

Calvary Open Class: Eschatology

Class 10: Aberrant Eschatological Views

PRETERISM

Definition: *the view that the biblical prophecies concerning the “end times” have already been fulfilled—in the past. Preterism is also known as “full preterism” or “hyper-preterism.”*

The preterist movement essentially teaches that all the end-times prophecies of the New Testament were fulfilled in _____ when the Romans attacked and destroyed Jerusalem. Preterists usually point to a passage in Jesus’ _____ to bolster their argument.

Problems:

- The preterist misinterprets the _____ nature of Christianity.
- Preterism denies the future prophetic quality of the book of _____.
- The apostle Paul warned against those who teach falsely that the _____ has already taken place (2 Timothy 2:17–18).
- Preterism denies the physical reality of Christ’s second coming and downplays the dreadful nature of the _____ by restricting that event to the fall of Jerusalem.

Conclusion: Preterism is _____ and should be _____.

PARTIAL PRETERISM

Definition: *Partial preterism is a Christian eschatological view that interprets many of the prophecies in the New Testament, particularly those in the Book of Revelation, as having been fulfilled in the first century, specifically during events such as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. However, unlike full preterism, which sees all prophecies as already fulfilled, partial preterism holds that some key prophecies are still awaiting future fulfillment.*

Problem: To maintain their view, they must also use an _____ hermeneutic when interpreting prophetic passages.

Conclusion: While partial preterism is within the scope of orthodoxy, it’s not the _____ view among Christians today.

JEHOVAH WITNESS

Jehovah's Witnesses hold distinct beliefs about the end times that differ significantly from mainstream (orthodox) Christian eschatology. Here are some key points of Jehovah's Witnesses' end-times beliefs, along with the reasons for orthodox Christians' disagreements:

1. Jesus' _____ Return in 1914

- Jehovah's Witnesses: They believe Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 to begin ruling as King in heaven, marking the start of the "last days."
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: There is no biblical support for this specific interpretation or timeline. Scripture teaches a visible, bodily return of Jesus, as described in passages like Acts 1:11 and Revelation 1:7, which states that "every eye will see him."

2. The _____ Class and the Great _____

- Jehovah's Witnesses: They believe only 144,000 faithful believers, called the "anointed," will reign with Christ in heaven. The remaining faithful, known as the "great crowd," hope to live forever on a paradise earth after Armageddon.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: All believers are saved and will experience eternal life in heaven or the new creation.

3. Armageddon as the Destruction of _____

- Jehovah's Witnesses: They teach that Armageddon is an imminent battle where God will destroy all governments and institutions opposing Jehovah, resulting in the death of all non-Witnesses. Only faithful Jehovah's Witnesses will survive to live in a paradise earth.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: Armageddon is a final battle between good and evil but it is not limited to the destruction of those outside a single denomination. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ and only God can judge who will be saved. Christians also see this event as leading to the final judgment, where all are judged based on their faith and relationship with Christ.

4. _____ and the _____

- Jehovah's Witnesses: They believe that after Armageddon, Jesus will rule over a paradise earth for 1,000 years. During this time, billions will be resurrected, and those who adhere to Jehovah's standards will gain eternal life on earth, while the unfaithful will face annihilation.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: Christians interpret the Millennium differently depending on their eschatological views (premillennial, amillennial, or

postmillennial), but they do not believe in a paradise earth exclusively for Jehovah's Witnesses. Instead, they believe in a new heaven and new earth where all believers will dwell eternally with God, as described in Revelation 21. Resurrection is seen as leading to eternal life with God or eternal separation from Him.

5. The Final _____ and _____

- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** They teach that at the end of the 1,000-year reign, Satan will be released briefly, leading to a final test. Those who remain faithful will live eternally on earth, while those who fail will be annihilated, as Jehovah's Witnesses deny the existence of eternal conscious torment in hell.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** Christians believe in the final judgment after Jesus' return, where individuals are judged and assigned either eternal life or eternal separation from God. Christians interpret eternal punishment as conscious, citing passages like Matthew 25:46, which describes "eternal punishment" alongside "eternal life," indicating a dual and enduring outcome.

6. No _____ Doctrine

- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** They reject the doctrine of the rapture, viewing it as an unbiblical teaching. They believe that God's kingdom is established in heaven already, and that faithful Witnesses will be preserved on earth through Armageddon.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** While views on the rapture vary, many Christians believe in a rapture based on passages like 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, where believers meet the Lord in the air. The concept of the rapture, though debated, generally anticipates a transformation or gathering of believers at Christ's return rather than preservation through a period of tribulation.

7. Living in the Last Days Since _____

- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** They believe the "last days" began in 1914, based on their interpretation of Bible prophecy. Witnesses see current global conditions as fulfillment of "last days" prophecies, and they focus on door-to-door evangelism to warn of the coming end.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** Christians generally believe that signs of the last days have been present since the time of Jesus and the apostles, who cautioned that no one knows the exact time of Jesus' return (Matthew 24:36). Christians believe in readiness for Christ's return, but they avoid setting specific dates or time periods as definitive markers of the "last days."

