PRETERISM

Preterism is the belief that virtually all of the Old and New Testament prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ were fulfilled in the 1st century AD. There are two major groups within Preterist theology – Partial-Preterists and Full-Preterists. The Partial-Preterists believe that all Bible prophecies were fulfilled by 70 AD with only the physical return of Jesus Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment left to be fulfilled. The Full-Preterists believe that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD. They reject a future return of Christ to Earth, a Millennial Kingdom and a future resurrection of the righteous and wicked. They contend that the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20.11-15) was held in 70 AD, and that the devil and all of the fallen angels were cast into the Lake of Fire at that time.

Basic hermeneutical principle

All Scripture must be taken literally with very few exceptions. The following hermeneutical principle is the basic principle that every Bible scholar must use to correctly understand prophecy:

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.

If all eschatologists used this principle they would all agree on the meaning of every prophecy. A clear example of how this principle works is found in Revelation 12.3-4:

And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child.

The great red dragon, that has seven heads and ten horns, sweeps one third of the stars in heaven (outer-space) down to earth. By using the principle noted previously we know this must be symbolic, because it is physically impossible for a dragon of any kind to cast one third of the 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy to Earth, much less one third of the stars of the remaining 125 billion galaxies in the universe. It is physically impossible for just one star to be cast down to a planet; because the planet would be burned to a crisp.

We know the dragon and the stars are symbolic of something. The identity of the dragon is the Devil or Satan (Revelation 12.9). The stars are fallen angels. We see that stars are used symbolically of angels in the book of Daniel. The small horn (Antichrist) causes some of the stars (angels) in heaven to fall to earth (Daniel 8.10).
Partial-Preterism

Partial-Preterists are not considered to be heretics by Full-Preterists or by Protestants, yet they agree with Full-Preterists on virtually all aspects of eschatology. The most notable proponents of this system of theology are R.C. Sproul, Ken Gentry and Gary DeMar. Hendrick Hanegraaf believes and teaches Partial-Preterism, but he does not call himself a Partial-Preterist.

Remember, as you read the following section on Full-Preterism, that Partial-Preterists believe virtually everything the Full-Preterists believe. The two major doctrines that they disagree on are the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection. Partial-Preterists believe in a future Second Coming and resurrection, while the Full-Preterists believe both took place in 70 AD.

Full-Preterism

Full-Preterism is one of the most unusual and incomprehensible systems of theology ever devised. It is self-contradictory and it denies several major doctrines. As noted previously they contend that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD. They reject a future resurrection of the just and the wicked, the physical return of Christ and a Millennial Kingdom. They believe mankind will continue to live on a sin-polluted Earth until the sun goes nova.

Full- and Partial-Preterism contrasted

Full-Preterists have some very unusual ideas which separate them from Partial-Preterists. These are questions that were submitted to Dr. Edward Stevens, a Full-Preterist, with the answers posted on his website.

Judgment of the dead in 70 AD

QUESTION: Matt. 25:31 “…before him shall be gathered all the nations…” If this scene took place in AD 70, what happened to those who were not raptured, did they go to the “everlasting fire”? What about us living now?

ANSWER: I believe this gathering here in Mt. 25:31 is speaking of the judgment of all the dead who had just been raised out of Hades. The living saints were raptured to be with the resurrected dead at this final judgment scene. This judgment took place in the unseen spiritual realm after the dead were raised and the living saints were caught up together with them. After AD 70, there is no more waiting place (Hades). “Death and Hades are done away with.” Now, when Christians die, we receive our new immortal bodies and go to live with Christ in heavenly places while the unsaved go to the “outside” where they consciously remain forever (Rev. 22:15). (Edward Stevens)
The belief that the living saints were “raptured” to be with the dead at the judgment does not make sense. If all believers were raptured in 70 AD who spread the gospel after that time? Why is there no record in the Church writings of all the saints being caught up to be with the Jesus? Did they come back to Earth in mortal bodies after the judgment?

Another strange idea that must be dealt with is that the bodies of the righteous and wicked were not resurrected. Jesus taught a physical resurrection of the dead:

*Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.* (John 5.28-29)

If the Full-Preterists are correct in teaching that the Resurrection took place in 70 AD, and if Jesus is correct that all the dead (righteous and wicked) are physically resurrected just as He was, then every grave prior to 70 AD should be empty. There are countless pre-70 AD graves that have bones in them. This means that either the Full-Preterists are wrong or Jesus is wrong!

Some Full-Preterists get around this problem by claiming souls are resurrected not bodies. If the Full-Preterists are correct in this belief, then Jesus was wrong in teaching a physical resurrection of the body. The Bible clearly teaches that bodies are resurrected (Job 19.26; 1 Corinthians 15.42-44, 51-54). Therefore, the Full-Preterists are wrong in claiming the spirits of people are resurrected, but not their physical bodies.

Jesus is correct that physical bodies will be resurrected in the future. Full-Preterists are wrong in believing souls are resurrected not bodies. The denial of the resurrection of physical bodies is heresy. It must be noted that Partial-Preterists believe in a future resurrection.

**All prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD**

Here is another unusual answer as to whether or not the prophecies concerning the last days were fulfilled in 70 AD:

**QUESTION:** Have all prophetic events – Daniel’s seventieth week, the second coming, the New Jerusalem, the new heavens and new earth, the judgment seat of Christ, the great white throne, the condemnation of the beast, false prophet, dragon and harlot, the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments... in fact all judgments – already taken place, or are they symbolic and have not and will not be literally fulfilled?

**ANSWER:** They WERE fulfilled in the first century. Some of them were physically-literally fulfilled in the physical events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem, others were fulfilled in the heavenly realm where the departed spirits
were raised out of Hades and gathered into the Kingdom. But, whether they occurred in the physical realm or only in the spiritual realm, the events actually, literally occurred and were fulfilled. (Edward Stevens)

Full-Preterists argue that the prophecies of the last days were all fulfilled in a literal and allegorical manner. Partial-Preterists say the only prophecies yet to be fulfilled are the return of Jesus Christ and the White Throne Judgment. All Preterists reject a literal Millennial Kingdom. At the conclusion of this appendix numerous proofs are given that Preterism is not biblical.

