

The History of the World Part 1

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The two most important men in my theological journey of the past 25 years. One just spoke and I have 45 minutes to introduce the other. Don Preston means more to me than he will ever know. Don defined the basic idea that has driven Tim Martin's and certainly my study these 25 years since I first heard of his work.

“Conservative” church life in the 1970’s mostly consisted of the twin doctrines of Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creationism. I had heard of Amillennialism, which was only defined as “we believe something else,” and Postmillennialism which was called “liberalism.”

It seemed as if all of us were subjected to the Christian horror flick, *A Thief in the Night*, and knew that computer binary codes were “The Mark of the Beast.”

And Young Earth Creationism, though only about 12 years old, had completely taken over.

Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creation were the only game in town.

Yes, we knew there were other views, but we only knew what the Dispensationalists told us about those other views, logical strawmen. And when we questioned Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creationism, we were told to read one part “literally,” which then required us to read another part “figuratively.”

That was the world in the 1970’s.

As Full Preterists, we know that the church is the “world” but that’s not the way we have been taught to use that word.

We’ve been taught that those other people are the world. That’s a false idea brought to us by Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creationism. In the New Testament, Old Covenant Judaism was the world that was passing away. The church was the new world coming into being.

The typical sermon today doesn’t use “world” correctly. They use it to refer to people outside of covenant, people who, during the first century were in neither world.

Our churches used to organize gatherings for the youth among like-minded congregations. In southern California, we would all descend on one of the local churches on a particular Sunday night each month.

Among the instrumental Church of Christ/independent Christian Church, where I was baptized, someone got the idea for us to all go to the Christian rock concerts at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa. We did this for two years, in '74 and '75. We'd all meet, sit together, a hundred or more of us, and listen to the concert.

After the concert came a sermon. About half the time, Chuck Smith, gave the sermon. The other half, it was given by a famous or then up-and-coming name in Baptist circles. I've forgotten the names of the others, but we listened to Hal Lindsey, once; Chuck Missler, twice; and Henry Morris, the Father of Young Earth Creationism, twice.

Chuck Smith's sermon was always a mix of Young Earth Creationism and the major points of Dispensationalism, the coming Rapture and the Mark of the Beast. Chuck Missler spoke about the same, with some Biblical Numerology added to the mix. Hal Lindsey supplied more detail about the Rapture and such. And Henry Morris spoke on Young Earth Creationism and how Young Earth Creationism proved that the Rapture would occur any day now.

Every sermon, regardless of who gave it, ended with the refrain.

“The time is short. The rapture will happen soon.

Do not go to college. The rapture will occur before you graduate.

Do not get married. Your infant children will be left behind.

Do not start a career. It will be a waste of time.”

We heard this admonition not just from Chuck Smith, but also from Hal Lindsey, Chuck Missler, and Henry Morris

Did those false prophets ever learn? Unfortunately, no. Those of you who know Mike Sullivan, Gary Parrish, and/or Mike Loomis can confirm that these same people at Calvary Chapel were making the same false prophecies a decade later.

Through these sermons, it was demonstrated monthly, that Young Earth Creationism was Dispensationalism in Genesis, that Young Earth Creationism could not be separated from the Dispensationalism that had given it birth.

I had a rather obvious choice. Either

Do as I was told,

Or

Reject it and become one of the mockers that the apostles warned us about and be in danger of being left behind.

In 1980, I was raptured, er, graduated. I married my college sweetheart. We raised five kids, had forty-plus-year careers, and now spoil our grandson and our siblings' grandchildren.

The Dispensationalists never learned. They've never repented. Nothing we were promised has ever occurred. After 50 years, they still call us mockers.

We've all been subjected to this sort of treatment by these false prophets. Some of us more than 50 years, some of us haven't hit the 50-year mark yet.

That is the world we live in.

In the years that followed, I did what most of you did. I studied. I discovered numerous interpretations of Genesis 1. I discovered numerous eschatologies. I discovered Preterism, through Kik's, *An Eschatology of Victory*, in 1992.

In 2000, I met Leon Gibson. Leon asked me, "Are you a Full Preterist or a Partial Preterist?" Leon gave me three books plus some tapes by three authors.

The first author was John Noe who attached his Full Preterism to Young Earth Creationism and denied an eschatology of Genesis. The curse of Genesis 3, sin, and death would never end.

The second was Ed Stevens who also attached his Full Preterism to Young Earth Creationism, then faked an eschatology of Genesis. To Stevens, the curse, sin, and death would never end but now they were blessings. We would be saved from death, after we die. We will die in sin and only then will we live.

The third was Don Preston. In one of the tapes, Preston was discussing Genesis 3:15. God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Preston said (rough quote), “A covenant cannot end until all of the promises of that covenant are fulfilled.”

