

PRETERISM



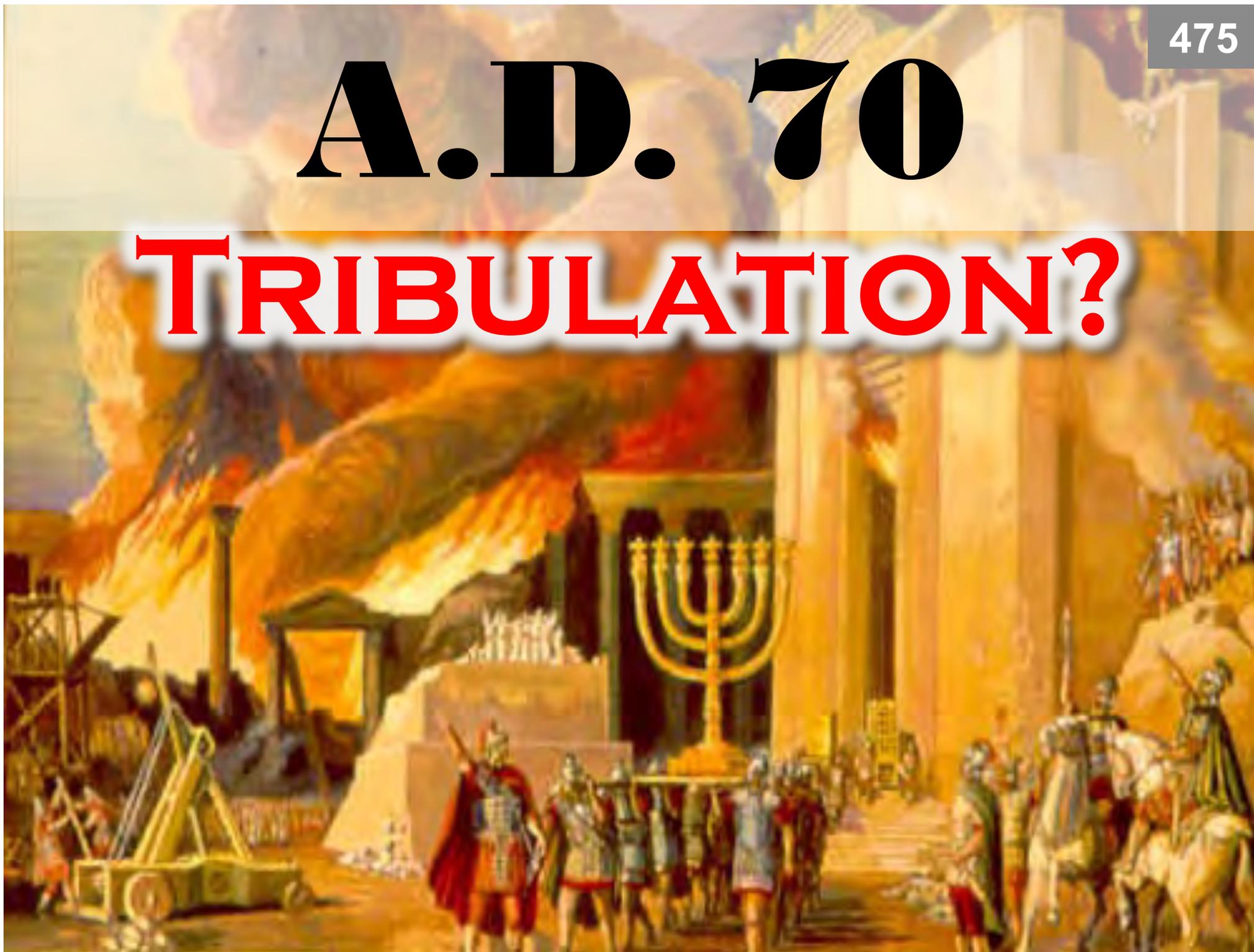
Dr. Rick Griffith • Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary • BibleStudyDownloads.org •
Edited from a 2010 class presentation by Joshua Daniel Rungsung, Penny Quek & Joni Siau



I. Introduction

A.D. 70

TRIBULATION?



Unable to find a parking space

TRIBULATION?



9/11

TRIBULATION?

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains." - Matthew 24:6-8

Tsunami

TRIBULATION?



The Bowl Judgments

TRIBULATION?



FOUR MAJOR ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS

Preterism	Past
Historicism	Present
Futurism	Future
Idealism	Timeless

THE VIEW
OF
Preterism

An eschatological viewpoint that sees most or all of Bible prophecy as being fulfilled sometime in the past (1st century AD after the death of Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70)

DEFINITION

History

The first systematic preterist exposition of prophecy was written by Luis De Alcasar in 1614.

REV. PATRIS
L V D O V I C I
A B
A L C A S A R
H I S P A L E N S I S,
E S O C I E T A T E I E S V T H E O L O G I,
& in Prouincia Bætica sacrae Scripturae Professoris,
V E S T I G A T I O A R C A N I S E N S V S
I N
A P O C A L Y P S I .

Cum opusculo de sacris Ponderibus ac Mensuris.



ANTVERPIÆ,
Apud Ioannem Keerbergium.
c16. 16c. xiv.

Johnson

THE VIEW
OF
Preterism

"The word 'preterist' is from Latin term *praeteritus*, which means 'gone by,' or past. Preterism holds that the tribulation prophecies (of Matthew and Revelation) occur in the first century."

Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr.

