

# Listener Interaction

*By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- Mar 16, 2014*

## Opening Remarks:

- A. Welcome to the Then and Now podcast where we study the Bible and History from a full preterist perspective.
  
- B. Last time we looked at the last three occurrences of **the word "body"** (Gk SOMA) in Romans 12, especially verses one and two of that chapter where Paul exhorted the Roman Christians to present their individual physical bodies to God as living sacrifices, and to have their minds renewed by the Holy Spirit.
  
- C. This time, as promised last week, we will share some of the very interesting feedback that we have been getting over the past month or so.
  
- D. Before we get into all that great interaction with our listeners, let's pray:

The Immortal Invisible God, we thank you and praise You for choosing us and using us as your servants. We are so grateful to You for sending Your Spirit into our hearts to guide us, strengthen us, enlighten us, and help us understand Your Holy Word, and to walk in Your Ways. Be with us now as we share our encouragements and insights together here in this podcast. We pray this in the Matchless Name of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Questions and Comments

**[COMMENT]** I have listened to David Curtis, RC Sproul, Ward Fenley, and Dee Dee Warren over the past few weeks. I am really confused about the resurrection. Please help me understand the differences between the CBV and the IBV. I need something real brief and simple that I can easily explain to others. I want to know what the two different preterist views are teaching, and what the differences are between them, and how they differ with the Futurist view. Could you explain these three views:

1. Futurist Body out of the Ground view (BOG)
2. Preterist Collective Body View (CBV)
3. Preterist Individual Body View or Souls Out of Hades View (IBV or SOH)

**[ED'S REPLY]** I would be happy to explain that. Here goes:

1. **FUTURIST BODY OUT OF THE GROUND VIEW (BOG):**  
They believe that at the resurrection Christ will raise bodies out of the ground and change them into immortal bodies.

## 2. PRETERIST COLLECTIVE BODY VIEW (CBV):

They believe the resurrection was a covenantal or spiritual change only, which happened to a collective body only. Out of this idea has come all sorts of deviant doctrines: heaven now, immortal body now, perfection now or perfection never, hyper-cessationism, and universalism.

## 3. PRETERIST INDIVIDUAL BODY VIEW (IBV) a.k.a. Souls Out of Hades View (SOH)

Disembodied SOULS were raised out of Hades and given new immortal bodies and taken to heaven. This "Resurrection of the Dead" (biblical wording) happened at the Parousia. Christ raised the disembodied SOULS of the dead saints out of HADES and gave them their new immortal bodies which had been reserved in heaven for them. Those new immortal bodies were like Christ's glorious body. Then they were taken to heaven to live forever afterwards. This resurrection of the dead (souls out of Hades) occurred in the unseen realm. They were not brought back into the seen realm. They remained in the unseen realm. The living saints who remained alive on earth at the time of the Parousia were CHANGED. Their mortal bodies were changed into immortal bodies, at which time they were taken into the unseen realm to join the resurrected dead to be caught up together to meet Christ and live with Him in heaven forever afterwards. So, the dead were raised to receive their new bodies, and the living were changed into their new immortal bodies. Then they remained in the unseen realm to live with Christ in heaven forever.

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**[COMMENT]** Just a quick word of THANKS for all of your work on the "Then and Now" Podcasts! I have recently subscribed to the RSS feed through Buzzsprout (awesome sound quality, by the way) and have been catching up. The podcast is VERY helpful to me! I have been a Preterist for at least ten years (I own probably every book and audio in your store) However, I have never been able to figure out the Collective Body view versus the Individual body view. It seemed so obvious to me that the Individual body view would be correct, but then other preterist teachers ... would seem so convinced that the CBV was correct... this just led me into confusion on that topic. So many things were crystal clear in Preterism to me, but this area had some "clouds" (Pun intended!). Well, since listening to your podcasts from the past 6 months regarding the CBV, IBV and the recent Romans "Body" texts ... I am thrilled to say that I am seeing this and other areas MUCH more clearly now... I look forward to each new podcast! Keep 'em coming brother! Can't wait to hear what you have for us today!

