

Journal of Dispensational Theology

JODT

Volume 12, Number 35 (March 2008)

(formerly *The Conservative Theological Journal*)

Editor
Christopher B. Cone

Associate Editor
Ron J. Bigalke Jr.

Editorial Committee
Patrick E. Belvill John R. Cook
David E. Olander

The *Journal of Dispensational Theology* is published three times per year by the *Society of Dispensational Theology* in cooperation with *Tyndale Theological Seminary* as a means for conservative evangelical scholarship from a normative dispensational perspective.

Manuscripts and communications can be emailed to editor@tyndale.edu. Contributors are expected to conform their manuscript to submission guidelines (available through the Seminary website: tyndale.edu).

Books for review should be sent to:

Editor, *JODT*
6800 Manhattan Blvd. #200
Fort Worth, TX 76120

Change of address notification, subscriptions, and renewals can be submitted online at tyndale.edu or through written communication to the above address.

Subscription rates:

U.S. Non-Tyndale Student - \$25 per year

Foreign Non-Tyndale Student - \$35 per year (includes Canada and Mexico)

Single copy rate - \$7

All subscriptions payable in United States currency.

© Copyright 2008 by Tyndale Theological Seminary. Printed in USA. All rights reserved. Materials in this publication may not be reproduced without prior written permission. The editorial committee reserves the right to reject articles and advertisements for any reason whatsoever.

Contents

Origin of the Constellations at Babel.....	5
<i>Jonathan F. Henry</i>	
Inerrancy or Discrepancy between Parallel Accounts In Judges 4:17-22 and 5:24-27.....	21
<i>René A. López</i>	
The Doctrine of the Trinity – Part I.....	31
<i>Steve Lewis</i>	
Preterist and Antiquity: Was Preterism a View of the Early Church?.....	49
<i>Ron J. Bigalke Jr.</i>	
Book Reviews.....	61

**PRETERISM AND ANTIQUITY:
*Was Preterism a View of the Early Church?***

Ron J. Bigalke Jr., Ph.D.

*Director, Eternal Ministries; Church Plant Pastor, Coastal Georgia;
Professor of Bible & Theology, Tyndale Theological Seminary*

If the preterist view is correct that most, if not all, of the Book of Revelation was fulfilled in the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem, there should be substantial evidence in the views of the early church to support this interpretation. Addressing the subject of “The Historical Basis of Preterism,” theologians Greg Bahnsen and Kenneth Gentry attempted to demonstrate a “Nascent Preterism in Antiquity.” Indeed, Bahnsen and Gentry claimed that preterism has a vast history in antiquity. This article will examine the evidences advanced by Bahnsen and Gentry to determine if preterism indeed was a view of the early church.

THE CLAIM OF EUSEBIUS

The first evidence provided for such a claim was Eusebius. If true, this claim (among the others referenced) would be the most substantial (because of his historical research); therefore, the majority of this article will consider the preterist claim regarding Eusebius. Bahnsen and Gentry wrote, “Eusebius . . . details the woes that befell Jerusalem in A.D. 70, mostly by reference to Josephus. . . . He then cites Matthew 24:19-21 as his lead-in reference and later refers to Luke 21:20, 23, 24!”¹ Prior to the rise of preterism in the nineties, J. Oliver Buswell had already devoted a section to the “distorted emphasis” of preterism.

Since the time of Eusebius . . . there have been those who have thought that Christ’s prophecy of the abomination of desolation was somehow fulfilled when Titus destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and that the words referring to “Jerusalem surrounded with armies” are just another way of saying “the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.” It can be shown, however, that nothing which took place at the fall of Jerusalem fulfilled the prophecy of Christ in regard to “the abomination of desolation” spoken of by

¹ Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 277-78.

Daniel. Attention has been called to the fact that Eusebius, in his *Canons*, lists Luke's reference to Jerusalem surrounded with armies as a verse peculiar to Luke, not parallel to anything in Matthew or Mark. Nevertheless, Eusebius' *Church History* is a chief source for the erroneous identification.