Types of Preterists

- **Extreme Preterists**

(Radical/Full/Consistent Preterists) see Tribulation, Resurrection, 2nd Coming & Judgments as past

- **Mild Preterists**

God judged Jews (A.D. 70) & Rome (A.D. 313)
Still look forward for the 2nd Coming of Christ

- **Moderate Preterists**

(Partial Preterists) – Almost all prophecies fulfilled in A.D. 70, Future 2nd Coming





II. Arguments and Responses on Preterism

A. External Evidence

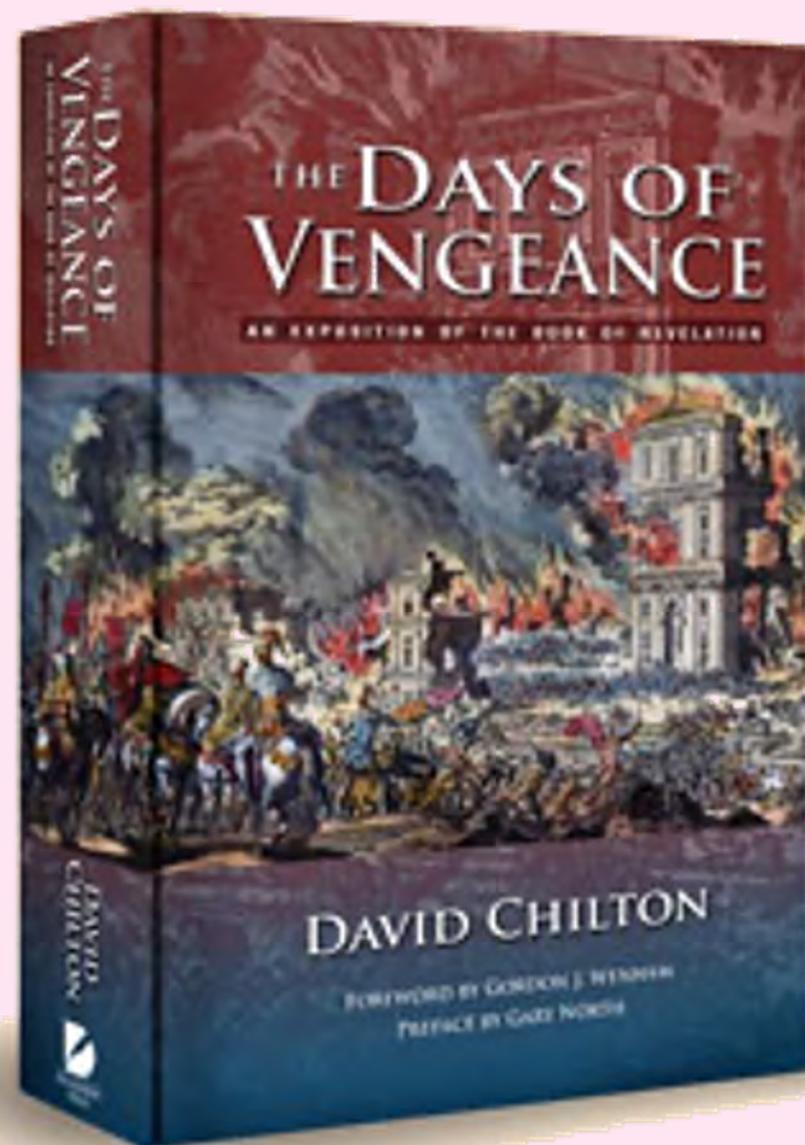


Critical to the position of the Radical Preterists is that they need to date Revelation before A.D. 70

A Radical Claim:

"The dating of the book of Revelation by the Church Fathers is wrong."

David Chilton



Church Fathers & Modern Scholars

- Church Fathers and most modern scholars concur with the date of A.D. 95/96.
- The Tribulation of Revelation does not refer to A.D. 70.



Revelation

Prologue

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the words of God and the testimony of Jesus' offspring—to the one who reads the words of this prophecy and to those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

One I saw dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever, and I shall die no more. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will not defile their robes. Then I saw the Holy Spirit and the seven angels standing around the throne, and the seven churches. The Spirit and the churches said, 'Come.' And I heard a voice saying, 'Come.' And the Spirit said to the churches, 'I will come to you and you will sit on my throne, and you will be my people, and you will worship me, and you will receive from me the Spirit and the bride's voice, and you will drink from the water of life free of charge.'

