

# **Critique of American Vision/Joel McDurmon's Affirmative – “The Hour is coming” (JOHN 4:21-24 & JOHN 5:28-29)**

Michael Sullivan / August 16, 2012



In Joel McDurmon’s recent debate with Don Preston, he proposed a few arguments leveled at Full Preterism (FP) which I will now summarize and then address in the body of this article. First, God’s promise to Abraham was that he would inherit the entire literal real-estate of the “world” (Greek kosmos) and since this has never happened, it stands to reason that a final literal bodily resurrection of the dead has not taken place. Second, an appeal to John 5-6 was made concerning the “last day” (also John 11-12) and a definite limited number of the elect is referred to – so for Joel this is somehow evidence of an end of time and history. Oddly he takes 2 Peter 3 as fulfilled in AD 70, but the longsuffering of the “us” and “all” of 2 Peter 3:9 is evidence of a salvation for the elect at the end of time? Third, by “allusion” the end of the world and history is supposed to be seen in Ecclesiastes 3:11 and Isaiah 41:4 and 46:10. And lastly, an appeal was made to an allegedly fleshly end of time resurrection spoken of by Job in Job 19.

This article is in process and will cover all of these points, but I will begin by addressing John 5:25-29 and laying the context of John 4:19-38... I have also done this in a bit of a hurry so I will need to go back through and no doubt do a little editing.

**The John 4-5 “The hour is coming and now is” and “The hour is coming” Connections**

Before examining McDurmon's points on John 5, let's take a look at these phrases and context found in John 4 and then how Partial Preterist Kenneth Gentry addresses the "hour is coming":

*"Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming (the eschatological "not yet") when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. "But **the hour is coming, and now is** (the eschatological "already and not yet"), when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn.4:21-24)*

Jesus is referring to the judgment upon Jerusalem when He mentions "an hour is coming" which is the eschatological "not yet" in His discussion of a hotly debated issue concerning a mountain and temple worship with the Samaritan woman. Jesus' answer is a AD 70 and post post AD 70 answer concerning a time when a localized place of mountain and temple worship will be meaningless – giving way to the establishment of NC Temple/Mount Zion (Jn.4:19-21; cf. Hebs.9:6-10; Heb.12).

We should take note that there are other eschatological themes such as the harvest which brings with it the Great Commission and resurrection motifs. There is only one NC "harvest" and it involves the harvesting of souls unto "eternal life" and would occur at the end of the OC "this age" Jesus and His audience were living in (Jn.4:35ff./Mt.3:10-12/Mt.13:37-43). There are not two different kinds of harvests, one evangelistic and spiritual and the other involving a literal resurrection of corpses at the end of time. John in Revelation describes the end of the same harvest at the end of the OC age as something that would "shortly" take place and was "at hand" (Rev.1:1, 3 <-Rev.14-> Rev.22:7, 10, 12, 20).

Jesus also instructs us that "salvation is of the Jews" (Jn.4:22) therefore this further confirms the harvest/resurrection occurs at the end of the Jewish first century OC. The resurrection/harvest theme is coinciding with the Bride theme that was introduced previously with John the Baptist. Samaritans were "half-breeds" that were the product of intermarriage and a "scattering" and "sowing" that occurred with the Assyrian captivity. A Samaritan woman who is ½ Jew and ½ Gentile is a fitting representation of the Bride of Christ – for He has reconciled the two into one new body. The parallels of Jacob finding his wife with Jesus finding His are striking:

- 1) Jacob left his home country to find a bride. Jesus left heaven to find His Bride.
- 2) Jacob had a dream of a ladder and anointed a stone.
- 3) John the Baptist finds a stone (Jesus) and anoints Him – the very ladder Jacob dreamed of (Jn.1:51). Jacob found his bride at this well at "high day." Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at the same well at the sixth hour or noon time.
- 4) Jacob had 12 sons that comprised the old-covenant bride of Israel. Jesus appoints 12 disciples representing the new-covenant and transformed Israel/Bride. This woman had married 5 men was living with the 6<sup>th</sup> — finding no rest and contentment until finding Jesus — the ultimate perfect Groom and Husband of the Church who brings rest/satisfaction/unfailing love – ie. the 7<sup>th</sup>. [2] Shiloh/Jesus is the Sabbath rest who is

beginning a “gathering” that will be completed at harvest time at His return in His contemporary generation ([Gen.49:1, 10](#); Mt. 13:39-43; [Mt.24:30-31, 34](#); Hebs.3-4, 10:25, 37). Since DeMar and McDurmon take the parable of the 10 virgins and coming of the Lord in Matthew 25:1-13, 31 as taking place in AD 70, then we are correct to point out that this is when the eschatological marriage/feast and resurrection of the dead takes place as well:

**“On THIS MOUNTAIN the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; HE WILL SWALLOW UP DEATH FOREVER”** (Isa. 25:6-8/1 Cor. 15:54).

In Jewish weddings the banquet/feast and giving of the finest wine takes place AFTER the wedding. Clearly when the Church inherits Zion in AD 70 is when the eschatological /feast and resurrection of the dead takes place. McDurmon took issue with Preston placing Isaiah 25:6-7 with verse 8/1Cor. 15:54 as if Paul did not have verses 6-7 in mind as well!?! But Isaiah 24-28 is a very well established contextual flowing “block” “inclusio” or simply called “Isaiah’s Little Apocalypse” for the commentators! And for further support let’s once turn again to our context of Jesus’ (and the Jewish) dispute with the Samaritan woman over a coming eschatological hour in which “worship” will take place on a “mountain” and “Jerusalem” — we should stay in Isaiah:

**“IN THAT DAY (the last day of the Old Covenant age) the Lord will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, WILL BE GATHERED (cf. Matt. 13:39-43, 49/Matt. 24:30-31/2 Thess. 2:1) up one by one. And in THAT DAY A GREAT TRUMPET WILL SOUND (Matt. 24:30-31/1 Thess. 4:15-17/1 Cor. 15:52) those who were perishing in Assyria and those who WORSHIP THE LORD ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN IN JERUSALEM.”** (Isa. 27:13).

Of Isaiah 27:13’s connection with the NT texts I inserted above, let’s turn to G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson for support:

“The trumpet as a sign of the day of the Lord in 1 Cor. 15:52 recalls Isa. 27:13...” Of 2 Thessalonians 2:1, “The content of Paul’s appeal in this section concerns not only “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” but also “our gathering to him.” The immediate reference to this latter subject is the comforting picture given in the previous letter of how all believers, both those who have died and those who are still alive, will be gathered together to Jesus at his return (1 Thess. 4:16–17). The motif, however, goes back to the widespread OT hope in the gathering together of the scattered exiles to their own land on the day of the Lord (Ps. 106:47 [105:47 LXX]; Isa. 27:13; 43:4–7; 49:12; 56:8; Jer. 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:8, 23; 33:7; Joel 3:1–2; Zech 2:6; Tob. 14:5; 2 Macc. 1:27; 2:7, 18; Pss. Sol. 17:50; T. Ash. 7:6–7; T. Naph. 8:3). This hope was taken over by Jesus and his scattered followers to refer to the final gathering of God’s people with the Messiah (Matt. 24:31 par.; cf. 23:37 par.).[\[1\]](#) Now let’s continue and compare Isaiah 27:13 with our text here in John 4 as laying the contextual foundation to John 5:28-29:

“Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on THIS MOUNTAIN NOR IN JERUSALEM (literal Old Covenant types)...a hour is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will the Father in spirit and truth (the New Covenant anti-type Heb. 12:18–13:14 “City/Jerusalem that is about to come”) , for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:21-24).

Interestingly enough, Kenneth Gentry identifies the eschatological “not yet” of Jesus’ phrase, “the hour is coming” in (John 4:21) as taking place in AD 70 and following.[2] Therefore, McDurmon fails to deal with contextually how Jesus uses the classic soteriological/eschatological “already and not yet” phrase “The hour is coming, and now is...” as referring NOT to the end of time and history but the end in AD 70. This being the case, the burden of proof now lies on the PP Joel McDurmon and AV associates and colleagues to explain why Jesus is now using the very same eschatological “already and not yet” phrases to be addressing an end of time and history event. It is not uncommon for the PP view to divide the contextual flow of eschatological chapters — that the reformed church has traditionally united.[3]

*“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, **and now is**, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, “and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice “and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (Jn. 5:21, 24-29)*

Here in the next chapter Jesus is using the “already and not yet” phrases “The hour is coming and now is” or “The hour is coming” to refer to the same AD 30 – AD 70 time frame. As the “already and not yet” of John 4 was spiritually fulfilled by AD 70, so it is here in John 5:25-29. Oddly McDurmon claims that John 5:28-29 “could be applied to AD 70.” But why would Joel McDurmon say this?