With that statement, Preston (though he didn't realize it) completely broke from Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creation

With that statement, Preston also broke with Max King. Max King never had an eschatology of Genesis. I don't know if Max King believed what John Noe believed or what Ed Stevens believed.

With that statement, Preston started the study of the eschatology of Genesis.

But that statement put the fire in my belly that has driven my study for the last 25 years.

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To explain this, I need to back up a bit.

Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creationism do not just dominate the church culture, they dominate the language. During the 19th-century, the early Dispensationalists changed the definitions.

Thomas Chalmers, in 1814, appears to be the first person to claim that “the earth” of Scripture was “Planet Earth.” Before that, “the earth” was the land or country or the people of a land or country. The Hebrew and Greek words had a similar meaning.

For approximately two hundred years before that, “Earth” with a capital “E” was the name of our Planet, curtesy of Johannes Kepler who got the rights to name it because he discovered/invented it.

“Earth” became Planet Earth.

“World” also became Planet Earth.

In Romans 8:1-2, we see that “the flesh” is “the law of sin and death.” In Scripture, “the flesh” is a law. In the same passage, “spirit” is another type of law.

Instead, by Dispensationalism, “flesh” became our “meatsuit.” “Literal” and “natural” became “physical” and “spiritual” became “not physical” or “other physical.”

Our world has taught us not to see law and covenant. Our world denies the very law and covenant that gave it life.

John Nelson Darby jumped on Thomas Chalmers' redefinition of "the earth."

Almost every eschatology now follows from this redefinition. Amillennialism, "conservative" Postmillennialism, the other versions of Premillennialism, every version of Partial Preterism and even some versions of Full Preterism, are based on Chalmers' redefinition of "the earth."

Every single version of Physical Creation (PC) also follows from this redefinition. Young-Earth, Old-Earth, Day-Age, the Gap Theory, Progressive, Evolutionary, and Theistic Evolution all require Chalmers' redefinition.

If you disagree with Dispensationalism and Young Earth Creationism, you are still forced to use their vocabulary and their definitions.

Worse, they even changed the hermeneutic.

The biblical hermeneutic used to be:

Scripture interprets Scripture

Instead, Dispensationalism replaced that with the “literal” hermeneutic. I’ve heard Tim LeHaye’s Golden Rule repeated by many preachers over the decades, “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense,” even by preachers who believe that Tim LeHaye is of the devil.

Let's look at an example.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

We will look at the phrase, "heavens and earth."

Scripture interprets Scripture would say, let's look at a bunch of examples of "heaven and earth" and try to understand how Scripture uses the phrase.

The Dispensationalist hermeneutic says, that the plain sense (which was redefined during the 1800's) is the "physical universe and Planet Earth."

As preterists, we understand that “the first heaven and the first earth” have passed away. The physical universe and Planet Earth have not passed away.

Houston, we have a problem.

Which hermeneutic do we accept?

Most of my Full Preterist critics claim to use Scripture interprets Scripture, yet they have never done so for this verse. Their interpretation is Dispensationalist to the core.

Which world do they live in?

Which world should we live in?

Now, I'm not saying that Covenant Creation and Covenant Eschatology are necessarily correct.

What I'm saying is that any understanding of Creation and/or Eschatology which starts with a definition of "heaven and earth" that came from outside Scripture is necessarily wrong-headed, until you prove from Scripture that your outside definition might be correct.

Heaven and earth, in Scripture, outside of Genesis 1, never means "the physical universe and Planet Earth." Why assume that Genesis 1 is the exception?

To do so, you are assuming the Dispensational definition and the Dispensational hermeneutic.

With this change in definitions and hermeneutic, Adam's covenant has been forgotten. Adam had a covenant and that covenant could not end until all of the promises of that covenant were fulfilled.

As Full Preterists, we are here to change the understanding. We are here to change the vocabulary. We are here to change the hermeneutic. We are here to change the world.

For the past 25 years, this is the world I've wanted to live in.

Adam's covenant could not end until all of the promises of that covenant were fulfilled.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

We all understand the serpent bruising His heel to refer to Christ's death on the cross.

Historically, the Seed bruising the serpent's head has been understood as part of the events of “the coming,” part of the events of AD 70.

Almost every month, I hear someone say, “Christ’s death and resurrection was the most important event in history.”

Was it? What did Christ say about it?

He called it, “the sign of Jonah.” A sign is important but only because it points to something even more important. “Yet forty days (years), and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

The Seed, bruising the serpent’s head was the overthrow of the spiritual Nineveh, Jerusalem.

The fulfillment of the prophecy of Adam’s covenant had to occur before Adam’s covenant could end. The end of Adam’s covenant required the most important event in history.

How important was this event?

Christ called it, “the passing away of heaven and earth.”