B. Internal evidence for dating Revelation before A.D. 70.

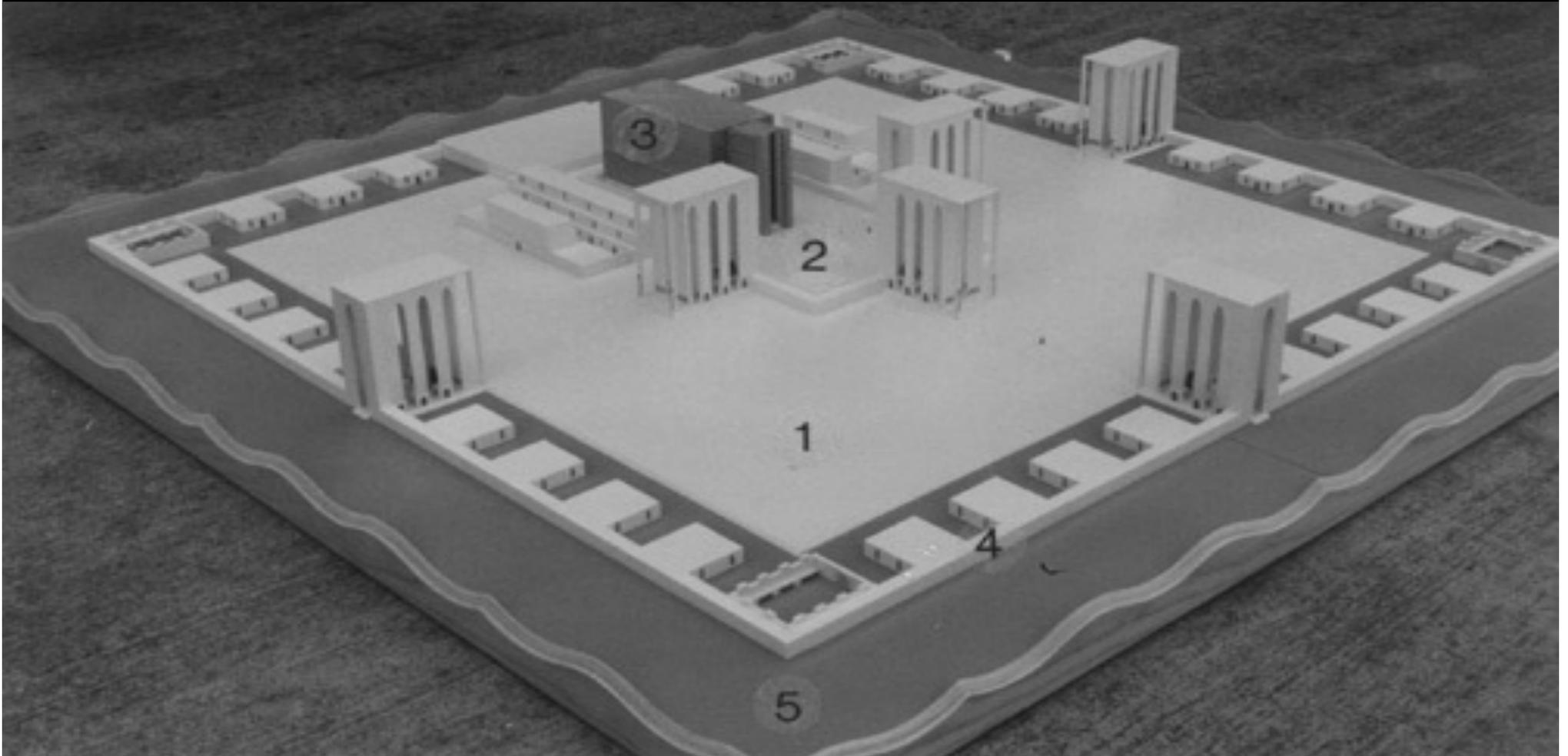


**Preterists see the temple in
Rev. 11:1-2 as still standing**

Response:

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The vision of the Temple in Ezekiel 40-48 was given when the temple in Jerusalem was already destroyed. In the same way, it is not necessary for the temple to be standing for John.



Was Jerusalem destroyed by this time?

Does 11:1-2 mean the temple still stood?

Then I was given a measuring stick, and I was told, "Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar and count the number of worshipers. ²But do not measure the outer courtyard..." (NLT)

1. No, this text refers to a literal future temple during the Tribulation.
2. This is a vision.
3. Also, the 7th bowl (16:17–21) does not picture "the great city" as entirely destroyed until after John's time, so it looked to a future destruction.

Rev. 13:18



Preterists see the number 666 in Rev. 13:18 as Nero, so Revelation must have been written during Nero's time

Response: Future Orientation



Rev. 1:1 and 4:1 state that John (the author) would be shown "what must **soon** take place" and "what must take place **after this**." This removes any doubt that the number of the beast must be future and not past or present.

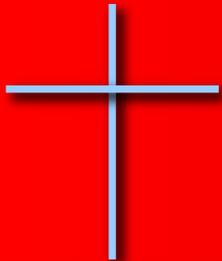
Rev. 17:10



Preterists see the "seven kings" as seven Roman kings from the first century. Then they argue that the sixth king is Nero.

When Did John Write Revelation?

Who was the Roman Emperor then?



Christ
Crucified
AD 33

Jerusalem
Destroyed
AD 70

Revelation
Written
AD 95

Tiberius
14-37

Caligula
37-41

Claudius
41-54

Nero
54-68

Vespasian
69-79

Titus
79-81

Domitian
81-96

Most
preterists
place the
book here

Supported by:
Irenaeus
Victorinus of Pettau
Clement of Alexandria
Eusebius

A marble bust of the Roman Emperor Nero, shown in profile facing right. He has thick, curly hair and a full beard. The bust is set against a dark background.

**Response: Why
can't Nero be
the 666?**

- **Nero exercised authority from AD 54-68, not for the required 42 months (Rev. 13:5).**
- **All inhabitants of the earth did not worship Nero (Rev. 13:8).**

Correlation with Daniel

Daniel 7:1-8

Revelation 13:1-2; 17:9-12

Four beasts (lion, bear, leopard, terrible beast with ten horns)

One beast that is like a leopard, bear, and lion (13:2) with ten horns (13:1; 17:3)

Seven heads representing four successive kingdoms

Seven heads representing seven successive kingdoms

Four kingdoms

Seven kingdoms

Ten horns (v. 7)

Ten horns (13:1; 17:3,12)

Eight Successive Kingdoms **(17:10-11)**

- 1. Egypt (Pharaohs)**
- 2. Assyria (Assyrian kings)**
- 3. Neo-Babylonia (Nebuchadnezzar)**
- 4. Medo-Persia (Cyrus)**
- 5. Greece (Alexander the Great)**
- 6. Rome (Caesars; "one is")**
- 7. Reunited Roman Empire (ten kings; "not yet")**
- 8. Final Gentile world kingdom (the Antichrist)**

Support for Successive Kingdoms View

**479-
480**

"The successive-kingdoms view avoids the nebulous nature of the symbolic view, is consistent with the Old Testament imagery from Daniel 7, and provides a consistent interpretation of the eight kings. For these reasons this is the preferred view. Therefore Revelation 17:9-11 offers no support for the early date of Revelation based on the idea that Nero is the sixth king."