Could it be that he realizes his admission that the resurrection unto everlasting life and everlasting condemnation in Daniel 12:2-3, 13 took place in AD 70 will come back to bite him? Perhaps he knows the commentators and scholars point out that the ONLY place in the OT that mentions the phrase “everlasting life” and a resurrection for two groups – believers and non-believers, is found here in Daniel 12:2?!? Perhaps in a rare moment McDurmon realizes he is stuck between a rock (Dan. 12:2 was fulfilled in AD 70) and a hard place (Dan. 12:2=John 5:28-29) in that the vast majority of Christianity connects the resurrection of the two groups in Daniel 12:2 and John 5:28-29 as the SAME EVENT — so he wants to throw it out there as a possible AD 70 fulfillment?

But instead of going with what the vast majority of Christianity teaches on these texts and what he says of an AD 70 fulfillment of Dan. 12:2/Matt. 13:39-43 (which would be but yet another text American Vision has surrendered to FP), he is reluctant to try and salvage his and American Vision's allegiance to the creeds and their supporters, claiming he believes John 5:28-29 is referring to an end of time fleshly resurrection because the phrase "now is" is not used in verses 28-29 only in v. 25, and the "graves" are mentioned here.

Well, as mentioned the OT echo or reference on the resurrection of the two groups is found in Dan. 12:2 and the "graves" would be that of Ezekiel 37. Neither of these OT resurrection texts according to PPism is referring to a fleshly resurrection – and neither is John 5:28-29! As the Son had seen the Father raise Israel from her graves spiritually, covenantally and corporately in Ezekiel 37, so too in a similar way He would raise the dead and those of the New Israel or those "In Christ" (living and dead) in AD 70 – spiritually, covenantally and corporately.

There is but yet another exegetical, theological and historical problem for Mr. McDurmon when it comes to studying the "The Hour is coming" in John's writings (which he avoided dealing with in his affirmative).

### **The John 5:25-29/1John 2:17-18 & Rev. 14:7 Connections**

Towards the end of John's "this generation" ([Mt.24:34](#)), He wrote that He and his audience knew it was the "last hour" ([1Jn.2:17-18](#)). In Gentry's debate with futurists on the book of Revelation he accurately states,

"Similar notes of the temporal proximity of divinely governed cries abound in the New Testament (see [Matt. 26:64](#); Acts 2:16-20; Rom. 13:11-12; 16:20; [1Cor.7:26, 29-31](#); [Col. 3:6](#); [1Thess.2:16](#); [Heb. 10:25, 37](#); [James 5:8-9](#); [1Pet.4:5, 7](#); 1John 2:17-18). How else could the New Testament express nearness more clearly?[4]

Again, we find McDurmon out of step with most reformed scholars throughout church history whom agree with FPism — that the analogy of Scripture parallels John's teaching on the resurrection "the hour is coming" found in (John 5:28-29), with "it is the last hour" in ([1 John 2:17-18](#)), and with "for the hour of his judgment is come:" in ([Rev. 14:7](#)). This of course is a problem for PPism and Mr. McDurmon since he sees "the last hour" and "hour of his judgment" of (1 John 2:17-18 and Rev. 14:7) as taking place in AD 70.

### **The "Hour is coming" and "The Last Days" Connection**

A similar problem arises in that American Vision's Gary DeMar and Joel McDurmon teach in their writings that the NT's reference to "the last days" is ONLY addressing the last days or end to the OC age in AD 70. Well, the vast majority of Christian scholarship once again agrees with FPism and understands that John's "The hour is coming" of (John 5:28-29) and "The last day" of (John 6:39) are referring to the "last hour" of the "last day" which closes the NT's "last days" eschatology!

