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Preterism Problems

We're concluding our framework study with a section on eschatology. This is the conclusion of our overview of church history because we wanted to see that the Lord Jesus Christ has been actively teaching His church the last 2,000 years. He hasn't just been sitting on His duff at the right hand of the Father. There is an active teaching ministry that Jesus Christ is carrying on from heaven through His agent on earth, the Holy Spirit. In the last 300-400 years He has brought to our attention the issues of ecclesiology and eschatology. And if you screw up in ecclesiology you'll have no hope in the area of eschatology. If the Church is confused with Israel then your whole eschatological framework is already determined. You have to be amillennial or postmillennial. Preterism is an eschatology that is basically amillennial or postmillennial. It has to be. What's amillennialism? Amillennialism says that Christ died, Satan was bound, the Kingdom of God is the Church and it goes on until the return of Christ and that's it; it's a very simple picture. Or you can be postmillennial. What's that? Postmillennialism is that Christ died, the gospel goes out, the world gets better and better and better until the kingdom is brought in, then Jesus comes and says, thanks boys, I'll take it over from here and then that's it. So they're kind of similar in that sense.

The problem with this view is that if this is the Church Age, the question is what happened to the program with Israel? What happened to the program with the Gentile nations? Since the Church was never clarified, the Church kind of becomes a surrogate for Israel. The Church replaces Israel in these schemes. Then the prophecies that are given in the OT are fulfilled to the Church. But the problem is that to fulfill these prophecies to the Church you have to allegorize the prophecies. Why? Because Israel was a national entity. Is the Church a national entity? No. Israel was a nation with a land. Does the Church have a land? No. So when you take prophecies that relate to this

nation and this land and have them fulfilled to an entity that is not a nation and has no land some stretching of the text has to go on. So maybe you turn the land of Israel into a type which has as its antitype heaven. There's not going to really be a national Israel restored to a promised land. That's all earthly and fleshly; the heavenly and spiritual meaning is the Church going to heaven. The problem with that is now you're employing a very interesting hermeneutic to draw that conclusion.

What do we mean by hermeneutics? We mean the rules of interpreting literature. There are grammatical-historical rules to follow. One of the rules is that the meaning of terms in a prophecy remain constant until the prophecy is fulfilled. In other words, if the meaning of land in the Abrahamic Covenant is physical land with physical borders then you can't change that 2000 years later into a spiritual land called heaven. What kind of integrity would someone have if they did that to you in a contractual arrangement? Say you buy a home and you take a loan out from the bank. There's a contract there and you sign the contract, they sign the contract. The contract is between you and who? You and the bank. That contract says you have certain obligations to meet and the bank has certain obligations to meet. That's a covenant or contract. In that contract it says you have to make a monthly payment for 30 years. You can't say 10 years later, well I thought it just meant that I had to pay it off in 30 years. No you have to make a payment each month or eventually they take the house away. So how stupid to think that you can come into a contract and change the meaning of the terms to fit what you like. Yet theologians get away with it all the time when it comes to the biblical covenants. Does land mean land or not? Does national Israel mean national Israel or the Church? Why people let them get away with it I'll never know. But they do. Wouldn't it be great if the bank would let us get away with it on our mortgage? Well, that's not reality because the reality is this is a contract and the meaning of the terms in the contract must remain constant for the duration of the contract so we can measure the parties faithfulness to the contract!

Now the argument is that if you consistently follow a grammatical-historical hermeneutic then you will be a premillennialist. Right here I have a quote from amillennialist Floyd Hamilton because people say, well, that's just your view. No it's not, here's an amillennialist saying this, not a premillennialist, this guy disagrees with us but he says, "Now we must frankly admit that a

literal interpretation of the OT prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the Premillennialists pictures. That was the kind of Messianic kingdom that the Jews of the time of Christ were looking for, on the basis of a literal kingdom interpretation of the OT promises.” So there it is. Premillennialism is consistent to literal interpretation. That’s a hallmark of premillennialism. What’s premillennialism? Christ comes to earth before the Kingdom. So you have the cross, Jesus ascends, the Spirit descends, the Church begins, it goes on, Christ comes back and then the 1,000 year kingdom on earth comes. After the 1,000 years history ends and we go into the eternal state.