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**[COMMENT]** It is sad that you have to spend so much time defending the individual body view when it is the obvious meaning, but as time goes by I am starting to put things together that were not clear earlier. For example, I have been loosely following Preterism for about 20 years but now with the internet and your podcasts, etc., I am now studying it very hard. I had an acquaintance that is a "preterist" of some sort and he used to talk about the idea that there is no heaven or hell. He said you just do what you

can to leave the world a better place and teach your kids the right thing to do. I am now putting together the thought that he must have fallen prey to the collective body view and lost all sense of biblical truth. Like you said, the collective body view produces bad fruit. And like Jesus said, "you will know them by their fruits". I can't thank you enough for your work. The pieces of the puzzle finally fit together. Thanks for your excellent work in the historical area. That has been extremely helpful to me, and I'm sure to many others also.

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**[COMMENT]** Listened to your podcast from January 26, 2014, on Romans 6. I would say that by-and-large you nailed it. I thought some of your arguments were better than others, but you certainly pinpointed the basic problems with trying to make "body" a collective entity in this chapter. You said to watch the personal pronouns. On that score, I can even add a little bit. In verse 12, Paul says "*your* mortal body" and continues with the second person plural - vs. 13, "your body", etc. If in fact this was the collective "body of Christ", then surely he would have used the first person: i.e., "our body". Even that is somewhat questionable. I've seen the argument that in the passages that clearly use the phrase "body of Christ", no personal possessive pronouns are ever used when referring to the collective body. Nonetheless, even if one wants to argue that "our body" is a collective body, then a member of the body of Christ wouldn't refer to it as "your body". I might also add that the phrase "mortal body" is very clearly a reference to an individual physical body. I've never seen any proof that it could be anything else. I've never seen or heard of the description "mortal body" indicating anything else. The adjective "mortal" is a physical pointer, and is never used to describe anything else or in any other way. It always points to physicality.

You made one comment that intrigued me. You said that neither camp can rightly point to the word "body" as *always* referring to either individual or collective . I totally agree. But then you said that this holds true for the "eschatological resurrection" passages as well. I was curious what you meant by that? I could disagree in that whenever "resurrection" is used eschatologically, it is used to indicate the raising out of Hades. Yes, Paul refers to "being co-raised with Christ", but those aren't eschatological! They aren't a promise, they are an accomplished fact - by being followers of Christ the saints weren't "being co-raised" but were already "co-raised", partakers in HIS already completed burial and resurrection. I don't see the term "resurrection" or "raised" anywhere used to refer to any collective body resurrection at the Parousia.

**[ED'S REPLY]** Another listener pointed out this same idea. I suspect you are both correct that there is not a single biblical text that is dealing with the **eschatological resurrection** which refers to a collective body undergoing a merely non-experiential covenantal change at the Parousia. Every one of the eschatological resurrection texts (especially Rom 8:18-23; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 5; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess 4-5; and Rev 20) seem to be clearly talking about the resurrection of individual souls out of Hades and their receiving new individual immortal bodies at the Parousia.

**[QUESTION 1]** Ed, I sent the following question to one of the other well-known preterist leaders who teaches the Collective Body View. Here's what I asked him:

I need help with this resurrection issue. With what kind of body or how were the Old Testament saints resurrected? If it was spiritually like you said in one of your teachings, how do you reconcile that with all spirits going back to God who gave them to them? You and brother Ed give some very good arguments for each of your respective views. I do understand that when I die I'm going to be with the Lord. Just trying to understand the AD 70 resurrection. I am truly loving Preterism and I think it is the only answer for biblical eschatology. Brother, Please help me out. I have read almost every book out there on the resurrection and I'm still not quite getting it. I need to choose a view and stick with it: either IBV or CBV.

So that is what I mailed to the other preterist teacher, but once again I did not get an answer from him, so I'm now officially an IBV preterist! Could you please answer the first question for me that is in the first paragraph about the resurrection of the Old Testament saints.