## The John 5:24-29 and Revelation 20:1-13 Connections

And where was Joel's "scholarly" or "exegetical" approach in examining John's teachings on the resurrection and judgment of John 5:24-29 with that of Revelation 20?!? Reformed theologian and commentator Simon Kistemaker, understands these events to be the same as does FPism:

<i>Fourth Gospel</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
A. <i>First Resurrection</i>	A. <i>First Resurrection</i>
I most solemnly assure you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has everlasting life ... has passed out of death into life. I most solemnly assure you, the hour is coming — yea, has already arrived! — when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.	"... and I saw <i>the souls</i> of them that had been beheaded ... and such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and <i>they lived</i> and reigned with Christ a thousand years.... <i>This is the first resurrection.</i>
... and (he) does not come into condemnation. (For the solemn introductory formula see on 1:51.)	"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no power."
B. <i>Second Resurrection</i> (unto judgment)	B. <i>Second Resurrection</i> (unto judgment)
Stop being surprised about this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out: those who have done good, for the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil, for the resurrection of condemnation.	"And I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it... And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works: And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.... And if any was not found in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

[5]

We too understand that these are dealing with the same judgment and resurrection of the dead event, but again we see two phases of ONE resurrection for "the dead" (both righteous and wicked) occurring at the end of the old-covenant age, not two kinds – one spiritual and one physical being taught by Jesus and John.

## The John 5:25-29 and Matthew 25:31-46 Connections

American Vision's Gary DeMar and Joel McDurmon along with PP associate Keith Mathison, have progressed much closer to FPism in that they now take the coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 25:31 as having occurred in AD 70. Well, hasn't the vast majority if not



virtually all of the exegetical commentators within reformed eschatology or systematic theologies connected these passages as taking place at the same time as does FPism?!? It is American Vision's Gary DeMar and Joel McDurmon along with Keith Mathison whom seek to pull one over on everyone claiming the coming of the Son of Man throughout ALL of Matthew 24-25 is NOT the Second Coming — which is out of step with orthodoxy and the analogy of Scripture. Selah.

### **The John 5:28-29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17/1 Corinthians 15 Connections**

Since all of reformed theologians and commentators connect these passages as depicting the same eschatological events concerning the judgment and resurrection of the dead, and Joel McDurmon claims John 5:28-29 “could be applied to AD 70, and PP Mike Bull says the coming of Christ in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15 took place in AD 70, there isn't much left to the PPism of American Vision. And their denial that their view does not lead to FPism is a total joke to the rest of the theological and scholarly world.

### **Concluding Joel's Affirmative Points on John 5:25-29:**

McDurmon miserably failed to address how Jesus uses these “already and not yet” phrases in the previous chapter as referring roughly from a time frame of AD 30 – AD 70, in attempting exegeting John 5:24-29. He also miserably failed to address Daniel 12:2 as being the OT source for Jesus' eschatology in John 5:28-29.

Joel McDurmon wanted to sound scholarly by explaining to us in the beginning of the debate that he was going to be going over these issues from an exegetical, systematic/theological, and historical way, and yet I have to give him an “F” in failing to address the exegetical and contextual issues in John 4-5, and how the historic church and scholars from a wide range connect the resurrection of John 5:28-29 with Daniel 12:2. There is simply NO exegetical evidence that the resurrection of John 5:25-29/Dan. 12:2-3, 13 is a fleshly resurrection to take place at the end of time. We in fact do want to appeal to the historic reformed Church (the PP view and the Classic Amillennial view – their scholars and commentators) which forms the organic development or “Reformed and Always Reforming” view of Full Preterism:

#### **1) Partial Preterism (& Joel McDurmon)**

a) Daniel 12:1-3, 13/Matt. 13:39-43/Matt. 24-25 was fulfilled in AD 70 and “The hour is coming” of (John 5:28-29) “could be applied to AD 70.” Joel McDurmon's tutor for the debate and now American Vision contributing author – Sam Frost, believes the millennium of Revelation 20:1-10 was fulfilled between AD 30 – AD 70. Perhaps this too “could be applied to AD 70” Mr. McDurmon?!? PP James Jordan disciple Mike Bull believes the parousia of Christ in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15 took place in AD 70. Mr. McDurmon, can these texts likewise be “applied to AD 70” per your peers?

b) The NT's use of "The last days" referred to and ended the OC age in AD 70 and the "The last hour" and "Hour of judgment" of (1 John 2:17-18; Rev. 14:7) was fulfilled in AD 70.