Nero (A.D. 37-68)



Domitian (A.D. 81-96)

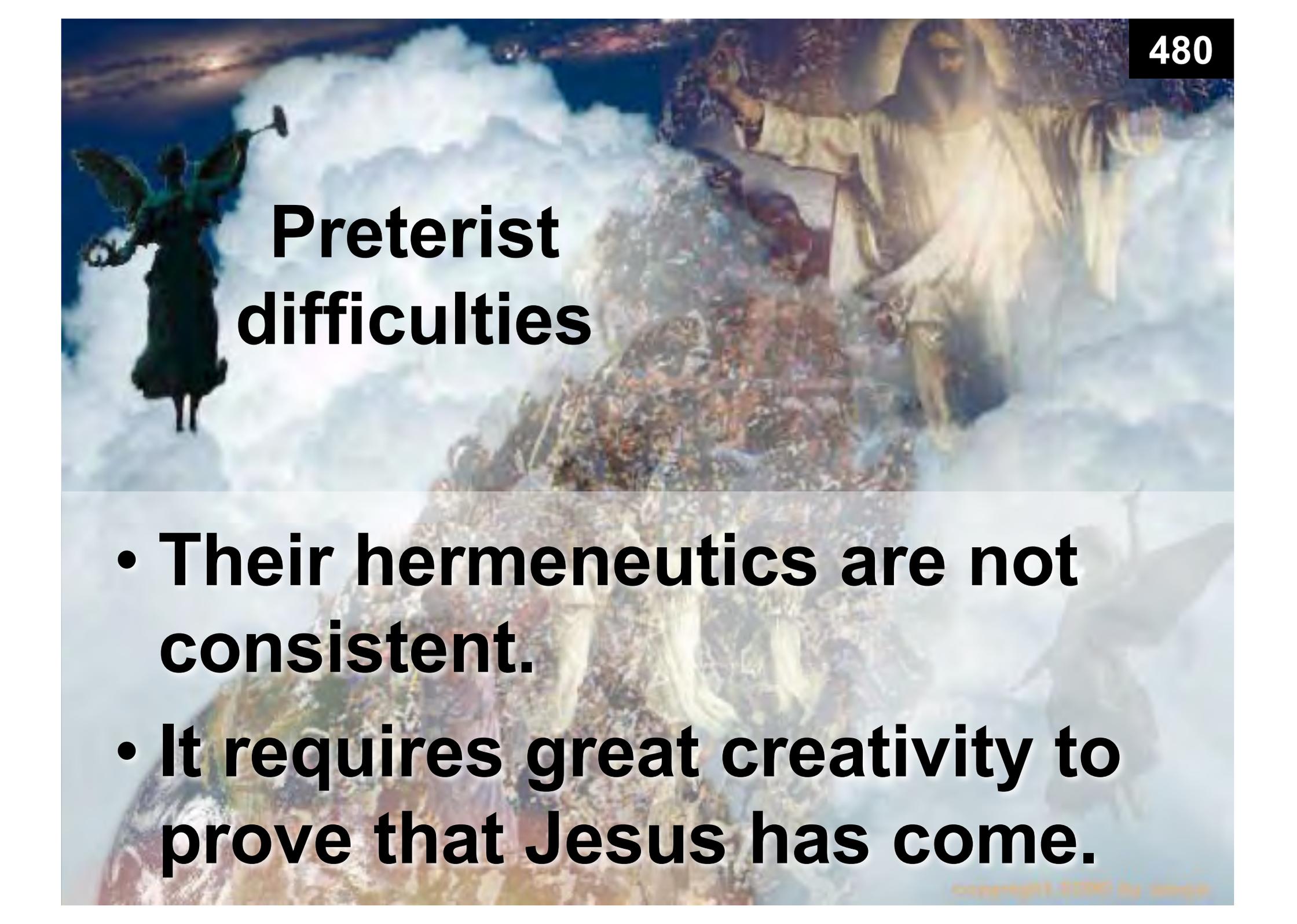
Rev. 17:10 has no reference to Nero or Domitian as Beale affirms.

C. The timing of fulfillment of the prophecies in Revelation

Preterists say words like "shortly" or "soon" relate to a short time (Rev. 1:1)



**However, they can't explain
"I am coming quickly"
(Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20)**



Preterist difficulties

- **Their hermeneutics are not consistent.**
- **It requires great creativity to prove that Jesus has come.**

A surreal landscape with a clock on a rock. The scene is dominated by a vast, desolate landscape of rolling hills and mountains under a dramatic, golden sunset sky. The colors are warm, ranging from deep oranges to bright yellows. In the foreground, a large, smooth rock sits on a hillside. Resting on the rock is a classic analog clock with a white face and black Roman numerals. The clock's hands are positioned to show a time around 10:10. The clock face has the words "Time Robber" printed on it. The overall mood is one of timelessness and mystery.

**D. The timing of the fulfillment of
Matthew 10:23, 16:28 and 24:34**

Their Claim



Radical Preterists use Matt. 10:23 as support that the Lord must come in the first century:
"When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next. I tell you the truth, the Son of Man will return before you have reached all the towns of Israel."