**[ED'S REPLY]** Welcome to the Individual Body View, dear brother! :-) So glad to have you onboard. The disembodied souls (spirits) of the Old Testament saints were waiting in Sheol (Hades) until the resurrection event. At the resurrection those disembodied souls (spirits) were raised out of Sheol (Hades) and "put on" their new immortal bodies. This all happened in the UNSEEN realm.

**[QUESTION 2]** What does the IBV say about the bodies of those whose bodies were in a casket or tomb? Were their bodies raised, or what happened to their bodies? What about the Christians that were thrown to the lions, or were decapitated? Was this resurrection visible to people on earth?

**[ED'S REPLY]** Their bodies were NOT what was raised. Their bodies returned to dust. It was their SOULS that were raised. Their disembodied SOULS were held captive in Sheol (Hades) waiting for our Redeemer to come and redeem them from Sheol (Hades). When Christ returned at His Parousia, He raised the dead disembodied SOULS of His saints from out of Sheol (Hades) and gave them their new immortal bodies in which to dwell in heaven. This resurrection occurred in the UNSEEN realm. They were not raised back into the visible realm. Their resurrection and reception of their new immortal bodies all occurred in the UNSEEN realm.

**[QUESTION 3]** I heard that you teach something about silence after AD 70, and that all the First Century Christians were raptured. Does that mean that any disciple that was alive when the Lord came back was raptured. But yet there is no report in writings like Josephus or other writers from that time that anyone just vanished away without a trace. Not trying to be critical or funny, just trying to understand, since this is the view that I will be taking. I'm currently reading the book, *Taken to Heaven in AD 70* by Ian Harding. and I'm going to re-read your book, *Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture*. I

read it before but I'm going to read it again. Also could you recommend other books on this subject from an IBV view.

**[ED'S REPLY]** These are excellent questions and they deserve serious well-researched answers. You already have my book (Expectations) and Ian Harding's book (Taken to Heaven). My book does a fairly good job of answering your questions about the SILENCE of those folks after AD 70, and about the seeming lack of historical documentation for a rapture. However, after those books were written, I have produced several seminar speeches, magazine articles, and podcast lesson outlines which go much further, and do an even better job of explaining all this. I have attached some of those articles to this message. I think you will find them very helpful for your studies. I would also recommend listening to all my podcasts which deal with the rapture issue. There is some great information there, just waiting to help anyone willing to listen to them. Spend some time there. You will be glad you did. Here is the link to my podcast webpage: <http://buzzsprout.com/11633>

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**[COMMENT]** I am looking on your website for other books that I might purchase but I have questions. I think that you are on the right track especially when it comes to the rapture and John's pre-70 death. It appears that other authors have not caught up with that yet and their books are handicapped with lame arguments that could easily be corrected if they took the kind of historical approach that you are taking. I am ready to move ahead with this historical fulfillment approach. When I purchase another book, I want to first make sure they are up to speed on the history, before I read their book. I am not a scholar but I do have a strong sense of the truth. I appreciate the fact that you never compromise with the truth, but always adhere to it even when it comes to the Creation account in Genesis, the global flood, morals, ethics, and political views, etc.

I am thinking about buying the book on Daniel by Jessie Mills, and I was wondering if there might be some more good books on Daniel that you could recommend. The question that I am trying to answer is this:

**[QUESTION]** How do you and other preterists explain Daniel's 70th "week"?

**[ED'S REPLY]** I will give a book reference for further analysis, as well as summarize the basic historical and chronological position that I am leaning toward at this time. I have not landed on a comprehensive position on Daniel 9 yet, so this is somewhat tentative and subject to enhancements, adjustments and refinements in the future.

#### **1. Book Reference:**

Thomas A. Howe (Southern Evangelical Seminary). *Daniel in the Preterists' Den: A Critical Look at Preterist Interpretations of Daniel*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008. 728 pages. ISBN 13: 978-1-55635-273-7. Ed's note: Dr. Howe has done a fairly comprehensive job of analyzing the various preterist interpretations on Daniel. I have only looked at his material on Daniel 9 and the seventy weeks, so I cannot say anything about the rest of the book. But the book appears to be thoroughly

researched and copiously documented. Every student of Daniel needs to get this book. He quotes and fairly represents the various preterist interpretations of Daniel. Since I have not put anything in print on Daniel 9, he was not able to do much with my particular approach, so I will give you a brief summary below.

