

Preterism – Time Texts

“The problem is raised by the fact that the prophets were little interested in chronology, and the future was always viewed as imminent. Biblical prophecy is not primarily three-dimensional but two; it has height and breadth but is little concerned about depth, i.e., the chronology of future events. There is in biblical prophecy a tension between the immediate and distant future; the distant is viewed through the transparency of the immediate. It is true that the early church lived in expectancy of the return of the Lord, and it is the nature of biblical prophecy to make it possible for every generation to live in expectancy of the end. To relax and say “where is the promise of his coming?” is to become a scoffer of divine truth. The “biblical” attitude is “take heed, for you do not know when the time will come (Mark 13:33).”

—— Ladd, George Eldon, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 22.

“The historic church has maintained that the prophetic events in the book of Revelation were “near” and “soon” even in the first century, although the fulfillment of these events would not take place for more than 2,000 years.”

—— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 290.

“The actual problem is a faulty perception of slowness, based on an erroneous reckoning of time by those who fail to appreciate the depth of God’s patience towards his elect who have not yet repented (v. 9). Some (not all!) of Peter’s contemporaries accused Jesus of failing to return quickly, but this is based entirely on their faulty human reasoning. The apostle alluded to Psalm 90:4 (“a thousand years in your [God’s] sight are but as yesterday when it is past”) to demonstrate that a divine reckoning of time is different than mere human reckoning; the idea is that the readers should recognize God’s timetable and divine perspective instead of relying on their own understanding.”

—— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 329.

“Isaiah 13:22 and Habakkuk 2:3-4, for example, speak of the imminence of the judgment to come upon Babylon. It is interesting to note that Isaiah was writing between 740 and 701 B.C., while Habakkuk wrote sometime between 609 and 598. Yet both spoke of Babylon’s judgment using short-term time texts. Isaiah says it is “near.” Habakkuk tells the people that “it will not tarry.” Babylon fell to the Persians in 539. . . . Isaiah 56:1 says that God’s salvation is “about to come.” Writing in the early sixth century B.C., Ezekiel says that “the fulfillment of every vision” is “at hand” (12:23). Writing after the Exile, in approximately 520, Haggai proclaims the following word from God: “Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land . . . (2:6-7). If this prophecy was fulfilled at the coming of Christ, as Hebrews 12:26-28 seems to indicate, then “a little while” was more than 520 years.”

—— Keith A. Mathison, *When Shall These Things Be?: A Reformed Response to Hyper-preterism*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004), 165.

“Preterists are faced with a critical dilemma. They insist that the time indicators “near,” “soon,” and “at hand” in the Book of Revelation must refer to first-century events and not to events that will immediately precede the Lord’s return. Nevertheless, as Mathison explains, the apostle John borrowed these time statements from the day of the Lord passages found in the Old Testament Prophets, passages that prophesied events that did not take place for at least several centuries after the prophecies were written. These same preterists condemn futurist interpretations of John’s time indicators on the grounds that they require several centuries for fulfillment! In addition, a general consensus exists among biblical scholars that the “little while” of Hebrews 12:26-28 is an allusion to the “little while” prophecy of Haggai 2:6. Consequently, preterists must either admit that the writer of Hebrews referred to a different “little while” than Haggai intended or that such day of the Lord passages can have both a near and a far fulfillment. This would mean either a dual fulfillment or an “already and not yet” aspect of fulfillment of Haggai’s original prophecy, both of which are devastating to common preterist thinking about how prophecy is fulfilled.”

—— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 418,439.