Response: 481
Pt. 1

"The evangelization of the rebellious nation of Israel will not be finished by them but will await His return, which is the point made by Paul (cf. Rom. 11:25-29) and the prophets (Zech. 12:10)"

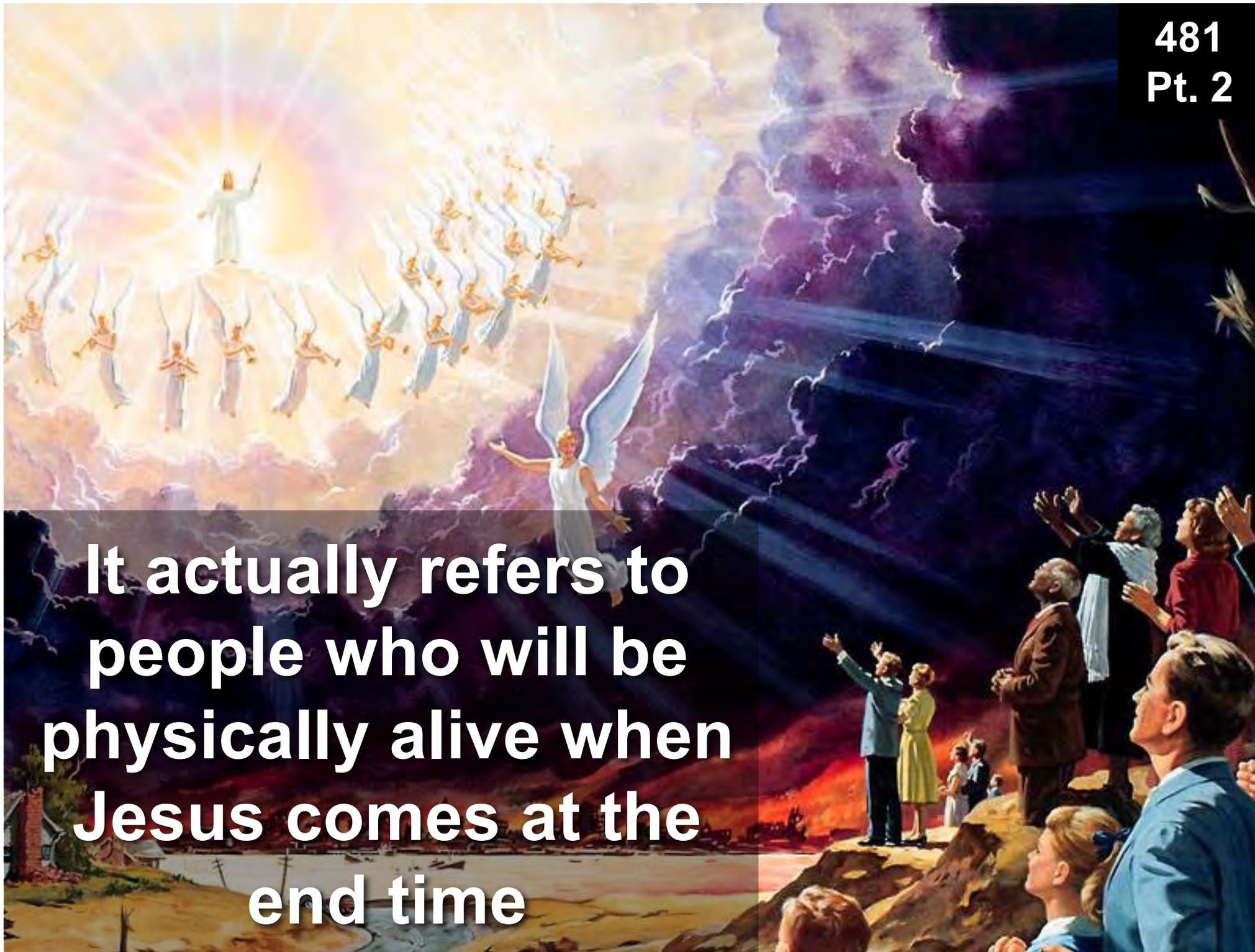


—Benware



**Radical Preterists see Matt.
16:28 as saying that Jesus will
come in that very generation**

**It actually refers to
people who will be
physically alive when
Jesus comes at the
end time**





**Preterists see "this generation" in
Matt. 24:34 as that particular
generation who heard Jesus**

END TIMES?

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Pt. 3

- "This generation" refers to a time period when the "birth pains begin" (Matt. 24:8).
- It will continue on until "the gospel is preached to the whole world" (Matt. 24:14).
- The "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel (Matt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 9:24-27) will have taken place.
- The "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) will have happened.
- Finally, "the Son of Man will come" (Matt. 24:27).



E. The Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24–25

**They view all or most of these
prophecies as fulfilled in the
Temple destruction of A.D. 70.**

Matt. 24:3



"Tell us, **when** will these things happen?"