Beliefs to which all Preterists hold

Olivet Discourse
(Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21)

Dr. R. C. Sproul explains in his book, The Last Days According to Jesus, that apocalyptic literature must be interpreted according to the genre in which it was written. He admits that not all of the events described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse took place in 70 AD:

When the Olivet Discourse is subjected to such a wooden literalism, the crisis of parousia-delay is created. The cataclysmic events surrounding the parousia as predicted in the Olivet Discourse obviously did not occur “literally” in AD 70. Some elements of the discourse did take place “literally,” but others did not. (pp. 65-66)

Sproul gives three methods of interpreting the Olivet Discourse in his book as follows:

1. We can interpret the entire discourse literally. In this case we must conclude that some elements of Jesus’ prophecy failed to come to pass, as advocates of “consistent eschatology” maintain.

2. We can interpret the events surrounding the predicted parousia literally and interpret the time-frame references figuratively. This method is employed chiefly by those who do not restrict the phrase “this generation will not pass away…” to the life span of Jesus’ contemporaries.

3. We can interpret the time-frame references literally and the events surrounding the parousia figuratively. In this view, all of Jesus’ prophecies in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during the period between the discourse itself and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (The Last Days According to Jesus, p. 66)

Sproul argues that the agnostics use the first method, the futurists use the second and the Preterists use the third. Agnostics and atheists fail to realize that all of the predictions of Jesus will be fulfilled, in the future. All of the events in the discourse have yet to be fulfilled except for the prediction of the destruction of Herod’s temple.
and the events described in Matthew 24.1-8; Mark 13.1-8 and Luke 21.5-10. Futurists understand this and use method one, with the exception of his phrase “with the result that some of Jesus’ predictions failed to come to pass.” We understand that all of the events will be fulfilled in a literal manner in a literal time-frame. The time-frame is in the future, not the past, as the Preterists claim. The Preterists wrongly think the time-frame was the 1st century AD. Therefore they must believe that virtually all the events were fulfilled in a symbolic manner.

The context demands that “this generation” (Matthew 24.34) refers to the birth of the nation of Israel, May 14, 1948. It must be noted that none of the events in the Olivet Discourse took place in AD 70 in a literal manner, as Sproul and all Preterists claim, except the destruction of the Temple.

Preterists dig deep holes from which they are unable to extricate themselves when they attempt to prove that some of the events in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled in a literal manner. Sproul buried himself in his book, The Last Days According to Jesus, by claiming that the prediction by Jesus, “But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matthew 24.29), was fulfilled in 70 AD. He used the account by Josephus as his proof. To fortify his proof he cited Gary DeMar who claims that the comet of 60 AD and Halley’s Comet of 66 AD were part of the fulfillment of the above passage (pp. 121-125).

The events described by Josephus, and the comets were not the fulfillment of the prediction by Jesus of cosmic signs. They are far too vague, and the comets were in the wrong years; 60 and 66 AD come before 70 AD, not “after” it.

Futurists understand that all of the events in these verses (Matthew 24.9-31; Mark 13.9-27 and Luke 21.25-27) have yet to be fulfilled, except for the destruction of the Temple. When they are fulfilled they will be fulfilled literally as stated by Jesus.

This generation

All Preterists argue that the events depicted in the Olivet Discourse must take place in the life (generation) of the men that Jesus was speaking to, because He used the phrase “this generation” (Matthew 24.34). They say that Jesus used that phrase about an hour earlier when condemning the Pharisees. He prophesied that they would kill, crucify, scourge and persecute the wise men, prophets and scribes He would send to them. He said the blood from Abel to Zechariah would be upon the head of “this generation” (Matthew 23.36). According to the Preterists, the phrase “this generation” (Matthew 24.34) must refer to the generation of the 1st century AD to which Jesus was speaking. Therefore, prophecies had to be fulfilled by 70 AD.

That argument seems strong, and it has persuaded many to believe in Preterism, but it is faulty. The context of “this generation” in the Olivet Discourse is seen by many as the generation that sees the events that Jesus spoke of take place. Preterists see it as all happening for the generation of the middle of the 1st century (30-70 AD). The Scofield dispensationalists say that is not right. Instead, they say “this generation” will be the generation that sees “these things” take place – the false christs (Matthew 24.5), the rumors of wars (Matthew 24.6), nations rising against
nations, kingdoms rising against kingdoms (WWI and WWII) and famines and earthquakes (Matthew 24.7). However, a better understanding of “this generation” is that it is a reference to the rebirth of the nation of Israel, as noted in Chapter 13.

The Greek word genea (Strong’s 1974), which is translated “generation” (Matthew 24.34), means “born one.” Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon gives the primary definition as “a begetting, birth, nativity” (p. 112). It is a reference to the birth of the nation of Israel. After Jesus had finished describing all of the events that would take place during the Tribulation (Matthew 24.9-31), He went back to the events that would take place before the start of the Tribulation (Matthew 24.4-8) to describe what would take place before the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

Jesus was using the law of recurrence when He gave the parable of the fig tree. The budding of the fig tree began when Theodore Hertzl saw the mistreatment of Jewish officer Dreyfus by the French government. He was unjustly convicted and banished to Devil’s Island. Hertzl began his work to bring Jews from around the world to Israel.

World War I, the first birth pain, prepared the land for the Jews with the promise by the British Empire to allow Jews to return to Israel (Balfour Declaration, 1917). World War II, the second birth pain, prepared the Jews for their return to Israel. Hitler’s persecution and slaughter of 6,000,000 Jews prepared them to return to Israel and form their nation again, after being without a nation for nearly 1900 years.