That’s history and preterism has fastened itself on to amillennialism and postmillennialism. Here’s why, because if you take the prophecies literally the Church Age ends in a disaster. The Church Age is not going to end nicely. This is bad news for anybody who sees history flow smoothly, so in order to deal with this, what these people do is they change the rules of interpretation and they try to reinterpret passages like Matt 24 and the Book of Revelation. We said last week that Matt 24, the Olivet Discourse, is largely seen as fulfilled in AD70; the entire book of Revelation is seen as fulfilled in AD70. Then we tried to show some of the problems of preterism.

The first problem was that Jesus did not come back the way He said He would in AD70. How did he say He would come back? In Acts 1 you have the two angels and they say, hey guys, what are you staring at? He will come back in the same way He departed. So how did He depart? He went up and disappeared into the clouds. So how will He return? On the clouds of heaven. His feet will come down and touch planet earth. Did that happen in AD70? Oh well, everybody missed it. The most important event of all history and everybody missed it? That doesn’t fit. Does Jesus Christ coming through the Roman Armies of Titus to judge the nation Israel satisfy the text of Acts 1:11? I don’t think so. And it does not require heavy Bible study to grasp we have a problem here. This simply does not fit. So the first objection to preterism is that their concept of the return of Jesus Christ doesn’t fit the requirements of the text.

The second problem was that the terms “soon,” “at hand,” and “about to,” that word group, do not require a near time frame understanding. Here’s where they claim they’re being literal and we’re being allegorical. I’m sorry, but the

lexicons say there are two literal meanings of these terms and the meaning in a given passage is determined by the context. So don't blame me. Here's George Eldon Ladd, Ladd is not a preterist but he's not exactly in our camp either, but listen to his remarks. He's talking about these so called time phrases and he says, "Others have interpreted the phrase to mean "these events must soon begin"; others "they must certainly begin"; still others, "they must swiftly take place"; that is, once the events begin, the end will come quickly." It's that last meaning that we are claiming and it's a completely legitimate meaning. You can't insist on one of the other meanings. The other meanings are possible meanings. But the meaning you decide is the correct one is the one determined by context. And we think that the context of these terms is designed to convey imminence, that these things can befall the world at any-moment. A completely legitimate meaning. Preterism says no, no, no, we don't like that, you're being allegorical. No, we're not.

Now we come to their favorite verse, Matt 24:34. When all else fails just quote Matt 24:34, the rest is details. This is their trump verse. They quote it like a mantra. In verse 34 Jesus says, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Can you see the problem that they think we have here? If this generation isn't going to pass away until all these things are fulfilled, and all these things refers to the events of Matt 24:4-31, the false Christ's, the earthquakes, the wars, the abomination of desolation, the second coming, then they say, these things must be fulfilled before that generation passed away. Therefore all these things happened between AD30, the crucifixion of Jesus and AD70, the destruction of Jerusalem. All of Matt 24:4-31 is done; you should not expect any of this in the future. The Second Coming already happened. So how do we interpret "this generation?" Doesn't that mean Christ's contemporaries? Doesn't that mean the disciples he was talking to there on Mt Olivet? That's their argument for why "all these things" Matt 24 and the Book of Revelation, had to have happened within the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries.

How do we respond to this? Charles Clough says, "A favorite proof-text centers upon the identity of 'this generation' in Matthew 24:34. Preterists ask these questions: is not 'this generation' in Matthew 24:34 the same group of people being addressed by Jesus since the last contextual use of the phrase 'this generation' (Matt 23:36)..." that's the previous chapter and part of Bible study is you always go to the context. So if you go to Matt 23:36 they say, see,

look, Jesus almost uses exact same verbiage. He's condemning the national leadership of Israel and there He says, "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." Clearly a judgment of Israel for their rejection. Yes, we agree, so what? Well since the last usage of "this generation" in Matt 23:36 referred to Jesus' contemporaries then how is it that you futurists say the usage in Matt 24:34 refers to a future generation of Israel? Wouldn't He have said "that generation?"