Matt. 24:3



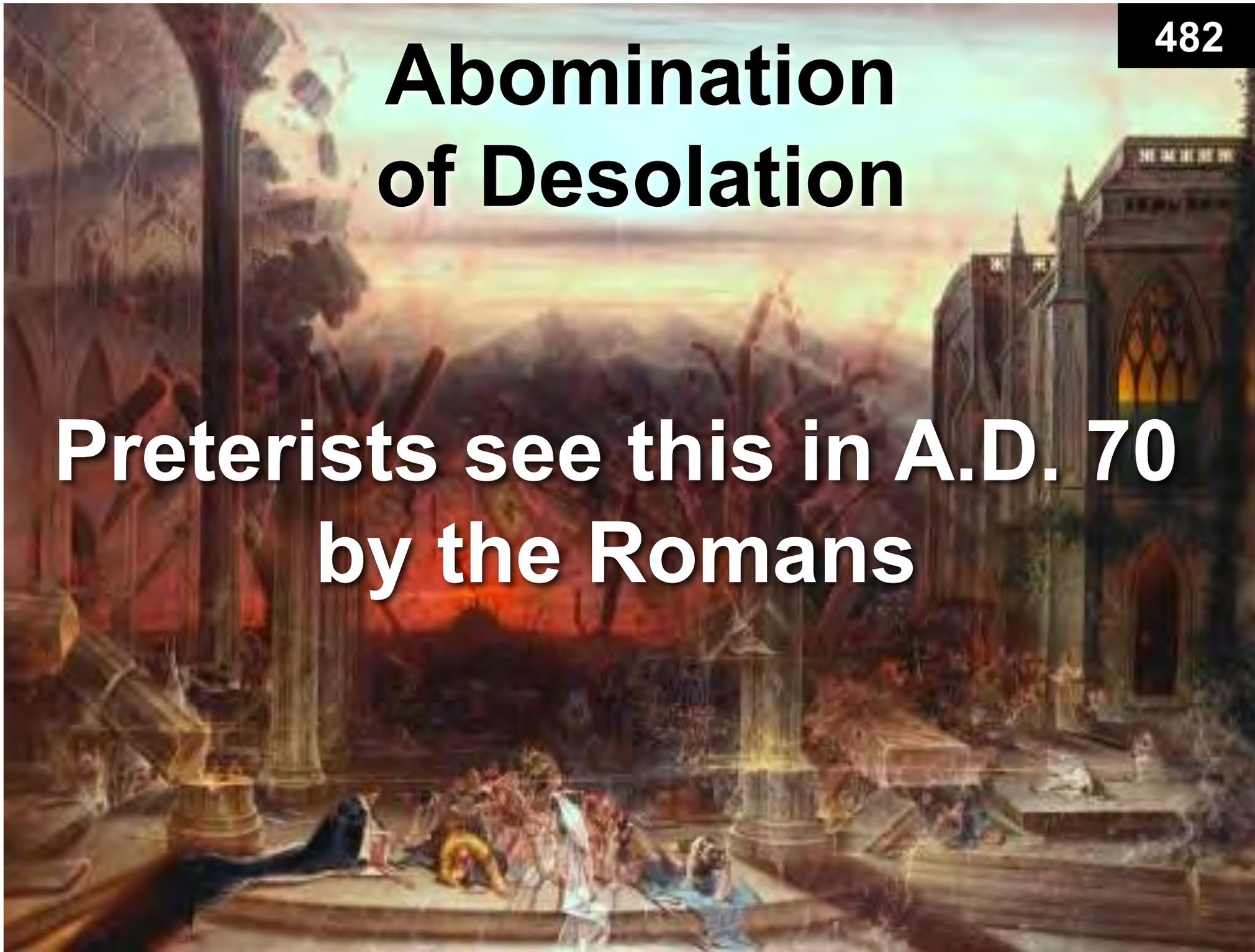
"What will be the **sign
of Your coming?"**

Matt. 24:3

"... and of the **end** of
the age?"

Abomination of Desolation

Preterists see this in A.D. 70
by the Romans



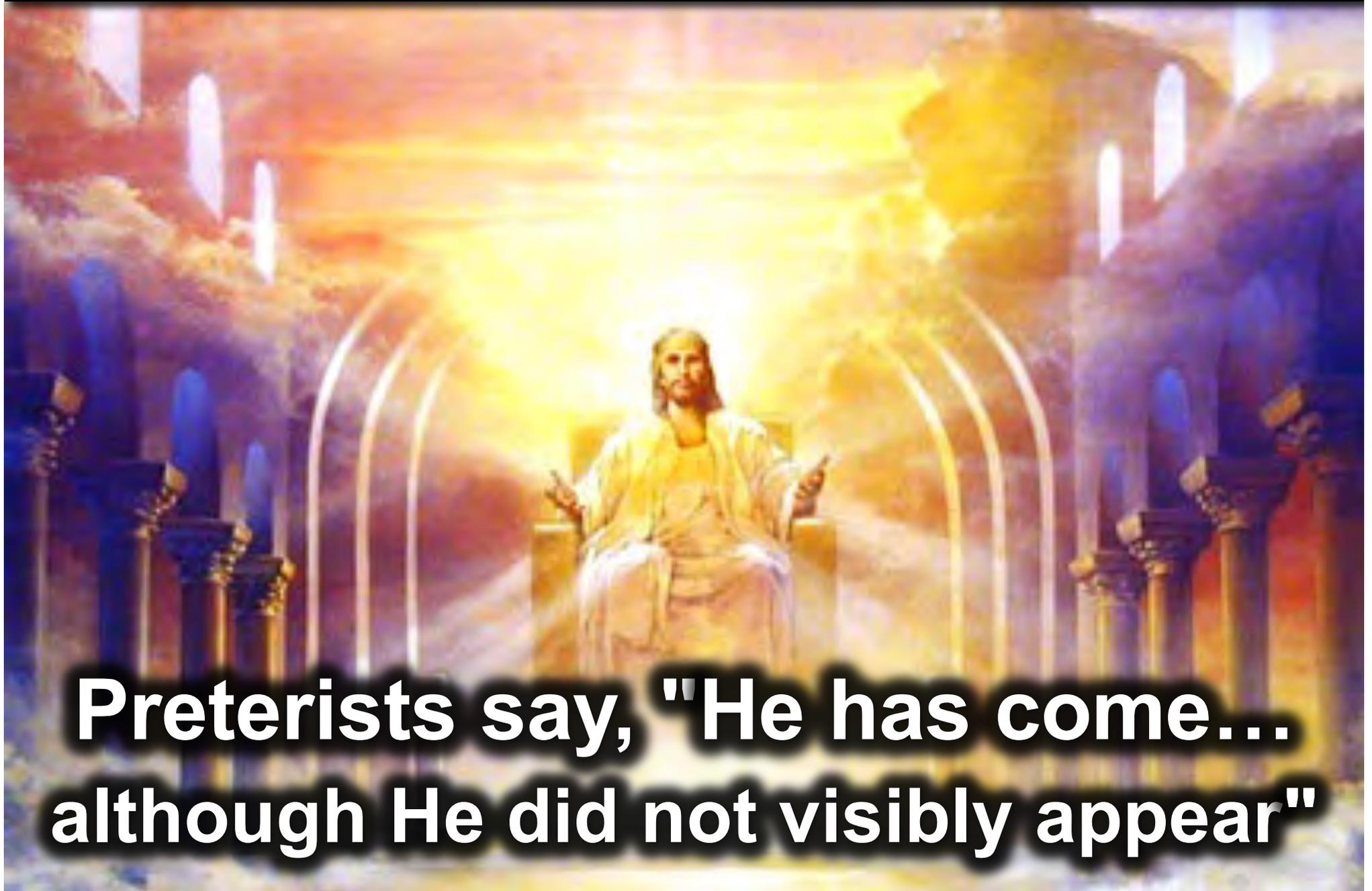
- Context of Matt. 24
- OT Prophets see it as future.
- Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