The case for the theory that the prediction of Christ as to the abomination of desolation was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem is well summarized in Schaff's *Church History*, Vol. 1, pp. 390-404. Schaff draws almost entirely from Eusebius' *Church History*, Book III, Chapters V-VIII and from Josephus' *Jewish Wars*, Books V and VI. Eusebius, in turn, is dependent almost entirely upon Josephus. The removal of Christians to Pella in Perea before the fall of Jerusalem is cited as the fulfillment of the command to flee at the sign of the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15 ff.; Mark 13:14 ff.).²

Philip Schaff wrote, "Eusebius puts the flight to Pella before the war (πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου), or four years before the destruction of Jerusalem" (1.VI.39).³ It is assumed that Schaff's comments concerning the "Effects of the Destruction of Jerusalem on the Christian Church" were based upon Eusebius' use of the phrase πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου.

The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war [πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου], removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice, for their crimes against Christ and his apostles, finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of those evildoers from the earth [Book III, Chapter V].⁴

Buswell commented, "One of our a-millennial friends . . . points out that the comma after, "before the war," shows that the warning, not the flight, took place before the war. Thus, this friend argues, the flight *may* have taken place after the abomination of desolation."⁵ Schaff's understanding of πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου would have been consistent with the subsequent statement of Eusebius in the previous quote. In other words, Eusebius

² J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962; reprint, 10th printing, 1976), 2:401-02.

³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1858; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1:402.

⁴ Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Christian Frederick Cruse (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 86.

⁵ Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 2:402.

stated, “the divine justice” was after “those that believed in Christ [were] removed from Jerusalem.”

Yet it may be proper to mention, also, what things occurred that show the benignity of that all-gracious Providence that had deferred their destruction for forty years after their crimes against Christ. During which time the greater part of the apostle and disciples, James himself, the first bishop there, usually called the brother of our Lord, still surviving, and still remaining in Jerusalem, continued the strongest bulwark of the place (Book III, Chapter VII).⁶

According to Eusebius, the church at Jerusalem departed to an area “beyond the Jordan, called Pella” before the destruction of the Temple occurred in AD 70. It is possible, as Buswell concurred, that the departure from Jerusalem could have occurred when the church witnessed the beginning stage of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and his armies. However, there is no historical account that would substantiate the fact that the departure to Pella was due to any understanding that the abomination of desolation (Matt 24:15) had just occurred and the subsequent reaction was to flee the city according to Matthew 24:16-21. The departure of the church to Pella does correlate well with Luke 21:20-23, but there is no basis to allow correlation with Matthew 24:15 or Mark 13:14. The abomination of desolation prophesied in Daniel 9:27 cannot be equated with the events that occurred in the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem.

Daniel prophesied that after Messiah is crucified, the Romans, that is, *the people of the prince who is to come*, would destroy Jerusalem and the second Temple. The *prince who is to come* is the eschatological Antichrist. However, the destruction of Jerusalem would occur due to the national rejection of the Messiah (Matt 24:1-2; Luke 19:41-44). The prophecy does not end with the AD 70 destruction; rather, *its end* will come *with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolation are determined*. In other words, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and his armies in the first century was not the final destruction of the holy city. The reference to *the end* extends the prophecy to the seventieth week. A time interval, the dispensation of the church, will occur between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks.

The interval in the current dispensation of the church of the fulfillment of the messianic program for Israel is derived from the Greek

⁶ Eusebius, *History*, 94.

verb *apotelō* meaning “to complete” or “to be perfected.” Randall Price explained, “The *apotelesmatic* interpretation recognizes in Old Testament texts that present the messianic program as a single event, a near and far historical fulfillment is intended, separated by an indeterminate period of time.” It is this period of time that is known as an “intercalation” or a “gap;” however, the term “prophetic postponement” is more preferable. Since the Old Testament prophets did not have the current dispensation as a great parenthesis revealed to them, God would reveal the mystery of the church in the New Testament. Postponement is an intercalation (gap) in fulfillment, concluding that the delay is only temporary, and hence prophetic since there is a purposeful and preordained work in the divine program. God implied a parenthesis in His messianic program in the Old Testament with references of Israel’s hardening (Isa 6:9-13; Zech 7:11-12) and judicial exile (Deut 4:27-30; 28:36-37, 49-50, 64-68); however, this postponement in the divine program was not fully revealed until the New Testament (John 12:37-40; Acts 28:25-28; Rom 11:25-26).⁷