## 2. Summary of Ed's Tentative Approach to Daniel 9 --

- I do NOT see the seventy weeks as a literal 490 consecutive years. Instead, I see it as a relative or indefinite period of time needed to fully accomplish the six objectives mentioned in Dan 9:24. The duration of this period of time in years was not revealed to Daniel. Otherwise, Jesus was wrong when he stated that "no man knows the day or the hour." If it was a literal 490 years, the Jews would have known exactly when it was to occur. Instead, God gave Daniel certain events to look for, which would signal when each of the three partitions (7 wks, 62 wks, 1 wk) of the seventy weeks had been accomplished or were about to be accomplished. That is the same approach Jesus used. He gave the disciples signposts to watch for, so that "when you see all these things happen, you will know that the end is near."
- Since the destruction of Jerusalem seems to be the endpoint of the 70 heptads, there does not appear to be any way to construct a literal 490-year chronology without at least one gap inserted in there somewhere. This further supports the idea that the 70 heptads are not meant to be understood as a literal 490-years, but rather as a period of relative or undefined length for the completion of the six objectives mentioned in verse 24.
- **Jim McGuiggan** (in his excellent Amillennial commentary entitled: *The Book of Daniel*) makes a strong case for the beginning of the seventy weeks at the decree of Cyrus in 539 BC. This would mean that the 70 heptads represented a period of a little over 600 years, i.e., from 539 BC to AD 70.
- **Thomas Howe** does a good job of listing all the various ways the premils, amils, and postmils have interpreted that final week at the end of the period. This last week of the seventy is where all the controversy is focused, and rightly so. What I find extremely interesting is the premil suggestion that the "prince" mentioned in Dan 9:26 is the future antichrist. That idea would work just as well (or better) in the preterist past-fulfillment scenario. In the last six years of my intense historical studies for my book (*First Century Events*), I have begun to zero-in on this same idea. The Messiah Prince mentioned in verses 25 and 26 appears to be a different Prince than the one introduced in verse 26. Since the people of this other prince abominate the city and sanctuary, causing it to be completely destroyed and desolated, this seems to fit the Zealot leader Eleazar b. Ananias and his band of Zealots who utterly wasted the city of Jerusalem and the temple area. Josephus talks about the pollution and abomination of the city and temple that was fulfilled by the Zealots in their internecine strife and rivalry. Since Eleazar "sat in the temple" and made numerous lawless changes in the sacrificial system, and lawlessly broke his covenant with the Romans and the Jewish people as well, it appears that he is the prime candidate for the "Prince" designation here in Dan 9:26, as well as the "man of lawlessness" prediction in 2 Thess 2.

- I am not totally convinced that the “anointed one” in Dan 9:25-26 is Messiah Jesus. I lean heavily in that direction, but am open for a better explanation based on further analysis of the historical data in Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, and Tacitus.

Obviously, I have not finished my study and landed on a firm position, but this will give you the basic framework that I am working within (past fulfillment at AD 70). And I heartily recommend taking a look at Thomas Howe’s very helpful book. It is not cheap, but it is well worth the price if you really want to seriously study Daniel from a preterist perspective.

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**[QUESTION]** Why do most full preterists believe that physical death had nothing whatsoever to do with the Fall of Adam? And why do the Collective Body advocates believe that Jesus' physical death and resurrection subordinate to His spiritual death and spiritual resurrection? The Collective Body View sees Jesus' physical death as merely accommodative or evidentiary only. To argue that "And it was good" included not only death by natural causes but death by cancer, ALS and leprosy, seems so foreign to what "good" means. I'd hate to go to a birthday party where they handed out "good" gifts which included vipers, scorpions and anthrax spores. I truly believe the Collective Body View loses a lot of credibility (especially in the eyes of futurists) when it tries to make the argument that physical death had nothing whatsoever to do with the Fall of Adam and God's plan of Redemption.

