conversion to a language not known or spoken by the vast majority of the Asian recipients of the book. Additionally, this solution can be reached only by suppression of the letter yod in QYSR to make Nero's title fit the 666 schema. The required abbreviated QSR is a rare and defective syriac form of the title.

Mickelsen also finds fault with the Preterist understanding of the mark of the Beast, stating,

"Nero Caesar in Hebrew letters comes out right if the consonants are NRW QSR. But in the Talmud the word Caesar is spelled QYSR. If this is adopted, the total numerical value comes to 676. In Greek, of course, no form of Nero Caesar comes to 666" (Mickelsen, 1963, p. 202; also Morris, 1980, p. 1338).

All of these objections make a rather strong case against presuming that 666 was intended by John to identify Nero. How could it be asserted that the recipients of Revelation would know on which of Nero's titles gematria should be used? How would they know to take the Hebrew transliteration of a Greek form of a Latin name? How would they know to remove the "yod" and instead use a defective syriac form of the name? It appears unlikely that they would. If they did, it would be most likely that the early church fathers and other Christian writers would have made this identification, but they did not.

CONCLUSION

The problems with preterism described above are significant. Anyone who believes preterism is a valid theological view should consider these objections and attempt to answer them. What often happens in the various eschatological views is that people who are committed to a particular view are willing to accept intellectually dishonest solutions just to get past a difficult objection. It is hoped that as preterists evaluate these objections, they will embrace any that are compelling and modify their views in light of those valid objections. An alternative to preterism is offered in *The End: A Reader's Guide to Revelation* that does not have the weaknesses described above. It is a futuristic view but lacks the difficulties of a premillennial view (a third coming, invisible rapture, etc) and does take into account many of the valid concerns of the preterist position.