It can be said that a false covenant, the same covenant prophesied by the prophet Isaiah (28:14-22), is made with Israel by the Antichrist. The seventieth week is the false covenant that lasts for one week of years;⁸ that is, a period of seven years commonly understood as the tribulation, or time of God’s wrath. The passage also teaches that the tribulation is divided by the abomination of desolation into two three and one half year periods (cf. 2 Thess 2:3-4).

According to the eschatological chronology of Daniel 9 and 2 Thessalonians 2, the tribulation will follow the rapture of the church, which is yet future and will terminate the present prophetic postponement of the church age between the sixth-ninth and seventieth weeks. Shortly after the rapture, the tribulation will begin with the signing of the false covenant between Israel and the Antichrist. It is this event that will inaugurate the final events of Daniel 9:24-27.

The nature of the tribulation will focus upon Israel. Jeremiah 30:7 refers to the tribulation period as a time of *Jacob’s distress*. During this period, God will prepare Israel for restoration and conversion (Deut

⁷ Randall Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9:24-27,” in *Progressive Dispensationalism: An Analysis of the Movement and Defense of Traditional Dispensationalism*, gen. ed. Ron J. Bigalke Jr. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 218-9.

⁸ The Hebrew word for week is *shābu’îm* which means a unit of seven.

4:29-30; Jer 30:3-11; Zech 12:10). God will also judge an unbelieving world during this time for its sins against Him (Isa 13:9; 24:19-20; Rev 4—19). All nations and communities will be affected by this judgment. However, for those who trust in the Messiah there will be salvation. This time of wrath will also result in worldwide evangelization and mass conversions (Matt 24:14; Rev 7:1-17). The tribulation will end with the return of Christ to this earth. He will descend upon the Mount of Olives, cross the Kidron Valley, and enter the Eastern Gate (Zech 14:4; cf. Matt 24—25). Clearly, there is not a single event that occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem which can be said to fulfill Daniel’s description and Christ’s reference of Daniel in Matthew 24:15.

Eusebius wrote, “. . . when finally, the abomination of desolation, according to the prophetic declaration, stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, but which now was approaching its total downfall [*sic*] and final destruction by fire; all this, I say, any one that wishes may see accurately stated in the history written by Josephus” [Book III, Chapter V].⁹ Schaff quoted Eusebius for his information and Eusebius based his history upon the accounts of Josephus’ *The Wars of the Jews*. In *The Wars of the Jews* 6.4.1—5.4, not once did Josephus record any abomination of desolation in the Jewish Temple prior to it being destroyed.¹⁰ After the Temple was destroyed, Josephus recorded,

⁹ Eusebius, *History*, 86.

¹⁰ Tim LaHaye wrote, “History records that our Lord’s words were fulfilled *to the letter* in AD 70. In that year the Roman army under the command of Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Fires raged through the city and in the temple area itself. After the flames burned themselves out, the soldiers saw that large amounts of gold had melted and flowed into crevices of the blocks of the temple. In order to recover the precious metal, the Romans had to take the buildings apart, stone by stone. And so Jesus’ prophecy was fulfilled literally; not one stone was left upon another [Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Are We Living in the End Times?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 31]. Responding to the statement, Gary DeMar wrote, “This is a remarkable admission. This is exactly what preterists claim” [Gary DeMar, “Dispensationalism: Being ‘Left Behind,’” [article online] (Modern Reformation Society, accessed 6 August 2002) available from http://www.preteristarchive.com/PartialPreterism/demargary_dd_05.html]. Certainly, both preterists and futurists agree that Matthew 24:1-2 was fulfilled in the first century. There is, however, no basis for arguing that the remaining prophecies were also fulfilled in the first century. According to the historical record, the chronology of events in AD 70 does not correlate with the chronology of Mathew 24:3 and onward.