**[ED'S REPLY]** That is another really superb comment and question. The reason why most preterists relegate physical death to the “unimportant” or “secondary” category is because they have been heavily influenced by Max King who got that idea from John A. T. Robinson’s book (*The Body*). Max knew that the **Body out of the Graves (BOG)** view of the resurrection was not true, but he did not seriously consider the other alternative within conservative evangelical Christianity (**Souls out of Hades**). Consequently, he chose to follow a radical liberal view (Robinson) which gave him an easy convenient way to avoid dealing with the physical death/resurrection issue in Genesis and the rest of the Bible (by waving his magic hyper-spiritualizing wand over the problem).

The Collective Body guys are simply following **Max King**, who was very closely following **Robinson**. Inspecting the liberal, skeptical, immoral, and universalist fruit that has come from that Collective Body approach does not recommend it at all. Something must be drastically wrong with it. By contrast, the strict conservative historical view of Genesis produces good fruit.

This is why Robert Strimple (in Mathison’s book) pointed out the fact that Max’s view (i.e., Robinson’s view) devalues the significance of Christ’s physical body in comparison to the greater significance of His collective body. Strimple was *spot on* in his analysis of the Collective Body View at that point. Max got that idea from Robinson. Robert H. Gundry points out this same devaluation of the physical body of Christ in Robinson’s views. See Robinson (*The Body*, pp. 50-66, 72, 79-83) and Gundry (*SOMA in Biblical Theology*, pp. 159-183, 217-244). Gundry does a marvelous job of showing the irreconcilable inconsistencies and logical fallacies of Robinson’s view (on which Max King heavily relies).

Now you can see why the fallacies of the Collective Body View need to be exposed and refuted. It is so wrong and so devastating to our faith in so many ways. I totally understand why Strimple, Hill, Mathison, Gentry, and Sproul are so passionate in their opposition to it. The Collective Body View attacks the fundamentals and essentials of our resurrection faith. It devalues and down-plays the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ's individual physical body. That forces them to relegate the physical death of Adam to unimportance as well. There is a direct connection between the way they treat Christ's physical body and Adam's physical body. They have no choice but to relegate both to unimportance, so they can focus most of the attention on the spiritual death and spiritual resurrection of the Collective Body of Christ. Do you see what that collective body approach does to the **physical** death and resurrection of Jesus? That is why so many of our futurist critics are so critical of the preterist view! We need to show them that there is a much more reasonable and biblical alternative view of the resurrection than the Collective Body View, and that the **Individual Body View** is a concept that is already found within futurism, i.e., *the resurrection of souls out of Hades!*

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**[COMMENT]** I had an opportunity to speak with a very close PCA elder friend of mine (with whom I shared an elder board at one time) about my eschatological alterations. Though he's probably a partial pret now after my prodding through the years (he realized early on that "must take place shortly" simply can't mean thousands of years), I don't think he ever fully understood the implications of my former collective body view. And for good reason. Because of his entrenchment in the PCA and reformed theology in general, I had to tread very lightly. I realized that the collective body view (that was the ONLY view I thought viable in the pret movement) redefined things in such a way that would make this good friend uncomfortable.

At any rate, as I recounted some of the areas I now had conflict with, he was rather shocked. He had no idea where the collective body view was taking people. The idea of sin never actually getting dealt with (thus sin in Heaven); the notion that we supposedly no longer see through a mirror dimly while on planet earth; that the NT never spoke of individuals receiving spiritual bodies but only referred to a collective body resurrection; that sin had nothing whatsoever to do with physical death; that Scripture never addresses individual resurrection (since it is only assumed by the collective); that we will never actually become like Him, and that "seeing" Him face to face is only metaphorical language. Once I told him that, and why I believed those things are erroneous, and assured him that the **Individual Body View** held to the tenets of reformed theology, he seemed rather relieved.