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

Seventh-day Adventist eschatology is central to their faith. Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) have a distinctive understanding of end-times theology, shaped largely by the teachings of their founders, including Ellen G. White. Their eschatology places particular emphasis on the Second Coming, the Sabbath, and specific prophetic interpretations. Here are some key SDA beliefs about the end times and reasons orthodox Christians might disagree:

1. The _____ Judgment

- **Seventh-day Adventists:** SDAs believe that Jesus began an “investigative judgment” in 1844, based on their interpretation of Daniel 8:14, which they understand to mean a cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. In this judgment, Christ reviews the lives of believers to determine their eligibility for salvation before His return.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** Christians believe that judgment occurs at death or the final judgment upon Christ’s return, not as an ongoing investigative process. Most Christians also interpret Daniel 8:14 as referring to historical events (e.g., the desecration of the earthly temple) rather than a heavenly judgment beginning in 1844.

2. The _____ and End-Time _____

- **Seventh-day Adventists:** SDAs observe the Sabbath on Saturday, believing it is a commandment that remains binding for Christians. They believe that in the end times, there will be a global enforcement of Sunday worship, which they view as the “mark of the beast,” and those who refuse will face persecution.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** Christians view the Sabbath as fulfilled in Christ, with Sunday observed as a day of worship in honor of the resurrection. While most do not see Sunday worship as an issue related to end-times prophecy, they disagree with the SDA belief that Sunday observance could become the "mark of the beast," as the Bible does not specifically tie Sunday worship to that concept.

3. The _____ Second Coming and _____ Millennium

- **Seventh-day Adventists:** SDAs emphasize the imminent, visible, and literal return of Christ, who will take the saved to heaven for a 1,000-year reign while the earth remains desolate. After the millennium, Christ will return to judge the wicked, who will be annihilated, and then renew the earth.
- **Orthodox Christians' Disagreement:** Christians agree on the visible, bodily return of Christ, but interpretations of the millennium vary (premillennial, amillennial, postmillennial). While some Christians believe in a literal 1,000-year reign on earth, others (e.g., amillennialists) see the millennium as symbolic of Christ's present reign. Annihilationism is not a Christian view.

4. The Great _____ Theme

- Seventh-day Adventists: This teaching, rooted in the writings of Ellen G. White, posits an ongoing cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan over the character of God and human loyalty. SDAs believe that the end times will reveal the just nature of God's character and law to the universe.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: While Christians agree on the concept of spiritual warfare, they do not view the end times as primarily a cosmic "vindication" of God's character. They believe God's sovereignty and holiness are already fully established and are not contingent upon an end-times display or vindication.

5. Conditional _____ and the State of the _____

- Seventh-day Adventists: SDAs believe in "soul sleep," teaching that the dead are unconscious until the resurrection at Christ's return. They also reject the belief in an immortal soul and argue that only the saved will receive eternal life, while the wicked will face annihilation (cease to exist) after judgment.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: Christians believe in the conscious existence of the soul after death, with believers entering God's presence immediately (2 Corinthians 5:8). Christians also believe in eternal conscious punishment for the wicked.

6. Health _____ and End-Time Faithfulness

- Seventh-day Adventists: SDAs promote health reform as part of spiritual discipline, advocating a vegetarian or healthy diet and abstinence from substances like alcohol and tobacco. They believe this lifestyle will prepare them physically and spiritually to endure end-times trials.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: While Christians support healthy living as beneficial, they generally do not see dietary practices as directly tied to end-time faithfulness. They regard diet as a matter of individual freedom (Romans 14:2-3) and do not believe it has eschatological significance.

7. End-Time _____ Church

- Seventh-day Adventists: SDAs consider themselves the "remnant church" with a unique mission to share the "three angels' messages" of Revelation 14, warning against Babylon (false religion) and urging adherence to God's commandments, especially Sabbath observance.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: Christians do not identify any particular denomination as the exclusive remnant church. They believe that the true Church consists of all who trust in Christ for salvation, regardless of denominational affiliation. Christians also interpret the "three angels' messages" in a symbolic or broader context rather than as a literal end-time mission exclusive to one group.

8. The Mark of the _____ and Religious _____

- Seventh-day Adventists: SDAs teach that the mark of the beast will be associated with enforced Sunday worship, likely through a union of church and state. They believe this mark will symbolize rejection of God's law and authority in favor of human tradition.
- Orthodox Christians' Disagreement: Christians interpret the mark of the beast more generally as a sign of allegiance to worldly powers opposed to God, not specifically tied to Sunday worship. They believe that the mark will reflect a broader rejection of God and that its nature will be clear in the context of future events.

CONCLUSION

“Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” – Matthew 24:44–46