We know Jesus did not mean the generation of the 1st century AD would be alive when the Tribulation had begun and when He returns, because the Tribulation has not taken place and Jesus has not yet returned. Even the Partial-Preterists teach that Jesus will return bodily in the future. If He meant the generation of His time, He contradicted Himself. Remember, a few days earlier Jesus told His disciples that they would long to see His return, but they would not see it (Luke 17.22). Jesus did not contradict Himself. The generation that He referred to is the generation of our day.

The Temple and two witnesses

One argument that all Preterists claim as an absolute proof for their eschatology is the failure of John to mention the destruction of Herod’s temple in the book of Revelation. In his book, The Last Days According to Jesus, R. C. Sproul says:

If the Book of Revelation was written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, it seems strange that John would be silent about these cataclysmic events. Granted this is an argument from silence, but the silence is deafening. Not only does Revelation not mention the temple’s destruction as a past event, it frequently refers to the temple as still standing. This is seen clearly in Revelation 11. (pp. 147-148)

John did not mention the destruction of Herod’s temple because it was old history. The book of Revelation was a prophetic book dealing with events in the far future, not the past. Chapters 2-5 deal with the period of time in which John was writing, while the remaining chapters presented the future. Chapter 1 was an introductory chapter. There is no mention of past events except for those in Chapter 12. They deal with the
birth of Jesus Christ, the fall of Satan and the ascension of Jesus Christ (vs. 1-5). There is no need for mentioning the destruction of Herod’s temple.

Preterists argue that, since a temple is mentioned in chapter 11 of Revelation, the book had to have been written prior to the destruction of Herod’s temple in 70 AD. They reject the possibility that it could be talking about a rebuilt temple in the far future. We know the temple will be rebuilt because the events described in chapter eleven of Revelation were not fulfilled in 70 AD. There is no historical record of two witnesses killing their enemies with fire; stopping rain from falling; turning water into blood; striking the earth with numerous plagues; being killed by the Beast (Antichrist) and being resurrected 3½ days later (Revelation 11.3-12).

Most Preterists may argue that all of those things are symbolic of something, but without literal fulfillment there is no way anyone can be certain that they were fulfilled. There is a double uncertainty when there is no historical evidence to support a claim that a prophecy was fulfilled in either a literal or symbolic manner. Below, Edward Stevens (Full-Preterist) declares that Moses and Elijah were in Jerusalem in 70 AD, without any historical evidence. He gave this answer concerning the two witnesses via e-mail:

Can you explain what the two witnesses (Revelation 11.3) are symbolic of?

[Stevens’ reply] Judging from the miracles they performed, it seems that it must have been Moses and Elijah who re-appeared in Jerusalem to give final testimony about Christ before the Jews were destroyed. That seems to be the significance of the transfiguration forty days earlier, when Jesus talked with them about his upcoming death on the cross. Moses and Elijah were scheduled for martyrdom similar to Christ’s at the end of that generation (AD 70). (11.19.2007)

It is interesting that Stevens believes Moses and Elijah appeared in Jerusalem during the Roman siege. It’s unfortunate that no one bothered to record that miraculous event. Josephus did not mention it, and none of the early Church fathers did. The lack of any historical corroboration means that Moses and Elijah did not appear in Jerusalem around 70 AD.

**Millennial Kingdom sacrificial system**

One of the main arguments by Preterists and also by Amillennialists against a literal Millennial Kingdom is the re-establishment of the sacrificial system. In chapters 40 through 48 of Ezekiel, a temple is built for the Millennial Kingdom and sacrifices are offered. They argue that offering animal sacrifices after the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is heresy. According to them, the redemption of the elect was not finished on the cross if animal sacrifices are offered in the future. This is unacceptable to them. Therefore, there cannot be a renewed sacrificial system, and there is no need for a rebuilt temple. They claim that the temple and the description of sacrifices must be symbolic and not literal. The Preterists and Amillennialists reject a literal Millennial Kingdom and allegorize every prophecy concerning it.

Ezekiel himself believed it was a reality and the future home of Messiah. Then, it becomes not heresy to believe that a Temple and sacrifices will exist; rather, it is almost a heresy not to believe this, especially because it is a part of God’s infallible word. The burden on us is to determine how it fits – not its reality. (p. 18)

Those who reject a literal Millennial Temple and animal sacrifices misunderstand the purpose of the sacrifices. The sacrifices that will be offered during the Millennial Kingdom will not cleanse people of their sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can do that (Hebrews 10.10-14). Instead, those sacrifices will be made to maintain fellowship with Jesus Christ, just as the animal sacrifices offered during the Old Testament dispensation enabled the elect to maintain fellowship with God. Animal sacrifices have never cleansed anyone of their sins, and they never will. They only allow the elect to maintain fellowship with God.

One may ask why God would return to an Old Testament-type dispensation during the Millennial Kingdom with renewed animal sacrifices. No one knows for certain. All we know is that God will commission a temple to be built during a literal Millennial Kingdom, and He will command the people to offer animal sacrifices. We do not have to know every reason for the actions of God to accept them. We must accept Him at His word rather than allegorize His infallible word because it does not make sense to us or because it is not politically correct.

The Millennial Kingdom

All Preterists reject the doctrine that when Jesus Christ returns He will establish a Millennial Kingdom. They argue that the numerous passages in the Bible about that kingdom are symbolic. In doing this they reject the clear understanding that the apostles had of the Old Testament passages that describe a literal kingdom.