**[ED'S REPLY]** One of the things that drive me onward in teaching the **Individual Body Resurrection View** is my concern for the future of the Preterist truth. As you noted above in your comments about your PCA buddy, the Preterist view will be shunned, avoided, and relegated to the dustbin of history, if it is considered only from the CBV perspective. Because I care about the future of the Preterist view, I want to make sure it gets off to a good start, with a solid biblical foundation, and a godly moral, ethical, and spiritual discipline. Without that kind of foundation, it will never survive. God will not bless it. And godly truth-seekers will not embrace it.



To attract pleasure-seekers, all we have to do is put on a good entertaining show. But to attract truth-seekers, we have to teach the truth! And there never was a time when the truth did not cause conflict and division. Truth-seekers and truth-followers understand that. Pleasure-seekers do not. Truth is a pearl of GREAT price. It requires a HUGE investment up front, but in the end it returns an incomparably great and eternal reward. Part of the price we pay for truth is the conflict, division, persecution and ridicule that comes our way for daring to follow the unpopular and difficult truth. Error is easy, and fun, and cheap. But in the end it produces bad fruit and destroys its followers.

I absolutely will not sit idly by and watch the bad ideas and bad consequences of the CBV discredit and destroy the Preterist movement. I love the truth and all my fellow truth-seekers too much to ever allow that to go unchallenged. The IBV and rapture views **ADORN** the Preterist view and make it **ATTRACTIVE** (not repulsive) to futurist truth-seekers. That is where I am focused for the rest of my days, whatever it costs, whatever it takes. Let all the naysayers heckle and scoff and laugh. In the end, when the smoke clears and the dust settles, the TRUTH will be left standing to influence every generation of the future. God has promised that. His Word will not return to Him void. It will accomplish everything He intended for it to accomplish! Time is on the side of Truth.

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**[COMMENT]** Enjoyed your latest podcast. Your 'Conclusion' was right on track in suggesting that Max King seems to have originally accepted the futurist concept of bodily resurrection without adequately considering the other alternative of resurrection of souls out of Hades. A while ago one of the Collective Body advocates posted links on FaceBook to PDFs of Max King's two books: *OT Israel and NT Salvation*, and *The Spirit of Prophecy*. They're full of references to physical bodily resurrection and rapture that he argues against. I suspect a contributing factor was the rampant proliferation of end time books/movies around the time Max wrote. Oddly though, there are a few mentions of "souls" in *The Spirit of Prophecy*. For example, see the following:

**pp. 162 and 170:** 1 Pet. 1:6-13 Receiving the end of your faith—the **salvation of your souls**.

**p. 213:** "The end of the world that Peter is actually talking about, however, vitally affects **the destiny of every soul**, and therefore it is important that we understand what world it is."

**p. 288:** Revelation 20:11-15 "... it is then that **Hades is emptied** of her subjects and destroyed forever, **never to be entered again by human souls**."

Duuuhh, how that didn't jump out at him as he wrote, is beyond me. Significant also is what he did not discuss much: 1 Thess. 4:13-18 for example. Calling it "accommodative language," he quoted 1 Thess 4:17 followed by 5:10. The word "sleep" there in 1 Thess 5:10 is from Strong's #2518 [Gk. KATHEUDO], not #2837 [Gk. KOIMAO] which is used in 4:13-15. I'm making notes on all this so that the next time I engage in conversation with the Collective Body advocates, I'll have quotes from the 'source' (Max's books) to back up what I'm saying!

**[ED'S REPLY]** Thanks for those excellent comments.

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**[QUESTION]** The previous podcast covered Romans 8 and this one covered Romans 12. Is there some reason why you skipped over chapters 9, 10 and 11 in your survey of Romans? I was really looking forward to hearing your interpretation of those chapters.

**[ED'S REPLY]** My purpose for this series on Romans was to analyze the 13 occurrences of the word BODY that are found in the epistle of Romans. Since there are no occurrences of the word BODY in chapters 9-11, we did not take time to look at those chapters.

Sixteen sessions on Romans was about all the time I wanted to spend on it. Plus, several listeners are already urging me to get back into the historical studies, which I am planning to do after this Listener Feedback session.