## 2) Classic Amillennialism –

a) Daniel's judgment and resurrection doctrine of Daniel 12:1-3 is that of Jesus' /John's/and Paul's in Matt. 13:39-43/Matt. 24-25/John 5:28-29/Rev. 20:5-13 and Acts 24:15YLT/WEY.

b) The "Hour is coming" "The last hour" and "Hour of judgment" of (John 5:28-29; 1 John 2:17-18; Rev. 14:7) marks the end to the NT's "already and not yet" "Last days" eschaton.

## 3) True or Full Preterism/Covenant Eschatology –

a) Daniel's judgment and resurrection of the dead doctrine of Daniel 12:1-3, 13 is that of Jesus' /John's/and Paul's in Matt. 13:39-43/Matt. 24-25/John 5:28-29/Rev. 20:5-13 and 1 Thess. 4/1 Cor. 15/Acts 24:15YLT/WEY.

b) The "Hour is coming" "The last hour" and "Hour of judgment" of (John 5:28-29; 1 John 2:17-18; Rev. 14:7) marks the end to the NT's "already and not yet" "Last days" eschaton during the transition of the OC age and NC age and ended in AD 70.. Reformed eschatology (PPism and the classic Amillennial view) continues to lead their readers to Full Preterism. And although American Vision continues to deny that their writings are leading their readers into FPism, the statistics and testimonies are just too clear. Why did American Vision publish their (and Talbot's) dancing bear trophy Sam Frost's thin little book on why he is no longer a FP? It's because they are DESPERATE for an image change! They know hundreds of books could be published from Full Preterist's such as *Why I Left Partial Preterism For Full Preterism* compared to the few converts Talot is bribing with a free tuition at Whitfield Theological Seminary or a whispering in the ear of a bright future within "reformed" "orthodox" ministries. American Vision needs Sam Frost, and Sam Frost needs American Vision. Personally, I believe this was the beginning of the end or rapid decline for both of them. Time will tell.

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[1] Beale, G. K., & Carson, D. A. (2007). Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament (747, 886–887). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos..

[2] Edited by Stanely N. Gudry and C. Marvin Pate, a 4 co-authored debate with Kenneth Gentry, *FOUR VIEWS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION*, p.66, Zondervan pub., 1998.

[3] Some examples being: 1) Christ's coming in Matt. 24:27-30 happened in AD 70 but His coming in Matt. 25:31 allegedly takes place at the end of time. 2) The coming of Christ and parallels to Matt. 24 in 1 Thess. 5 took place in AD 70, but the PP hermeneutical points of Paul's parallel source material in 1 Thess. 4:15-17 with that of Matt. 24 is dropped and 1 Thess. 4 is allegedly dealing with an end of time and history event. 3) The coming of Christ



in Heb. 10:25-37 occurred in AD 70, but apparently the author of Hebrews is allegedly dealing with a different coming of the Lord in Heb. 9:26-28. The de-creation of Rev. 21:1 deals with the creation of the OC passing in AD 70, but allegedly the de-creation of Rev. 20:11 is dealing with the end/transformation of planet earth. These of course are just a few of the none contextual and arbitrary distinctions the PP view makes in its attempts to deal with the time texts and be creedal at the same time.

[4] Gentry, *ibid.* FOUR VIEWS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION, p.43.

[5] Hendriksen, William ; Kistemaker, Simon J.: *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids : Baker Book House, 1953-2001 (New Testament Commentary 1-2), S. 1:200. Tagged [American Vision](#), [eschatology](#), [Full Preterist](#), [Gary DeMar](#), [graves](#), [Joel McDurmon](#), [John 5:28-29](#), [not yet](#), [Partial Preterist](#), [resurrection](#)