Jesus taught that there would be a literal kingdom on Earth:

**But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.** (Matthew 25.31-34)

This passage can mean nothing else. When Jesus Christ returns He will gather everyone before Him and judge them. Those who do not trust Him to save them will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Those who believe in Him will enter into His kingdom
in mortal bodies.
He told His disciples that they would rule over the 12 tribes of Israel:

And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22.29-30)

Jesus clearly proclaimed that the apostles would sit on literal thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. It has no spiritual meaning. The 11 apostles, plus Paul, will rule the 12 tribes of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. It is a literal statement about a literal event. The apostles can only rule over literal tribes of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. It cannot be the Eternal Kingdom, unless one believes people will retain their national identities forever, and that the apostles will be ruling over the Hebrew people through all eternity. It can only be a reference to the Millennial Kingdom.

All believers will help rule the planet during that kingdom just as Jesus said:

And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds. And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities. (Luke 19.17-19)

If there is no Millennial Kingdom then this statement means that faithful believers will rule over unfaithful believers through all eternity. They will be living in cities on Earth outside the city of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21.1-7). It is much more logical to believe that faithful Christians living in the Church Age will rule over cities populated by people who enter the Millennial Kingdom in mortal bodies.

Jesus also said that when He returns He will weed out the wicked leaving the righteous to enter the kingdom of their Father:

And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13.37-43)

The people in Israel believed there would be a literal kingdom:

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear. (Luke 19.11)
Joseph of Arimathaea believed that a literal kingdom would be established:

And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God. (Luke 23.50-51)

James and John had their mother ask Jesus if they could sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in the coming kingdom (Matthew 20.20-21). Jesus said that privilege would be made by His Father (Matthew 20.23).

The disciples believed a literal kingdom would be established by Jesus on Earth after His resurrection:

They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? (Acts 1.6)

Jesus told them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. He did not say there will be no Millennial Kingdom. Instead He told His disciples they had no need to know when it would be established. They would not be alive when it would be established. They had a mission to take the gospel to the world.

James, the head of the church in Jerusalem, knew there would be a time in the future when Jesus would re-establish the kingdom of Israel. He quoted a passage out of Amos (9.11-12):

After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old. (Acts 15.16-18)

He clearly understood that the kingdom of Israel would be re-established after the nation of Israel was scattered, and the Temple was destroyed. When James quoted Amos, Israel was still a nation, and the Temple was still standing. James was not saying that the building of the second Temple by Herod after the Babylonian captivity was the fulfillment of this prophecy. A proof of this is an earlier verse, where God said:

For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth. (Amos 9.9)

The nation of Israel was not scattered among “all” of the nations during the Babylonian captivity. They simply went into captivity in Babylon. It was after 70 AD that they were scattered among “all” of the nations.

Some of the most notable passages dealing with the Millennial Kingdom are – Isaiah 4.1-6; 11.6-10; 25.6-7; 35.5-10; 60.1-22; 61.3-9; 62.1-9; 65.17-25; 66.20-24;
Isaiah prophesied that in a future kingdom women would give birth to babies who will not die in infancy, that anyone who dies before the age of 100 would be considered accursed and that there will be sinners in that kingdom:

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. (Isaiah 65.20-23)

This period of time has not come to pass. It speaks of a time in the future. Mankind must eliminate infant mortality and raise the minimum age of death to 100 years to fulfill this prophesy. That is virtually impossible. It must therefore be a prophecy of a literal Millennial Kingdom. It cannot be a prophecy of the Eternal Kingdom because we know that no babies will be born in that kingdom, no one will die and no sinners will be in it. No matter what some Christians may claim, this passage will be fulfilled in a literal manner.

In the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation the number “1000 years” is used six times. The context shows that the “1000 years” is literal. There is no hermeneutical principle that allows for it to be symbolic. Therefore to brush it off as symbolic is to reject Scripture. Everyone who rejects a literal Millennial Kingdom does so to conform Scripture to their false doctrine.

Preterists brush off all of the passages dealing with the Millennial Kingdom by saying they are symbolic, and they will not be fulfilled in a literal manner. This concept came from Augustine (354-430 AD), a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church from 391-430 AD. Apparently Preterists think the false religion of Roman Catholicism got it right, while the Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ, the apostles and all of the early Church fathers got it wrong.

The Church fathers who taught that there will be a literal Millennial Kingdom were: Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Hermas, Polycarp, Ignatius, Papias, Pothinus, Justin Martyr, Melito, Hegesippus, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Apollinaris, Cyprian, Commodian, Nepos, Coracion, Victorinus, Methodius and Lactantius (Chafer, Lewis Sperry, Systematic Theology, Vol. 4, p. 271-274). At the Nicene Council, “318 bishops from all parts of the earth placed themselves on record” in believing in a literal Millennial Kingdom (Ibid., p. 275).

Justin Martyr, 100-165 AD, said this concerning the Millennial Kingdom:

It to be thoroughly proved that it will come to pass. But I have also signified unto thee, on the other hand, that many – even those of that race of Christians who follow not godly and pure doctrine – do not acknowledge it. For I have demonstrated to thee, that these are indeed called Christians; but are atheists and impious heretics, because that in all things they teach what is blasphemous, and
ungodly, and unsound. (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 270)

Justin also had this to say about the Millennial Kingdom:

But I and whatsoever Christians *are orthodox in all things* do know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in the city of Jerusalem, built, adorned and enlarged, according as Ezekiel, Isaiah, and other prophets have promised. For Isaiah saith of this thousand years (ch. 65:17) ‘Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; but be ye glad and rejoice in those which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem to triumph, and my people to rejoice,’ etc. Moreover, a certain man among us, whose name is *John, being one of the twelve apostles of Christ*, in that revelation which was shown to him prophesied, that those who believe in our Christ shall fulfill a thousand years at Jerusalem; and *after that* the general, and, in a word, the everlasting resurrection, and last judgment of all together. Whereof also our Lord spake when He said, that therein they shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal with the angels, being made the sons of the resurrection of God. (Ibid., pp. 270-271)

All of the Church fathers of the first 2 centuries believed in a literal Millennial Kingdom, with the exception of Clement of Alexandria, who taught from 193 to 215 AD, and was the mentor of Origen. Clement believed in heresy of universal salvation. In the 3rd century, a few Church fathers denied the blessed doctrine of a Millennial Kingdom – Clement, Caius (or Gaius), who wrote around 210 AD; Origen, who lived from 185 to 254 AD; and Dionysius, who lived from 190 to 265 AD. Origen and Dionysius are also considered to have been heretics. Origen denied the physical resurrection of the body, the preexistence of souls and universal salvation. Fifteen anathemas were declared against him in 553 AD by the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Dionysius, a student of Origen, believed Jesus was inferior to God the Father.