Well, the short answer is because the contexts are different. If you look at Matt 24:33 he's going to use the second person plural you and He's using it of the nation Israel. In fact, if you go into Deut 30, one of the passages we looked at when we developed Israel's eschatology you find lo and behold, Moses refer to future generations of Israel by these second person plurals. He says things like, when all these things come upon you Israel, the blessing and the curse and when you call them to mind...so this is not like some kind of do-do way of interpreting the text, this has precedence. Look at what he says in v 33, "so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." What generation? Verse 33, the generation that sees all these things. The context is not saying you disciples *will* see these things, the text is saying the generation that does see these things. What things? All the things in Matt 24. So you say, well who saw the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION in AD70? Exactly. That's our point. Nobody saw it. Well, Nero; Nero committed the abomination of desolation by commissioning Vespasian to take the armies to Jerusalem and destroy it. So they try to force fit things around AD70 into the text and get Israel destroyed, out of the way so the Church can take over. The problem with that, one of the problems is that Israel isn't destroyed in Matt 24. Israel is saved in Matt 24. Notice verse 31, this is at the Second Coming. "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." If you look in your margin you'll see that's a quote from the OT. Does anyone see Deut 30:4 in that list of citations? Hold your place and turn there. This is a passage we went through a few weeks ago. This is why it's so important to study the OT prophecy first, that way when you come to the NT you realize there's already a prophetic picture so it gives you a base for interpreting these things Jesus said. Notice Deut 30:1, "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I

have set before you,” by the way, is that Moses talking about his contemporaries? No, this is Moses talking to a generation of Israel centuries later. The nation would be blessed, they would be cursed, they would face the ultimate curse of Exile, thousands of years later. And he says when you’re out there, “and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, ²and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, ³then the LORD your God *will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴“If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.”* What did Jesus say in Matt 24:31? I’m going to gather you from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. The only thing Jesus adds in Matt 24 is the vehicle for doing this will be angels. Now, did Jesus fulfill this in AD70? Did Jesus send angels out to regather Israel and restore them to their land? No, He did not do that. So should we still expect Jesus to do that? If Jesus is the way, the truth and the life we should. Preterists say no, Matt 24 is about the destruction of Israel not the salvation of Israel. I’m sorry but Jesus says it’s about the salvation of Israel not the destruction of Israel. Preterist say the exact opposite of Jesus!

So then when Jesus says “this generation will not pass away until all these things take place,” the context indicates that it’s talking about the generation that sees all these things, not Jesus’ contemporaries. Jesus’ contemporaries didn’t see any of these things. However we can also make a grammatical point about Matt 24:34. The word “this” is what we call a pronoun, but it’s a specific kind of pronoun called a demonstrative pronoun. And you have two demonstrative pronouns, we have them in our language too so this isn’t anything new. One type are the *near demonstrative pronouns*, “this” and “these,” spatially or temporally you’re referring to something close to you when you say “this” car” or “these” cars,” those are near demonstratives; you use them when you’re referring to something close to you. The other pair are *far demonstrative pronouns*, “that” and “those,” you use those when you’re referring to something far away like “that car” or “those cars.” That’s not too hard. If you’re pointing at a bunch of hot air balloons flying in the distance you don’t say “this hot air balloon,” you say “that one.” Why do you say “that one” and not “this one?” Because it’s far away from where you are standing. So the preterist argument in v 34 is obvious, Jesus says “this generation”

because He's standing in close proximity to the generation that's not going to pass away until all these things take place, that is, Jesus' contemporaries. Besides it is argued, in Matt 23:36 that it does refer to Jesus' contemporaries, so now why all of a sudden are you changing your tune?

