

The middle way

between preterism and dispensationalism

Left - Preterism	Center - Biblical view	Right - Dispensationalism
<p>Preterism was one of the alternative views on the interpretation of the prophecies of Revelation that was developed by the Jesuits in response to the Reformers' interpretations that identified the papacy with Antichrist. Spanish priest Luis De Alcazar (1554-1613) proposed that Revelation chapters 1-11 described the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; chapters 12-19 were about the overthrow of Roman paganism (the great harlot) and the conversion of the empire to the church; chapter 20 describes the final persecutions by Antichrist, who is identified as Caesar Nero (54-68 A.D.), and judgment. Chapters 21-22 describe the triumph of the New Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic Church.</p>	<p>The spiritual view of prophecy represents the traditional view of the church.</p>	<p>Dispensationalism is based on an approach to the prophecies of Revelation developed by Jesuit priest Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) in order to counter the Reformers' interpretations that identified the papacy with Antichrist. It has become dominant among Protestant Christians especially in America. Its supporters promote Zionism.</p>
	<p>Jesus has been given all power, and reigns as King over all. [Matthew 28:18]</p>	<p>Dispensationalism denies that Christ reigns now; instead, it claims that Satan rules the world.</p>
<p>Preterism claims that in Matthew 24:34, "this generation" means those alive in the generation of Jesus, and so is limited to the first century AD.</p>	<p>In Matthew 24:34, "this generation" means the generation of Jesus; since he rose from the grave, his generation still exists!</p>	<p>Dispensationalist authors claim that in Matthew 24:34, "this generation" means those alive in 1948, when the Jews founded the state of Israel.</p>
<p>Preterism sees the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans as the dominant theme fulfilling the prophecies of Jesus and Revelation.</p>	<p>The spiritual view of prophecy sees the church, and the gospel, as the principal subjects.</p>	<p>Dispensationalism sees the founding of the modern state of Israel as important in fulfilling prophecies that refer to Israel.</p>
	<p>The prophecies of scripture were given in another tongue, which is the language of metaphor, and parable. "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets." [Hosea 12:10]</p>	<p>Supporters of dispensationalism insist that prophecies in scripture must be interpreted literally, but they make many exceptions.</p>
<p>Bible prophecy is mostly about the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century AD, and events described by Josephus, the Jewish historian.</p>	<p>The prophets ministered <i>unto us</i>, that is, the church. [1 Peter 1:12]</p>	<p>The church is nowhere mentioned in Old Testament prophecy, according to dispensationalism. In fact, the church age is a "great parenthesis" in God's plan, which is mainly about the destiny of ethnic Jews.</p>

Left - Preterism	Center - Biblical view	Right - Dispensationalism
	All the promises were fulfilled in Christ; the land promises in the Old Testament represent the eternal inheritance or "rest" promised to the saints. [2 Corinthians 1:20]	The land promises in the Old Testament apply to ethnic Jews, and remain to be fulfilled.
The Jews were punished in 70 AD for crucifying their Messiah, according to this view.	Jesus took on himself the sins of all men, even of those in previous ages, who murdered the prophets and righteous men.	
The events foretold for the "day of the Lord" all occurred in the first century, when Jerusalem was destroyed, so we don't need to look for the "day of the Lord" today.	Judgment is on the church now. [1 Peter 4:17]	The church is not the object of "the wrath of God," so we don't need to look for the "day of the Lord."
The great tribulation came upon the Jews in the first century AD.	The great tribulation refers to the judgment of the world.	The great tribulation comes upon the world, not the church, which will be raptured to heaven, and so will escape the troubles that will befall the rest of the world.
	The church becomes desolate, and the saints scattered, before the Spirit is poured out upon it.	144,000 Jewish men will convert to Christianity and become evangelists during the tribulation. All will be virgins.
The prophecies Jesus gave in Matthew 24 were fulfilled in the same generation that Jesus was part of, within the first century AD.	All the prophecies will be fulfilled in Jesus' generation. Since Jesus remains alive, his generation exists forever.	Most of the prophecies will be fulfilled in the generation of those alive when the Jewish state was founded in 1948.
The 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 was completely fulfilled in the first century AD.	The 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 has no gaps; the last half week is symbolic, and represents the present age, and is not yet complete.	Dispensationalism invokes a gap in the 70 weeks prophecy between the 69th and 70th weeks.
	The kingdom of God is spiritual, and is already here; it is the church. The church is the Israel of God in the New Testament. The prophets and saints of the Old Testament are included in the church's foundation.	The church, and Israel, are always separate and distinct in scripture.
	The Gog and Magog invasion is an invasion of the church by worldly people, along with their flawed interpretations.	The Gog and Magog invasion is a modern army, probably including Iran and Russia, that invades the Jewish state.
The prophecies of Revelation were written before 70 AD. They were to happen "shortly" rather than in the distant future, so most were fulfilled in the first century, and especially in 70 AD.	The prophecies in Revelation apply to the present age.	Most of the prophecies in Revelation apply to Jews in the future 7 year tribulation. During that time, Jews must begin to live by the Sermon on the Mount.

Left - Preterism	Center - Biblical view	Right - Dispensationalism
Antichrist was Nero, or perhaps Simon Magus.	Antichrist is a spiritual adversary, who will be overcome by Christ and the saints.	Antichrist refers to a human individual who will reign in a literal Jewish temple that is yet to be built. Animal sacrifices will be restored in a new Jewish temple in the future, and then interrupted by the Antichrist figure.
The temple in Revelation 11:1-2 refers to the literal temple at Jerusalem before 70 AD.	The temple in Revelation 11:1-2 represents the church. By measuring it, John alludes to Ezekiel's prophecy, which describes the Spirit of God residing in the temple forever.	The temple in Revelation 11:1-2 refers to a literal temple at Jerusalem yet to be built.
	The woman in Revelation 12 represents the church.	The woman in Revelation 12 represents the Jews, not the church.
The 1,260 days possibly represents the time of the siege of Jerusalem. Or else it refers to the three and a half years following the crucifixion. Its significance went unnoticed by the apostles.	The 1,260 days represent the entire age of the church.	The 1,260 days are a literal three and a half years, when the Antichrist reigns in Jerusalem.
	The two witnesses represent the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, which witness to Christ during the church age.	The two witnesses are two humans with supernatural powers who will preach in Jerusalem for three and a half years while the Antichrist touts himself as God in the rebuilt Jewish temple.
The Mount of Olives being cleaved in the midst represents the way being opened for Gentiles to come in to the church when the law is removed. Preterists quote Matthew Henry, who said, "The mountain being divided, one-half towards the north and the other half towards the south, there shall be a very great valley, that is, a broad way of communication opened between Jerusalem and the Gentile world, by which the Gentiles shall have free admission into the gospel-Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord, that goes forth from Jerusalem, shall have a free course into the Gentile world."	The Mount of Olives becoming cleaved in the midst, and the two halves moving in opposite directions, in Zechariah 14, represents two opposite interpretations of the Olivet Discourse of Jesus: preterism and dispensationalism. Zechariah says, flee to the valley between the two halves of the mountain, meaning apply the Olivet Discourse, and Zechariah's prophecy, to the present age, rather than a future one, or one that is already past. [Zechariah 14:5]	The Mount of Olives is cleaved in the midst when Christ returns to deliver the Jews. When his feet touch down on it there is a great earthquake and people in Jerusalem flee <i>towards</i> the zone of these great earth movements.