The heresy of no Millennial Kingdom was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in the 5th century. Its main proponent was Augustine (354-430) who was a faithful Catholic priest who believed in all of the Church’s false doctrines, including the damnable heresy of Purgatory. Amillennialism has held sway among the Roman Catholic Church unto today, and it has also gained a following among some Protestant denominations.

A serious student of eschatology must answer these questions:

1. Were all of the Old Testament prophets wrong in their belief in a literal Millennial Kingdom?
2. Was Jesus Christ wrong in His belief, and clear proclamation of a literal Millennial Kingdom?
3. Were all of the apostles wrong in their belief in a literal Millennial Kingdom? (Acts 1.6)
4. Were the early Church fathers of the 1st and 2nd centuries wrong in their belief of a literal Millennial Kingdom?
5. Did the Holy Spirit refuse to give the Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ, the apostles and the early Church fathers the proper understanding for some mysterious reason?
6. Did the Holy Spirit reveal the so-called “truth” that there is no Millennial Kingdom to heretics, and then to the false Roman Catholic Church?
7. Were Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Hermas, Polycarp, Ignatius, Papias, Pothinus, Justin Martyr, Melito, Hegesippus, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Apollinaris, Cyprian, Commodian, Nepos, Coracion, Victorinus, Methodius and Lactantius wrong; while Clement of Alexandria, Caius, Origen, Dionysius, Augustine and the Roman Catholic Church theologians were right?

The Prince
(Antichrist)

Another of the major arguments by Preterists that has no merit is the identity of the “prince” of Daniel 9.26. Virtually all Preterists say that Jesus Christ is the “prince” and the “people of the prince” are the Jews. This is absurd to say the least, and it makes the passage nonsensical. The easy way to determine if a conclusion concerning the identity of someone or something is correct is to replace the original word with the one they think it means. In this case, we will replace “people” with “Jews,” “prince” with “Jesus,” the “city” with “Jerusalem” and the “sanctuary” with “temple”:

And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people (Jews) of the prince (Jesus) that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (temple); and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. (Daniel 9.26)

According to Preterists, the Jews destroyed their own city as well as their temple. One might argue, that because the Jews revolted and the Romans came in to put down the revolt, that the Jews destroyed their own city and the temple. This line of reasoning is impossible to accept for most people. We know the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Therefore, the prince must be a prince of the Roman Empire, not Jesus Christ.

We know from the next verse that our identification of the prince is correct. In verse 27 it says the prince will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he (the prince) will put a stop to sacrifices. At that time the abomination of desolation will take place, until the one who causes the abomination is destroyed.

The Preterist claim that Jesus made a covenant with the Jewish people (at the beginning of His ministry), and then He broke it after 3½ years (at the end of His ministry). Just who is the “one who makes desolate” (causes the abomination of desolation)? Virtually all Preterists (partial and full) claim he is Nero. According to the reasoning of Preterists, it is Jesus who stopped the daily sacrifices, but Nero
caused the “abomination of desolation.” The passage is clear that the one who makes the covenant is the one who causes the desolation.

Ken Gentry identifies the Beast (Antichrist) as Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus (Nero) (*The Beast of Revelation*, p. 14). R.C. Sproul does not give his opinion in his book, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, but he devotes Chapter 8 to the identity of the Beast. He uses the work of Ken Gentry, and gives the reader the impression that he thinks Nero was the Beast (pp. 185-189).

Edward Stevens, a Full-Preterist, believes the Jewish zealot, Eleazar ben Yair, was the Beast because he took control of the Temple in 66-67 AD, with help from the Edomite army. The Jews of Jerusalem fought against the Edomite army. A total of 8500 Jews were killed in the outer court of the Temple, including Ananus the high priest. Yair defiled the Temple and fulfilled the prophecy of Paul (2 Thessalonians 2.4). He did not make a covenant with the Jews, so he could not have been the “prince” of Daniel 9.27.

Instead of exegeting the passage correctly – the one who makes the covenant is the one who causes the abomination of desolation – Preterists insert another character to keep from saying that Jesus Christ is the one who causes the abomination of desolation. Their method of exegesis is not consistent.

Preterists also make a mistake in not realizing that the Messiah (Jesus) is cut off, and after His death, the prince will come. It is obvious from the grammatical structure of this passage (Daniel 9.26-27), that the Messiah comes first, and then the prince (“the prince who is to come”). The Messiah cannot be the prince “who is to come.”

Jesus cannot be the “prince who is to come” (Daniel 9.26), because He did not make a covenant with the Jewish people at the beginning of His ministry. He also did not put an end to sacrifices with His death. He put an end to the need for sacrifices, but He did not put an end to them. The end came 37 years later when the Temple was destroyed, although some Jews have continued to offer sacrifices since 70 AD. Preterists must insert strange meanings into difficult passages for them to make the Scriptures conform to their theology. Instead, they should make their theology conform to Scripture.

It makes sense that the prince “who is to come” (Antichrist) will make a covenant with Israel, and allow them to renew the national sacrificial system. Then, three and one-half years later he will stop the sacrificial system and cause the “abomination of desolation.” It will be the setting up of a statue of himself in the holy of holies of the rebuilt Temple (Matthew 24.15), and declaring himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2.4) that is the “abomination of desolation.”