At this point in Jesus' answer to their questions He has a generation of Israel in mind that sees these things. And at this point He is positioning Himself among the generation that sees them. He has launched himself forward into history and is now standing in the future among the generation that sees these things, for if He had been in the present looking into the future, He would have said "that generation will not go away until those things are fulfilled."

Now people say, that sounds kind of strange. How do you prove that Jesus has moved into the future and is speaking to a future generation of Israel that sees these things? What's your evidence? Do you know of any other examples where Jesus does that? Well, no, I don't, but I do know of many examples of OT prophets doing that and Jesus is talking in the same way as the OT prophets. Sometimes they speak of a prophecy from the present and look into the far distant future and at other times they position themselves in the far distant future and speak as if they are in the midst of the prophetic events. So the expression "this generation" does refer to a present generation, it's just that Jesus has positioned himself among the generation that sees these things, so from His perspective they are present. And what this means then is that the generation that sees these things is not going to pass away before all the things take place, that is, they will happen in a relatively short period of time. If we went to Dan 9:27 we'd say this is the 70th week of Daniel so all these things will take place in just seven years, they're not going to drag on for years and years and years. When they start they are going to be fulfilled rather quickly, within a generation.

Now let's go to Zeph 1 to show that Jesus is doing nothing more than what all the prophets of old did. Everyday speech as well as eschatological texts often show that the speaker shifts his location relative to the objects that are spoken of. Zeph 1 is a case, we could go to hundreds of cases but we'll just go to two. If you look in verse 8, "Then it will come about on the day of the Lord's sacrifice that I will punish the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments." This is a prophecy of Judah's military

defeat which occurred at the hands of the Babylonians. Verse 9, “And I will punish on that day” that day, notice, is that a near day or a far day, is that nearby or far away, it’s far away, “that day,” a future day. Now watch, “I will punish on that day all who leap on the *temple* threshold,” Now are they leaping on the temple threshold at that moment? No, it’s still a future day. But what he’s doing is filling up imagery in your mind of what it’s like in that future day. Let’s go on, “Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit.” Notice here he doesn’t say they *will fill* the house of the lord, he simply says, who fill it, as if he’s standing there watching them do it. See how the author has transported us into the future to see this. Notice verse 10, this one’s really vivid. “On that day,” declares the LORD, “There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, A wail from the Second Quarter, And a loud crash from the hills.” That one does use will, they will, future, so now the author is back in the present looking into the future, but not in verse 9. See how he’s jumping around from present to future, back to present. In verse 11 he’s transported into the future again. “Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar,” he’s now giving a future people a command. Then he’s right back in the present, “For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off. ¹²“It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, “The LORD will not do good or evil!” And we won’t go through it all but you see him switching back and forth. Do you see how appropriate it would have been to that situation?

Now I want to show you where the demonstrative, this shifting back and forth, occurs explicitly. It’s implicit in these passages like Zeph 1 where you see the shifting back and forth. In Jeremiah 4:9 we have the demonstrative pronouns explicitly used. “It shall come about in that day,” so again, where is the author with respect to that day? He’s in the present, he’s looking into the distant future. “that the heart of the king and the heart of the princes will fail; and the priests will be appalled and the prophets will be astounded.” No problem, this is all a future prophecy. Verse 10, “Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Surely You have utterly deceived *this* people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘You will have peace’; whereas a sword touches the throat.” And watch it, here it comes in verse 11, “In *that* time it will be said to *this* people and to Jerusalem,” in that time it will be said to this people, there’s a far time but a near people. What people? The people in Jeremiah’s day or the yet future people? The yet future people. Yet he uses the near demonstrative, he doesn’t say in that time

it will be said to that people, he says in that time, speaking from the present perspective of the future and then he says, this people, speaking from the present perspective but in the future, he's standing right there saying this to that future generation. Do you see the shift? We could go on and on about this. The problem is that in prophecy you have this shifting back and forth, "that" to "this," and it's just the nature of prophecy. That's just the way the OT is structured in text after text after text.