And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy [6.6.1].¹¹

Schaff also documented the preceding quote from Josephus. Within a quotation, he wrote, “Thus was fulfilled the prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.”¹² A casual reading of Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church* would seem to indicate that Josephus wrote the preceding sentence, but since the sentence cannot be found in Josephus’ section on the destruction of Jerusalem, it is obvious that the sentence is the conclusion of Schaff. He referenced “Daniel 9:27; Matt. 24:15; comp. Luke 21:20”¹³ as being fulfilled in the destruction.

Eusebius was correct in referencing Luke 19:42-44 and 21:23-24 (Book 3, Chapter 7)¹⁴ and Schaff was correct in referencing Luke 21:20 as fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. However, Eusebius was incorrect when referencing Matthew 24:19-21 and Schaff also when referencing Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15. The reason why both historians are wrong in quoting the Daniel and Matthean passages is that Josephus recorded the Roman sacrifices (desolation) as occurring after the fire destroyed the city and the Temple.

Furthermore, as Buswell mentioned, there was no opportunity for the Jews to escape the city as Jesus commanded in Matthew 24:15-21. Josephus recorded that Titus had a wall constructed which encompassed the entire city of Jerusalem “. . . to guard against the Jews’ coming out. . . . So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city” (5.12.1, 3).¹⁵ It was due to the wall encompassing the city, preventing any escape, which constituted a famine that consumed the Jews (5.12.1-4).¹⁶ Titus did not enter the city

¹¹ Flavius Josephus, “The Wars of the Jews” in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 743.

¹² Schaff, *History*, 1:398.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Eusebius, *History*, 93.

¹⁵ Josephus, “Wars,” 722-24.

¹⁶ Referencing Josephus, Eusebius (Book III, Chapter VI) also mentioned the famine that consumed the Jews because of the inability to escape from the midst of the city.

of Jerusalem until after the construction of his wall and the famine consumed the Jews. Therefore, it would be impossible to heed the commands of Jesus to flee the city because of witnessing the abomination of desolation spoken in Matthew 24:15. It should be mentioned again that any sacrilege on the part of the Romans was after the city and Temple were destroyed.

Buswell provided the reasons why much of the events of Matthew 24 do not correlate with a date of AD 70. *First*, “There was no possibility that anybody could flee from Jerusalem.” *Second*, “Titus does not in any way resemble what Daniel said of the Prince of the Covenant.” *Third*, “There was no covenant with Titus or Vespasian or anybody else remotely resembling the covenant of Daniel 9:27.” *Fourth*, “The event which Schaff calls the abomination of desolation did not occur in the midst of any recognizable seven year period. There was nothing three and one half years before or after which in any way corresponds to Daniel’s prediction.” *Fifth*, “There was no resurrection of the dead (Daniel 12:2). The Son of Man did not appear in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30) nor gather His elect with the sound of a trumpet (Matthew 24:31).” *Sixth*, “The sacrifices were not stopped by Titus but by the Jews themselves.”¹⁷ Schaff demonstrated that the ceasing of the sacrifices was not the result of Titus. He wrote, “The daily sacrifices ceased July 17th, because the hands were all needed for defence” but the Temple “was burned on the tenth of August, A.D. 70, the same day of the year on which . . . the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.”¹⁸

Preterists are akin to interpreting the eagles in Matthew 24:28 as symbolic of the Roman armies. In this view, Jesus was prophesying of the Roman armies, with their ensigns bearing the eagle, coming to destroy Jerusalem. In other words, the Jews would understand the mere presence of the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem with banners of eagles on them as the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation. Buswell commented on the problem with such an interpretation as follows: “But Roman ensigns, eagles and idolatrous objects worshipped by the Roman soldiers were common in the time of Christ and Paul.”¹⁹ As an editorial footnote to Josephus’ *The War of the Jews* 6.6.1, Whiston

¹⁷ Buswell, 2:403-04.

¹⁸ Schaff, *History*, 397-98.