Another major problem with the Preterist interpretation of this passage is that they claim 69½ of the weeks of years (486.5 years) were fulfilled of the literal 70 weeks of years (490 years) that Daniel wrote of (9.23-26). What happened to the remaining one-half week (3½ years)? It is ignored or allegorized to be an indefinite period of time. For the Full-Preterist, those 3½ years equaled 37 years (33-70 AD). For the Partial-Preterist, those 3½ years equal 1976 years, as of 2009. Once again, Preterists are not consistent in their exegesis of Scripture. They ignore or allegorize 3½ years of the 490 years to make Scripture conform to their theology. Preterists and all allegorical alchemists need to take the warning of Jesus Christ seriously to not add to or take away from the Bible (Revelation 22.18-19).

One last problem the Preterists have with this passage (Daniel 9.24-27) is the
statements that are made concerning sin, righteousness and the holy place. In verse 24 the angel tells Daniel that seventy weeks have been decreed for “your people” (Daniel’s people), and for “your holy city” (Jerusalem). The purpose of the seventy weeks of years (490 years) would be “to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.”

Full Preterists claim that all of these things were fulfilled in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temporary return of Jesus in the air. Partial-Preterists believe they have yet to be fulfilled, except for the atonement for iniquity, which was fulfilled at the cross.

Full-Preterists allegorize these things except for the atonement for iniquity. It is obvious that the “transgression” was not finished by 70 AD, for there has not been an “end of sin.” The “everlasting righteousness” has not been brought in, and “prophecy” was not sealed until the book of Revelation was finished around 95 AD. And “the holy place” (temple) has yet to be anointed.

Once again, Preterists pick and choose what is symbolic and what is literal to make Scripture fit their theology. How can they possibly claim that atonement for iniquity was made in a literal manner yet the other things were fulfilled in an allegorical manner? There is no hermeneutical principle that permits a specific thing in one passage to be literal while the rest of those same things are symbolic. Either they are all fulfilled in a literal manner or they are all fulfilled in a symbolic manner. Since atonement for iniquity was fulfilled in a literal manner, the rest will be fulfilled in a literal manner. Another example is the claim that some of the weeks of years in Daniel 9.25-27 are literal, while some are not, as we noted previously.

We must also explain that the early Church fathers knew that Nero was not the Antichrist. They said he would come some day. The following passage from The Ante-Nicene Fathers shows this:

Of the Time of Antichrist

Isaiah said: This is the man who moves the world and so many kings, and under whom the land will become desert. Hear ye how the prophet foretold concerning him. I have said nothing elaborately, but negligently. Then, doubtless, the world will be finished when he will appear. He himself will divide the globe into three ruling powers, when, moreover, Nero will be raised up from hell, Elias will first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa and the northern nation, the whole earth on all sides, for seven years will tremble. But Elias will occupy the half of the time, Nero will occupy half. Then the whore Babylon, being reduced to ashes, its embers will thence advance to Jerusalem; and the Latin conqueror will then say, I am Christ, whom ye always pray to; and, indeed, the original ones who were deceived combine to praise him. He does many wonders, since he is the false prophet. Especially that they may believe him, his image will speak. The Almighty has given it power to appear such. The Jews, recapitulating Scriptures from him, exclaim at the same time to the Highest that they have been deceived. (Vol. 4, p. 211, emphasis added, R.K.)

It is clear from this passage that the author did not believe Nero was the
Antichrist. Instead, he believed that, in the future, Nero would be raised from Hell, and become the Antichrist. Every early Church father, who wrote about the Antichrist, said he would come in the future. No early Church father said that Nero was the Antichrist.

Another passage shows that the early Church fathers believed the Antichrist was yet to come:

Moreover, when the tyrant will dash himself against the army of God, his soldiery are overthrown by the celestial terror; the false prophet himself is seized with the wicked one, by the decree of the Lord; they are handed over alive to Gehenna. (Ibid., p. 211, emphasis added, R.K.)

It is odd that men who live 1900 plus years from the time of Nero argue that Nero was the Antichrist, when no one in the first 3 centuries made that argument. It is logical to believe that if Nero was the Antichrist, God would have revealed that to someone in that era.

**Dating of the book of Revelation**

It is interesting that all Preterists argue vehemently that the book of Revelation was written before 70 AD. Kenneth Gentry, Jr. wrote a book, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, in an attempt to prove that hypothesis. He failed in his attempt. Instead, he should have written a book dealing with the testimony of the early Church fathers concerning the Tribulation. No one in the 1st or 2nd century taught Preterism. All the early Church fathers said the Tribulation was to come in the future.

Gentry quoted Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and then argued that Irenaeus said John was seen in Domitian’s reign, not that John wrote the book of Revelation at that time (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp.46-47). This is what Irenaeus wrote concerning the Antichrist:

We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign. (Roberts, Alexander, *The Ante Nicene-Fathers*, Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” Book 5, Chapter 30.3, pp. 559-560)

Gentry went on to argue that Irenaeus did not say the vision (Revelation) was seen in the time of Domitian’s reign (81-96 AD). Instead, he meant that the Apostle John was seen alive in that time (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp.47-57).

His argument is pointless and mute. The next paragraph by Irenaeus makes it perfectly clear that he believed the Antichrist would come in the future:

But he indicates the number of the name now, that **when this man comes we may avoid him**, being aware who he is: the name, however, is suppressed, because it is not worthy of being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit. For if it had been declared by Him, he (Antichrist) might perhaps continue for a long period. But now as “he was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the abyss, and goes into perdition,” as one
who has no existence; so neither has his name been declared, for the name of that which does not exist is not proclaimed. But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that “many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” Book 5, Chapter 30.3, p. 560)

Notice that Irenaeus said that when the Antichrist comes “we may avoid him.” He obviously believed the Antichrist would rise to power in the future. It is astounding, to say the least, that Gentry did not comment on this. He did not bother to deal with the fact that every early Church father, who wrote about the Tribulation, taught that it would take place in the future.