So the conclusion, "Preterists think that Jesus throughout all of His discourse in Matthew 24 never moves away from a present-centered perspective. In such a perspective 'this' and 'these' would refer to things near in time, that is, things that would come upon His contemporary generation, "and 'that' and those' would refer to things in the future. Indeed, Jesus has this present-centered perspective when speaking of the future time of His coming. He uses 'that' and 'those' in such expressions as 'those days' and 'that' hour (24:19, 22, 29, 36)." I deliberately had you look back at Zeph 1 and Jer 4 because I wanted you to observe that in prophecy they'll often say "in that day," "in that time." Jesus follows exactly that OT technique when He's talking about "in that day" such and such will happen. He's doing exactly what Zephaniah did, Jeremiah did, and all the prophets did. Why? Because He's Jewish and He operates within the same prophetic framework and understanding as the Semitic peoples of the OT.

In Matt 24:34 the immediately preceding context of verse 33 insists that Jesus is *no longer standing in the present looking to the future but in the future looking at its features 'close up.'* Therefore it is the generation that sees these things that will not pass away until all has been fulfilled. So that's how we respond to their key proof text. It has contextual evidence, it has precedence from the OT so I see no problem.

A fourth problem with preterism is that it sees no gap of time between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel. Turn to Dan 9. We've already looked at this prophecy two or three times. This is a very, very critical OT prophecy, it happened toward the end of the OT. We said that Matt 24 and the Book of Revelation are actually expansions of Dan 9:27; it's a prophecy of the seventy weeks or seventy sevens - the Hebrew word translated weeks is the word sevens. They're groups of seven years. Look at verse 25. Here he gives the beginning of the clock, when the countdown begins, "So you are to know and

discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks,” seven plus sixty-two is sixty-nine; sixty-nine of these groups of seven years, which is 483 years. That’s the amount of time between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince. And then, very clearly in Dan 9:26 the Hebrew text says there is a gap of time after the 69th week during which some things happen, then verse 27 the 70th week begins. Preterists deny that gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. They say the 69th week flows continuously into the 70th week. Notice verse 26, “Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week...” Now preterists agree that the Messiah being cut off is the crucifixion and they agree this describes the Roman armies coming to destroy the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. But they disagree that these things happen in a gap of time between the 69th and 70th weeks. They say they occur within the 70th week. So for them it’s just continuous, the 69th week goes directly into the 70th week, there’s no break, no gap. So inside the 70th week they argue Jesus was crucified and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. So there fourth problem is they don’t recognize the gap that verse 26 clearly introduces. It says “after,” it doesn’t say the crucifixion occurs within the 70th week, it occurs after the 69th week. And there’s no mention of the 70th week until verse 27 when a treaty is made.

Now flowing out of this problem is the fifth problem, their refusal to recognize a gap forces them to allegorize the 70th week. Preterists agree that the sixty-nine weeks are literal, each one is seven years, because we know they literally happened, but the 70th week is stretched out to equal 40 years. He’s got to do that because he’s put the crucifixion inside the 70th week which is AD30 and he’s also put the destruction of Jerusalem in that same 70th week but it didn’t occur until AD70. So the 70th week has to span from at least AD30-AD70 which is 40 years. How is it that if they take the first 69 weeks literally then switch and take the 70th week allegorically? See how that’s a problem?

And ultimately what I’m showing you is that their system forces them to abandon the literal interpretation. This is always the problem people that

deny the distinction of Israel and the Church get into. Sooner or later it will force you to abandon the literal meaning of the text and then you start doing exegetical gymnastics with the text.