¹⁹ Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 2:404.

quoted Tertullian similarly: “. . . and Tertullian truly says in his Apologetic, 16.162, that the entire religion of the Roman camp almost consisted in worshipping the ensigns, in swearing by the ensigns, and in preferring the ensigns before all the [other] gods.”²⁰

Josephus’ *The Antiquities of the Jews* (16.3.1) attributed the presence of the Roman eagle banners in Jerusalem with Pilate. He wrote,

But now Pilate . . . introduced Caesar’s effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account the former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem; and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people. . . .

. . . Pilate was deeply affected with their firm resolution to keep their laws inviolable, and presently commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Cesarea.²¹

In Luke’s Gospel there is the record on the cruelty of Pilate toward the Jews. *Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices* (Luke 13:1). Jesus did not agree that Pilate’s victims *were greater sinners than all other Galileans* (13:2). Indeed, His response to them was: “. . . no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish (13:3). It is likely that when Jesus spoke these words He was thinking of the judgment that would fall upon all the unrepentant in the destruction of the city by the Romans in AD 70. Buswell commented, “Alford commenting on Acts 21:31,32 suggests that a Roman guard was stationed in the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple area. It may be supposed that they usually refrained from displaying their ensigns.”²² Therefore, Jesus was well aware of the ensigns that Pilate had brought into Jerusalem. If the Jews were to understand the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation as the presence of the Roman ensigns in the city then the fulfillment of Matthew 24:15 would have been prior to AD 70 when Jesus was speaking to the them.²³

²⁰ Footnote ^a in Josephus, “Wars,” 743.

²¹ Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews,” in *Works of Josephus*, 479-80.

²² Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 2:404.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2:401-04.

THE CLAIM OF THE *CLEMENTINE HOMILIES*

Thinking they have proven their case regarding Eusebius as affirming a nascent preterism (which they have not), Bahnsen and Gentry added, “Another ancient document that makes reference to the destruction of the temple based on Matthew 24:2-34 is the *Clementine Homilies*.”²⁴ Clementine actually wrote:

Accordingly, therefore, prophesying concerning the temple, He said: ‘See ye these buildings? Verily I say to you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be taken away; and this generation shall not pass until the destruction begin. For they shall come, and shall sit here, and besiege it, and shall slay your children here.’ [Matthew 24:2, 34; Luke 19:43, 44] And in like manner He spoke in plain words the things that were straightway to happen, which we can now see with our eyes, in order that the accomplishment might be among those to whom the word was spoken.²⁵

Clementine did reference Matthew 24:2 and 24:34 but he did not provide *any* commentary that could be said to affirm a nascent preterism. Indeed, he provided no commentary on the surrounding verses, such as 24:27-31. Clementine referred to the AD 70 destruction of the Temple as fulfillment of Jesus’ words in 24:2, but all views affirm this to be the case whether preterist, historicist, or futurist. Clementine’s quote is not evidence of nascent preterism in antiquity. Furthermore, the editors of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* gave attention to “the loose method of Scripture citation characteristic of Clementine literature.” Regarding Clementine’s loose quotation of Scripture, they added, “Sometimes the meaning is perverted.”²⁶

THE CLAIM OF CYPRIAN

Bahnsen and Gentry also cited Cyprian, of whom they wrote, “we have clear reference to Matthew 24 as referring to Jerusalem’s A.D. 70 fall.”²⁷

²⁴ Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 278.

²⁵ *The Clementine Homilies*, III.XV, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (1886; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 8:241.

²⁶ Footnote 3 in *ibid.*, 8:215.

²⁷ Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 278.

Bahnsen and Gentry referred to two statements by Cyprian: (1) “That the Jews should lose Jerusalem, and should leave the land which they had received;” and, (2) “That Christ should be the house and temple of God, and that the old temple should cease, and the new one should begin.”²⁸ The first statement cited Matthew 23:37-38 and the second statement cited 24:2. Neither reference is support for preterism. Similar to the Clementine reference, both citations refer to the destruction of the Jewish Temple in A. 70 which preterists, historicists, and futurists all agree regarding the time of fulfillment. Neither Clementine nor Cyprian referred to the Olivet Discourse in its entirety as having been fulfilled in the first century.