It could not have occurred!!!



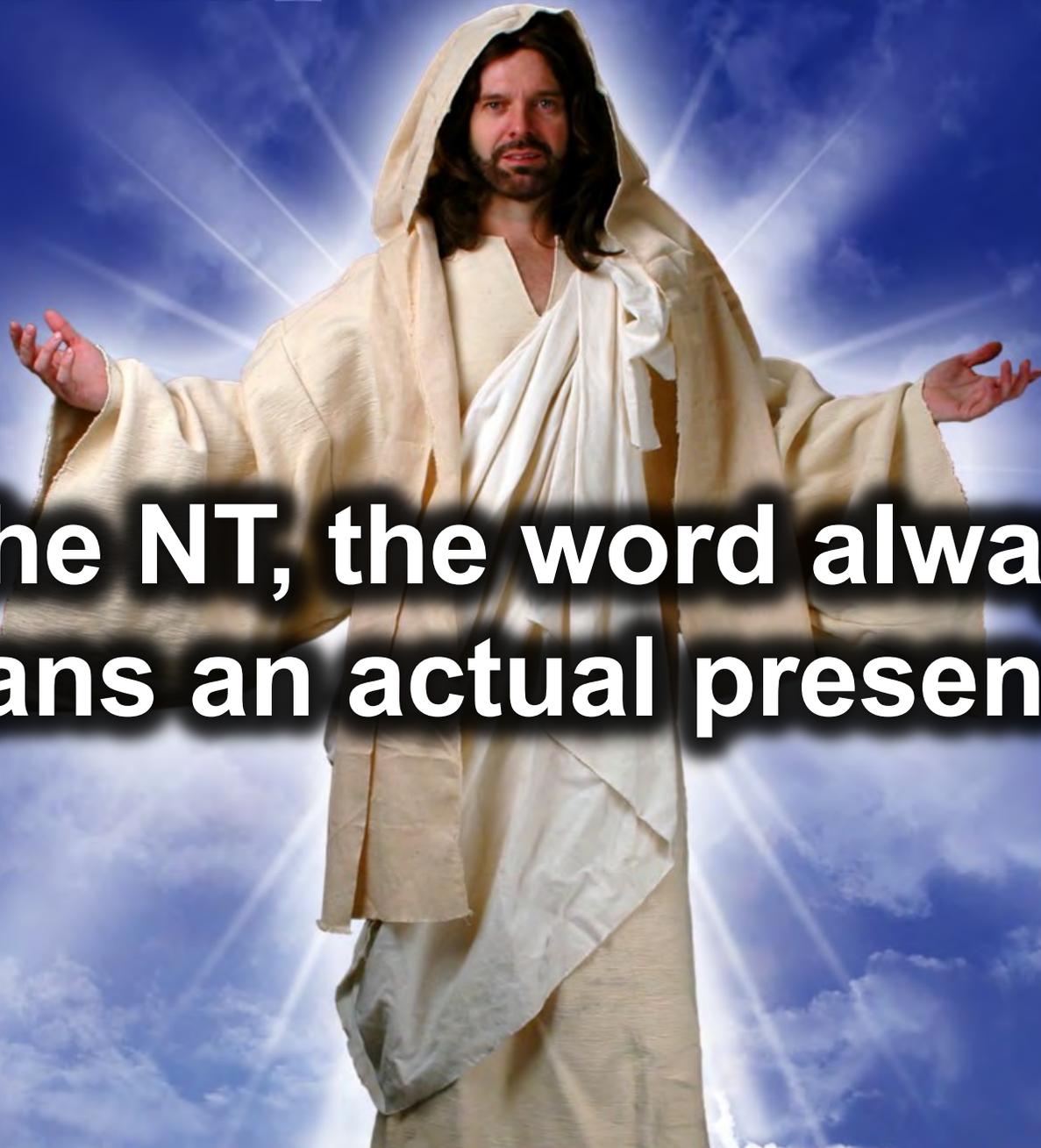
The Coming of Christ

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**Preterists say, "He has come...
although He did not visibly appear"**

παρουσία *parousia* (coming)



**In the NT, the word always
means an actual presence**

Preterists claim that the "signs in heaven" are only dramatic ways of expressing amazing cosmic signs, national calamity or victory in battle (a non-miraculous approach).