The sixth problem is that preterists must date the book of Revelation before AD70. What's the traditional date of composition? AD95-96. Preterists have to set the date of composition no later than AD67. Why is that? It's quite simple to understand this. If Matt 24 and the Book of Revelation are prophecy you can't have them being written after the prophecy has already been fulfilled. It wouldn't be prophecy, it would be history. Now we're futurists, we can have it written before or after, it doesn't really matter for us because either way we believe these things are still future. But preterism requires it be written before AD67. And the reason I've pushed it back to AD67 is because they say some of the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled as early as AD67. So if it was prophecy it had to be written before AD67. One of the problems is that nobody in church history holds to a date that early. Not a single person. The guy that tries to defend that wrote his whole dissertation on it and he cites some people who hold to a pre-AD70 writing but no one as early as AD67.

But the bigger problem is this: there was an early church father named Irenaeus and he's the earliest person to comment in his writings on the date Revelation was composed. He wrote this around AD180 and he apparently knew Polycarp who was personally disciplined by John the Apostle. So we have a very early comment on this from someone who has direct links back to the apostle John and he says, "We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign." Right there, toward the end of Domitian's reign? What was seen towards the end of Domitian's reign? The Revelation. John had his vision. Well, when did Domitian reign? After AD70. So here's a guy, an early church father, and he's saying the book of Revelation is written by John right near the end of Domitian's reign. So again preterism has a problem here trying to establish an early date. The guy who wrote his whole Ph.D. dissertation on this is trying to say the book of Revelation was written before AD70 and the evidence just isn't there. He tries to downplay this, question

the Greek, question the antecedent, the arguments go on and on but the arguments really aren't there. The nearest antecedent is to what was seen is the apocalyptic vision.

So I've gone through six problems with preterism, let me give you one more. Number seven is this; if preterism were true then all the NT epistles are irrelevant to Christian's after AD70. What do you mean? Well, all the NT epistles, most of them at least, were written before AD70, were they not? And what's preterism saying? That the period from Pentecost to AD70 was an age of transition between the Old and the New Covenant, the Old Covenant doesn't fade out until AD70, the New Covenant doesn't fade in until AD70. Interestingly, they move the focal point away from the cross to AD70 and by doing that they discount a lot of what is in the epistles. Let me give you a short example right here in our own town. I recently got involved in a personal issue at another church where there was a problem with divorce and the fear that this is becoming a pattern and the church leadership wasn't doing anything about it. The problem was that there were people in the congregation that didn't like what they were seeing and thought the leadership should do something. In fact they were using some of 1 Cor 5 which we're going through and saying, hey, this isn't right. So they pointed it out. Hey, aren't we going to judge this thing? It's in the church. So they got a response from someone else in the church on this passage that said, well, Paul could judge the man because Paul was an apostle, Paul also had the power to judge nations, but that was a different time in history and we have no Scriptural mandate to judge other believers. That was a transition time so the new covenant could be fully inaugurated, meaning AD70. So what did they do with 1 Cor 5? Said it's pre-AD70, that's not for us, we're in the new covenant now and under the new covenant we can't judge these people. So my criticism here is that if all the epistles were pre-AD70 then pretty much the whole NT is irrelevant to the Christian life today. It only applied to Christians living between Pentecost and AD70.

That's the end of our critique on preterism. It all comes back to the issue of the Church and Israel and if you don't have that clarified you can never hope to get eschatology sorted out. Every time you will be forced to go into an allegorical hermeneutic. Alright next week we'll start post-tribulationism. From now on all of the positions we are going to deal with are people who are premillennial, and see the 70th week of Daniel as future, and all these

positions are arguing over the timing of the rapture. So now we're getting closer to home and we'll deal with post-tribulationism, meaning the rapture occurs after the tribulation, mid-tribulationism which means the rapture occurs in the middle of the tribulation, pre-wrath, they have a special view of wrath and they divided it up between Satan's wrath and God's wrath and they lump God's wrath down at the very end of the tribulation so you get raptured prior to God's wrath but you as a Christian have to undergo Satan's wrath and finally pre-tribulationism, meaning the rapture occurs before the tribulation. And if you're listening carefully you remember the idea of tribulation comes out of the Old or New Testament? That's an OT term that relates to Israel or the Church? Israel. So that sets you on course for how to handle the timing of the Church's rapture.

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