

# **THE PASSING OF THE LAW AND FULL-PRETERISM**

~by~

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## **~Introduction~**

A common Full-Preterist interpretation of Matthew 5:17-18 holds that the Law was passed away in AD 70. This article was originally posted on Death Is Defeated, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011.<sup>1</sup>

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## **~Purpose~**

This article is intended to show that the implications of this common Full-Preterist interpretation are aberrant to Christian dogmata and lacking in exegetical warrant.

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## **~Focus~**

The author will approach the subject dogmatically from an orthodox Preterist perspective. The Full-Preterist position will be contrasted from the Presbyterian standards.

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## **~Method~**

This article examines the arguments, implications, and errors of two prominent Full-Preterist papers. Exegetical work will be the basis of criticism.

- I. Full-Preterists commonly presuppose certain exegetical judgments concerning the grammatical elements of the text (e.g. verb mood). By ignoring these elements and the immediate context, Full-Preterists commonly treat the text as a rational proof for their distinctive doctrines. This paper traces how Full-Preterists commonly abstract key phrases into loaded theology terms. An examination into how they define the terms and make applications according to their assumptions is given.
- II. A couple examples of common faulty hermeneutical applications are given to show how Full-Preterists define the terms of their argument by other passages (with different central themes) without regard for exegesis. The examples are compared to how the word usage is actually defined by the passages actual

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<sup>1</sup> <http://deathisdefeated.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-passing-of-the-law-and>

context. This paper also accounts for the novel addition of several unnecessary corollaries in Full-Preterism void of exegetical demonstration. Also, the author comments on common attitudes concerning foundational doctrines and common Full-Preterist rhetorical and argumentative fallacies.

- III. Full-Preterists commonly differ with Presbyterian orthodoxy concerning the definition of the Law and the Old Covenant. Full-Preterists generally abstract these into interchangeable terms. Another point is that, when making their argument on Matthew 5:17-18, they suppose that nothing of the Old Covenant was done away before AD 70. Such a postulate is demonstrated to be repugnant to the Scriptures. There are a couple excepted Full-Preterist positions considered, but no popular views are satisfactory in dealing with this problem. Lastly, some of the aberrant implications of the Full-Preterist argument are examined.

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~Examination~

In a transcript of a sermon, under the title *Heaven & Earth and the Law Have Passed Away*, Rev. David Curtis comments on Matthew 5:18,<sup>2</sup>

***...the Law and Heaven and Earth are connected - when one passes, they both pass.***

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He thereby emphasizes that *the Law* and *Heaven and Earth* are correlated in the timing of their passing. There is a certain assumption that Curtis makes here before he comments on the text further. Although the verbs of these clauses are all in the subjunctive mood (*paraltheE, genEtai*), Curtis treats the sentence as if it were inflected in the indicative mood. By interpreting the sentence in the indicative mood, Curtis is able to treat it as an independent proposition—one that speaks of a prediction<sup>3</sup> that must pass.<sup>4</sup> He hardly entertains the idea that this could be a parenthetical [or, perhaps, rhetorical] thought to stress the unchangeableness of the Law.<sup>5</sup>

Curtis, commenting on “the Law and the Prophets” referred to in Matthew 5:17, says,

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<sup>2</sup> “...Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (AV)

<sup>3</sup> Preston says, “...the Law had a predictive element to it; it was far more than legal mandates and moral legislation... heaven and earth had to pass away before the Old Law could pass away! We have defined "heaven and earth" as the Old Covenant world of Old Israel. We have seen that instead of predicting the destruction of physical heaven and earth the Bible predicted the passing of Old Israel's world in order for God to create the New World of his Son—the Kingdom of God—the church of the living God. We have seen that the Bible very clearly tells when ALL prophecy was to be fulfilled--when heaven and earth would pass--in 70 AD with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the very heart and core of Israel's world.”

<sup>4</sup> One exegete notes of the accepted view according to the Greek, “These words of Jesus do not indicate a terminus, after which the law shall *no longer* exist (Paulus, Neander, Lechler, Schleiermacher, Planck, Weizacker, and others), but He says : *onwards to the destruction of the world the law will not lose its validity in the slightest point*, by which the popular expression the duration of the law *after* the final catastrophe of the world is neither taught nor excluded.” (Meyer, 1884); cf. remarks from Curtis, e.g. “Jesus said that ‘all’ the law had to be fulfilled.”