Victorinus was a martyr of the faith who lived at the end of the 3rd century AD (???-304). He believed the Antichrist would rise to power in the future:

10. “And there are seven kings: five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he is come, he will be for a short time.” The time must be understood in which the written Apocalypse was published, since then reigned Caesar Domitian; but before him had been Titus his brother, and Vespasian, Otho, Vitellius, and Galba. These are the five who have fallen. One remains, under whom the Apocalypse was written – Domitian, to wit. “The other has not yet come,” speaks of Nerva; “and when he is come, he will be for a short time,” for he did not complete the period of two years.

11. “And the beast which thou sawest is of the seven.” Since before those kings Nero reigned. “And he is the eighth.” He says only when this beast shall come, reckon it the eighth place, since in that is the completion. He added: – “And shall go into perdition.” For that ten kings received royal power when he shall move from the east, he says. He shall be sent from the city of Rome with his armies. And Daniel sets forth the ten horns and the ten diadems. And that these are eradicated from the former ones, – that is, that three of the principal leaders are killed by Antichrist: that the other seven give him honour and wisdom and power, of whom he says: –

16. “These shall hate the whore, to wit, the city, and shall burn her flesh with fire.” Now that one of the heads was, as it were, slain to death, and that the stroke of his death was directed, he speaks of Nero. For it is plain that when the cavalry sent by the senate was pursuing him, he himself cut his throat. Him therefore, when raised up, God will send as a worthy king, but worthy in such a way as the Jews merited. And since he is to have another name, He shall also appoint another name, that so the Jews may receive him as if he were the Christ. Says Daniel: “He shall not know the lust of women, although before he was most impure, and he shall know no God of his fathers: for he will not be able to seduce the people of the circumcision, unless he is a judge of the law.” Finally, also, he
will recall the saints, not to the worship of idols, but to undertake circumcision, and, if he is able, to seduce any; for he shall so conduct himself as to be called Christ by them. But that he rises again from hell, we have said above in the word of Isaiah: “Water shall nourish him, and hell hath increased him;” who, however, must come with name unchanged, and doings unchanged, as says the Spirit. (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, p. 358, “Commentary on the Apocalypse,” 17.10-16, emphasis added, R.K.)

Victorinus believed that the Antichrist would come to power after his time. He also dated the writing of the book of Revelation in the time of Domitian. All Preterists claim that no early Church father or writer clearly stated that John wrote the revelation during the reign of Domitian. Here it is! This statement cannot be made to say anything other than the book of Revelation was written during the time Domitian ruled. He believed, as some other early Church fathers, that Nero would be raised from the dead and be the Antichrist.

**Irrefutable proofs against Preterism**

There are numerous, irrefutable proofs that both forms of Preterism are not biblical. All that is needed is just one irrefutable proof to show that Preterism is a false doctrine. There are dozens, and here are just a few:

1. None of the early Church fathers believed that Jesus Christ returned in any manner or form in 70 AD. Every early Church father who wrote about the Tribulation, the Rapture and the Second Coming made it perfectly clear that they would be fulfilled in the future. They also agreed that the Antichrist would rise to power in the future.

2. Nero, who many Preterists say was the Antichrist, was never in Jerusalem, and he never sat in the temple of God declaring himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2.4). Some early Church fathers said Nero would be raised out of Hell, and be the Antichrist in the future.

3. Nero reigned for 14 years (54-68 AD). The Bible says Antichrist will reign for 42 months (3½ years) (Revelation 13.5). Some think he reigns for 7 years because he is the rider of the white horse (Revelation 6.1-2). The rider of the white horse begins his reign at the start of the seven-year Tribulation. Either way, Nero cannot be the Antichrist because he reigned too long!

4. Nero died on June 9, 68 AD, after cutting his throat. He cannot possibly be the Beast (the Antichrist), because that enemy of God will be slain (Daniel 7.11), and then be resurrected. After that he will be seized, and cast alive into the Lake of Fire, along with the False Prophet (Revelation 21.20). Nero was cremated and his ashes were buried in the Mausoleum of the Domitii Ahenobarbi, in what is now the Villa Borghese (Pincian Hill) area of Rome (Suetonius, The Lives of Twelve
Caesars, “Life of Nero,” 50). There is no way anyone can argue that Nero was the beast (Antichrist), unless they claim the Bible is not accurate.

5. There was no period of world-wide “peace and safety” (1 Thessalonians 5.3) before the alleged start of the Tribulation in 66 AD. Ken Gentry and others claim the pax Romana was that period of peace (He Shall Have Dominion, p. 403), but it is not acceptable. If one argues that the people claiming “peace and safety” were the Jews, one must think they enjoyed being under Roman rule. If that was so why did the Jews rebel? It does not make sense. Before the Tribulation starts, the unsaved will be unanimous in thinking they have achieved “peace and safety” throughout the world. It cannot be a period of normal “peace and safety.” It must be a special period; something that has never been seen before. The pax Romana does not qualify.

6. There was no world church that ruled over Antichrist (Revelation 17.3).

7. There was no mark of any kind that people had to take to be able to buy or sell (Revelation 13.15-16). People were not forced to worship Nero to be able to buy or sell. When a person was accused of not believing Nero was god, they were forced to worship him or be executed. That only applied to people accused of not worshipping Nero. It was used mostly against Christians. There was no custom that a person had to worship Nero or an image of him before they could buy or sell something.

8. There is no historical record of massive “distress of nations” and “roaring of the sea” (Luke 21.25). There is also no record of “signs in sun and moon and stars” (Luke 21.25). Preterists claim there were signs in the sky, and they cite the writings of Josephus. Even if there were signs in the sky, that is not what Jesus predicted. He said the signs would be in the sun, moon and stars, not the sky.

9. There is no historical record of anyone seeing Jesus return in the air over Jerusalem in 70 AD. Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1.7). Only Josephus recorded unusual things in the air in 70 AD, and he did not say that he or anyone else saw Jesus.