However, I do have several outlines for the whole book of Romans, as well as some great notes and email exchanges covering Romans chapters 9-11. If any of our listeners would like to have those outlines and email exchanges on Romans 9-11, simply request them by email. :-)

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**[QUESTION]** Just finished your book on *Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture*. It was a very good read, but I need your clarification on a couple points:

(1) Concerning the idea of no documentation for the Parousia by the saints after AD 70, if the CBV is right then we would have had documentation on the occurrence of the Parousia and Resurrection because they were supposedly still around and would have written about it. Is that what you are saying in your book about the silence?

(2) Also in a short synopsis what is your view on the New Jerusalem?

**[ED'S REPLY]** Indeed, if the CBV is correct, then we should have heard something from those saints who had just witnessed the Parousia, right after AD 70! They should have been **dancing in the streets** and **shouting from the rooftops** about what they had just seen, heard, and experienced at the Parousia. Instead, all we have is silence, ignorance, and confusion from those post-70 Christians. None of the pre-70 saints ever showed up and said anything after AD 70. Apparently they were no longer around. They were **silent** because they were **absent**.

In regard to the **New Jerusalem**, it is in the *unseen realm*. Because of Christ's atoning sacrifice on our behalf, the New Jerusalem was prepared as a dwelling place for the saints during the transition period (AD 30-70), and then brought down with Him at His Parousia from the highest heaven to the lowest heaven, where it remains forever. As soon as we saints die, we enter into its gates to dwell forever. *We are citizens of that heavenly kingdom now, but we do not experience the full benefits of dwelling in that heavenly city until we die and get our new immortal bodies and go to heaven.*

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**[COMMENT]** A thought question: The heretic "Christians" were left behind on earth with the original, or at least very early copies of the true NT writings. How could any of those good manuscripts have survived unaltered? I know that God can do all things, but how did He accomplish this?

**[ED'S REPLY]** Marvelous question. I dealt with that idea a little bit in one of the past podcasts, but I did not cover this specific question in very much detail. I will try to give you a little better reply here.

The short answer is simply that there were many copies of those NT manuscripts floating around in the hands of the Gnostics in Alexandria, Marcion and other heretics in Greece, Asia, Syria, and Armenia, the Unitarian Judaizing sects of Jewish "Christians" in Palestine and Syria, plus the unbelieving Jewish rabbis and Jewish leaders themselves had copies to use as evidence against the Christians. There is no way anyone could tamper with those documents without being discovered by one of the other groups that had copies of them. Any deletions, additions, changes, corruptions, or interpolations by any of those groups would have been detected by the other groups, and would have been exposed and challenged.

In fact, we see some of that happening. Marcion, Cerinthus, the Gnostics, the Unitarian Judaizers, and other heretics DID mess with the text, and some of the other groups noticed their corruptions and pointed it out. With all those heretics having copies of the documents, it kept each of them from corrupting the text, since they knew there were many other copies floating around that could be compared with their corrupted version.

Paul and the apostles did us all a huge favor by making sure there were lots of copies of their documents scattered all over the Roman world before they passed away from the earthly realm. That made it extremely difficult for their writings to be corrupted without detection. It would have been very difficult for anyone to tamper with the New Testament documents and get away with it. Ultimately someone with another copy of that same text would spot the differences and expose the fraud.

## Conclusion

Well, I hope that selection of questions and comments from our listeners was interesting, encouraging, and helpful for us. I had another fifteen pages of material just like this that I wanted to include, but there simply was not enough time for it here in this podcast. I tried to use comments and questions that are fairly representative of the emails that I am getting on a daily basis. These were very encouraging to me, and I trust that they will be to all of our listeners as well.

Beginning next session, we are planning, Lord willing, to get back into our historical studies. If anything here in this session provoked any thoughts or questions, be sure to share those with me by email. My email address is [preterist1@preterist.org](mailto:preterist1@preterist.org).

That will wrap it up for this time. Thank you so much for listening.

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