Are You Ready?

Rapture Ready.com

A surreal, dark blue and teal landscape. The foreground is dominated by large, crashing waves with white foam, appearing to be part of a vast, dark sea. The sky is a deep, dark teal, filled with wispy, ethereal clouds. In the upper left, a large, glowing sphere, possibly a planet or moon, is visible. Several bright, star-like points of light are scattered across the sky. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and otherworldly.

**They claim that cosmic signs
are not to be taken literally**

Rebuttals:

They are allegorizing the text

**The OT context is not taken
into account (Joel 2)**

Applications

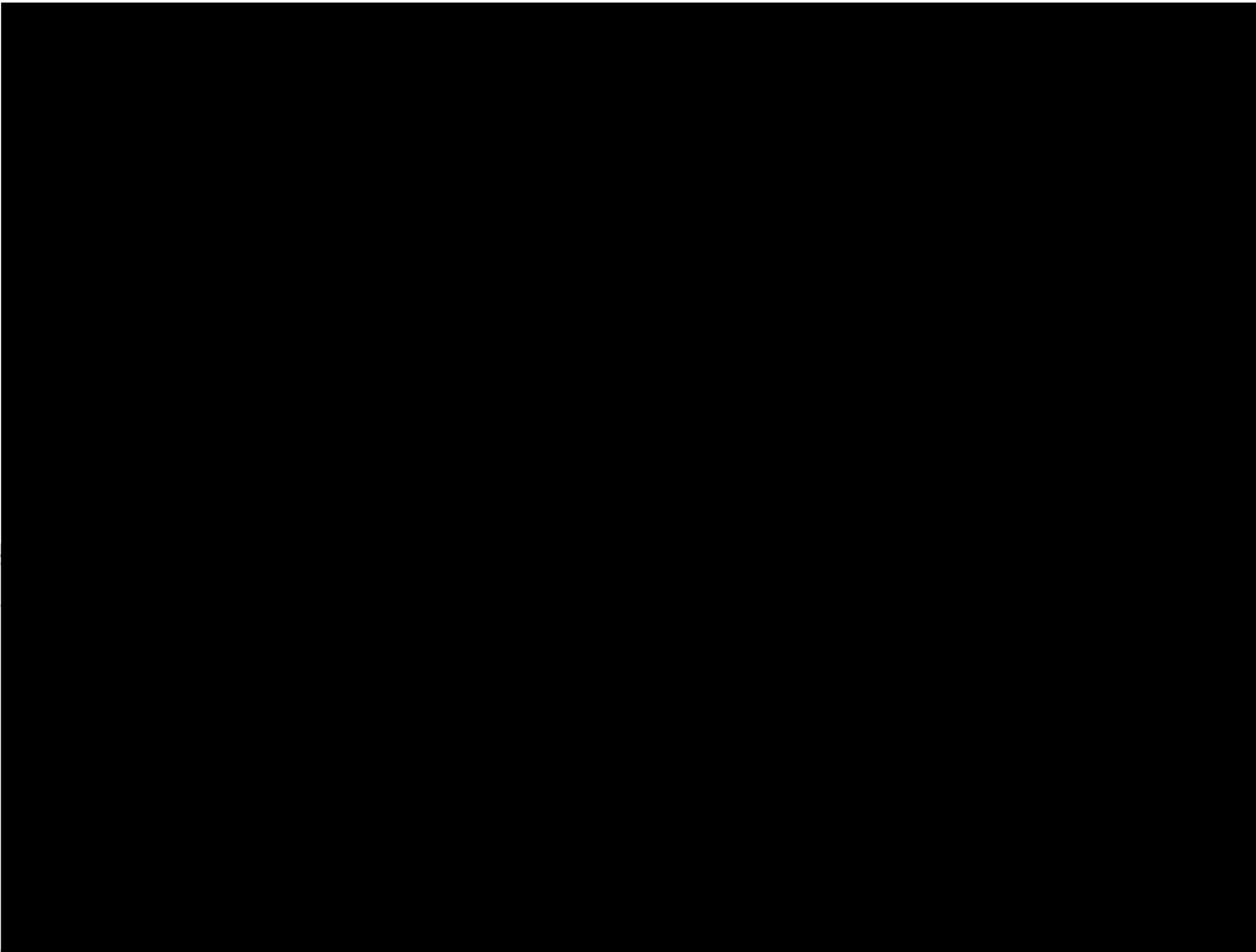
- Evaluate other perspectives, but...
- "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome" (2 Timothy 2:24)
- Giving critical evaluation to other views sheds light on your own view
- Teach the Scriptures

Conclusion

- Uphold the importance of:
 - Second Coming
 - Bodily resurrection
 - Day of the Lord
- "Therefore, be on the **alert** for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (Matt. 24:42).

**"Yes! I am coming soon!"
Amen! Come Lord Jesus!
The grace of the Lord Jesus
be with God's people.
Amen.**





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