10. Demon possession is prevalent today even though Full-Preterists claim that all demons, fallen angels and the Devil were cast into the Lake of Fire in 70 AD.

11. Full-Preterists claim that the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (John 5.28-29) took place in 70 AD, yet there are thousands of graves and tombs holding bodies of people who died prior to 70 AD that were not resurrected. The only solution they have is to say the resurrection is not physical, but spiritual. That is heresy.

12. All Preterists claim the “end of the age” (Matthew 24.3) was the end of the Old Testament era which ended in 70 AD. That would mean Jesus promised the disciples He would be with them only until 70 AD (Matthew 28.20).
13. All the nations of the world were not gathered against Jerusalem in 70 AD (Zechariah 14.2; Revelation 11.2). Only Rome attacked Israel.

14. Nation did not rise against nation and kingdom did not rise against kingdom in 70 AD (Matthew 24.7). There was only a minor revolt in the Roman Empire from 66 to 70 AD by a few thousand Jewish zealots.

15. The “holy place” was not restored exactly 2300 days after the alleged “abomination of desolation” was committed (Daniel 8.14). It was not restored at all.

16. There is no historical record of an event that could be a biblical fulfillment of the “abomination of desolation.”

17. No historian has ever claimed that 70 AD was a time of tribulation greater than any other time (Mark 13.19). Only Preterists make such an unusual claim.

18. Half of the residents of Jerusalem were not led captive into the world in 70 AD (Zechariah 14.2; Luke 21.24).

19. There was no “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21.24; Revelation 11.2). The nations did not control (tread under foot) Jerusalem for 42 months (Revelation 11.2) before Jesus returned. (Laying siege does not count as treading under foot.)

20. If the “generation” to see the return of Christ was that of the disciples, Jesus contradicted Himself, because He said His disciples would not see Him return (Luke 17.22). Therefore, the “generation” He spoke of was one in the future.

21. If the Full-Preterists are correct that we are living in the Eternal Kingdom, the descriptions of that kingdom are wrong! It says “and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away” (Revelation 21.4). Plenty of tears have been shed by Christians since 70 AD, millions of Christians have died, all Christians since then have mourned and cried, and all Christians have suffered pain. If the Full-Preterists are correct the Bible is wrong. God forbid!

**Conclusion**

All forms of Preterism are non-biblical. Full-Preterism denies a physical resurrection of the dead (righteous and wicked), and it denies any future resurrection. It is considered to be a heresy by Partial-Preterists.

Partial-Preterists claim that virtually all of the prophecies concerning the “last days” were fulfilled in 70 AD in a symbolic manner, yet they believe that the Second
Coming of Jesus Christ will be literal.

As we come within a few years of the Tribulation/Rapture, we will see most of the prophecies in Appendix A be fulfilled. By the time we come to the final year before the start of the Tribulation, so many prophecies will have been fulfilled in a literal manner that there will be virtually no Preterists left. They will realize that Preterism is a false doctrine.

No Preterist uses the exegetical study method (critical explanation of Scripture). Instead they use the eisegetical method (insertion of a meaning into Scripture). They make up an interpretation of a passage that fits their theology. The following example should give you a better understanding of the two methods of study.

J. Stuart Russell, the founder of the modern-day Preterist movement, believed that the demonic cavalry of the sixth trumpet was symbolic. The four angels of Revelation 9.15 were the four legions that sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. The 200 million cavalry were the four Roman legions (24,000 foot soldiers), plus the cavalry of some Oriental kings who assisted in the conquest of Jerusalem. The Euphrates River was literal, but the rest was symbolic (The Parousia, pp. 415-17).

An exegetical study of the passage shows that four fallen angels, who are released from their imprisonment in the area of the Euphrates River, lead a cavalry of 200 million demonic creatures. They are not symbolic of the Roman legions that sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. (They are also not symbolic of the Red Chinese army as some non-Preterist eschatologists teach.)

All Preterists agree that the prophecies of the First Coming of Christ were fulfilled in a literal manner. It is highly illogical and beyond credulity for God to have all the prophecies of the First Coming of the Messiah fulfilled in a literal manner, and then have all but a few of the prophecies of His Second Coming fulfilled in an allegorical manner. All Preterists forget an essential aspect of the character of Jesus Christ – that He does not change His ways.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.* (Hebrews 13.8)

Jesus Christ does not change His way of doing things. Throughout the Old Testament dispensation, prophecies were fulfilled in a literal manner. Moses commanded the people of Israel to test all prophets by seeing if their prophecies were fulfilled in a literal manner. If their prophecies were not fulfilled in a literal manner, they were false prophets and they were to be killed (Deuteronomy 18.20-22). If prophecies were fulfilled in an allegorical manner how could anyone know if they had been fulfilled. Even the Preterists disagree on how certain prophecies were fulfilled in an allegorical manner. The obvious example is that the Full-Preterists claim Jesus Christ returned in the air in 70 AD, and the Partial-Preterists claim that He will return bodily in the future.

All the prophecies that have been fulfilled in the New Testament dispensation were fulfilled in a literal manner. Jesus literally died (John 19.30), He physically rose from the tomb (John 20.1-9) and He physically ascended to Heaven (Acts 1.9). Numerous prophecies have recently been fulfilled in a literal manner, and several more will be fulfilled literally (Appendix A).

All forms of Preterism use the allegorical principle of hermeneutics to conform Scripture to Preterism, rather than using Scripture to determine what their theology
should be. All forms of Preterism must be rejected as non-biblical, and antithetical to Christianity. It is clear that Preterists are allegorical alchemists who twist Scripture unto their own destruction, as Peter predicted:

*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.* (2 Peter 3.15-16)

Remember the Golden Rule of Interpretation:

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate content, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicates clearly otherwise.

If Preterists used this rule, there would be no Preterists.