Prior to the former statements, Cyprian wrote, “And when He [Jesus] was interrogated by His disciples concerning the sign of His coming, and of the consummation of the world, He answered and said. . . .”²⁹ Cyprian then cited all of Matthew 24:4-31, which means he considered these verses to be written about “the consummation of the world.”

THE CLAIM OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Bahnsen and Gentry cited Clement of Alexandria additionally as holding “a distinctly preteristic interpretation of Daniel 9.”³⁰ The following quote is from Clement’s *Stromata*.

The half of the week Nero held sway, and in the holy city of Jerusalem placed the abomination; and in the half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius. And Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed Jerusalem, and desolated the holy place.³¹

Clement simply stated a view of continual fulfillment concerning the seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel. J. Barton Payne produced a table in his *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* that demonstrates various interpretations of Daniel 9:24-27.³² Payne’s work illustrates that scholars

²⁸ *The Treatises of Cyprian*, XII.I.5, 15, in *ibid.*, 5:510-11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XI.II, in *ibid.*, 5:502-03.

³⁰ Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 278-79.

³¹ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, I.XXI, in *ibid.*, 2:329.

³² J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (1973; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 384-85.

throughout the centuries have interpreted some aspects of Daniel 9 as being fulfilled in the past. Simply because someone in the history of the church believes aspects of Daniel 9 is a past event does not make him a preterist. It appears that Bahnsen and Gentry would consider everyone a preterist if they believe in a past fulfillment of prophecy. All Christians (whether preterist, historicist, or futurist) hold to a past fulfillment of *some* prophecies, but that does not mean they are preterists, like Bahnsen and Gentry.

THE CLAIM OF ARETHAS

Bahnsen and Gentry's last attempt to find a preterist source in antiquity was Arethas, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Andreas, an earlier archbishop of Cappadocia. In *Before Jerusalem Fell*, Gentry admitted that Andreas argued for dating the book of Revelation during the reign of Domitian.³³ Bahnsen and Gentry made the audacious claim that Andreas wrote in his commentary on Revelation, "There are not wanting those [apparently Arethas] who apply this passage to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus."³⁴ Bahnsen and Gentry gave the appearance that the preceding quote is an actual quote from Andreas' comments on Revelation 6:12, but the quotation could not be found anywhere in Andreas' commentary. In this instance, one is inclined to wonder if Bahnsen and Gentry read someone's thoughts on Andreas and carelessly quoted the statement as the actual words of Andreas (or, at worse, are they purposely deceiving their readers).

The second quote Bahnsen and Gentry attribute to Andreas ("these things are referred by some to those sufferings which were inflicted by the Romans upon the Jews") is a genuine commentary on Revelation 7:1. The dates for the commentaries of Andreas and Arethas are not clear since there is no direct information available, but the majority of dates for their writings were toward the close of the fifth century or early sixth century.

Andreas was known for blending the views of leading theologians. It was not uncommon for him to add his own views, which

³³ Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: American Vision, 1998), 106-07.

³⁴ Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 279.

included historicist and allegorical interpretations. Concerning the two bishops, Adventist scholar LeRoy Froom remarked,

In his [Arethas] commentary on the Apocalypse, which is mostly a compilation, he follows Andreas in the main. He considers the Apocalypse to be a revelation from the world beyond, and finds in each prominent word the possibility of reference to both past and future history.³⁵

CONCLUSION

Bahnsen and Gentry desire their readers to believe “many ancient fathers were preterists regarding Daniel’s Seventy Weeks, the first portion of Christ’s Olivet Discourse, and/or Revelation. . . .”³⁶ The statement has proven to be false. Andreas and Arethas appear to be the earliest forms of a mild preterism. However, even if Bahnsen and Gentry’s statement were correct, it still would not prove the validity of preterism (which it is certain they would agree) for the heart of the issue is what “saith the Scriptures.”

³⁵ Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 1:572.

³⁶ Bahnsen and Gentry, *House Divided*, 283.