<sup>5</sup> Curtis comments, “And if we don't understand these words of Jesus, we will end up in confusion like the Commentator who, commenting on this verse, said, ‘In saying 'till heaven and earth pass away' - the most stable of all created objects - Christ affirmed the unchangeableness of the Law.’ That is not at all what Christ meant!”

***The use of the terms "the law" and "the prophets" indicates that what the Lord is speaking of in these verses is the whole of the Old Testament. If you trace these terms through your Bible, you will find that wherever this expression is used it includes the entire Old Testament...***

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Right away, Curtis assumes that the words *the Law* and *the Prophets* are “terms” that can be abstracted for hermeneutical application. Curtis goes on to cite Luke 24:44 as an example.

***And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.(AV)***

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Curtis comments on the passage,

***The "law of Moses", "the prophets", and "the psalms" speak of the entirety of the Old Testament.***

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The tendency to define words as “terms” is common in Full-Preterist hermeneutics. By making applications in the name of *analogy-of-faith*, common Full-Preterist arguments are constructed from the equivocation of similar words from different passages. This is not the *analogy-of-faith* of the grammatical-historical tradition. Don Preston (PRI) is more guarded against suggesting that the phrase in this verse refers to *the entirety of the Old Testament* in this context.<sup>6</sup> In answer to the objection that the Law and the Prophets were fulfilled in Christ’s passion at the cross, Preston gives some attention to the immediate context of Luke 24:44—

***...Jesus is not even speaking of the passing of the law and the prerequisites for that. He IS speaking of the necessity of the fulfillment of the law to be sure--but in contrast to those who appeal to this text he is not saying "now here is all that is necessary for the Old Covenant to pass away; I must suffer". In Matthew 5 Jesus IS speaking of the prerequisites for the passing of the Law, and he says it must ALL be fulfilled. In Luke 24 Jesus was saying that his passion was one of the constituent elements of the Law that had to be fulfilled NOT THE ONLY THING IN THE LAW THAT HAD TO BE FULFILLED!***

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Although the noun phrases “the law of Moses...the prophets...and the psalms” could be taken as a reference to the total canon of Scripture (the Old Testament), Preston reminds us that similar phrases are not abstractions that can be divorced from their immediate contexts to make undue applications from.

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<sup>6</sup> In his sermons on the subject, Curtis aims to establish this premise that the Old Covenant administration cannot be classified into moral, civil, and ceremonial laws (cf. WCF). By dismissing the historic view, he attempts to dodge the objection that the ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant administration have been abrogated in the New Covenant before AD 70. Nonetheless—for the same reasons—Preston takes the same premise elsewhere, “Remember, Jesus said NONE would pass until ALL was fulfilled. If ALL was not fulfilled then NONE of it passed! The Old Covenant stands or falls as a WHOLE!”

In this case, Curtis appeals to Luke 24:44 to justify his definition of “the Law and the Prophets” in another passage with a different central theme. In Luke 24:44, the phrase resembles the phrase in Matthew 5:17-18, but with the subordinate clause—“concerning Me”—*all that must be fulfilled* is restricted to a specific sense according to a different usage. The phrase is not a fixed “term”; one must examine the immediate context before hermeneutical applications may be made. Although the definition supplied by Curtis is not shared by all Full-Preterists [nor is it a necessary postulate for his overall conclusions to stand], it is nonetheless telling of his predisposed effort to demonstrate a correlation between the fulfillment of all Bible prophecy and the abrogation of ceremonial ordinances.

In this context, the sense of “the Law and the Prophets” in Matthew ch.5 is actually defined by our Lord in this passage. In Matthew ch.5, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, Christ establishes that children of God, the blessed, are to show their good works before men, and glorify God. He *establishes* the standard of the Law; He is not a dissident with a liberal agenda to undermine the Law. The central theme of the context has nothing to do with the Law having to pass for the saints to be blessed—rather, its inviolability is affirmed. Christ upholds it and demands obedience. He says,

***Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19)***

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Christ continues His homily through the exhortation of moral commandments and instruction until the end of ch.7. In Matthew 7:12, our Lord says something astounding:

***Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.***

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Here, in the very same sermon, Jesus sums the great commandments as “the Law and the Prophets”—it is not used as a general description of all the prophecies that needed to be fulfilled.<sup>7</sup> From this, all the *least commandments* of the Law and the Prophets hang (cf. Matthew 22:35-37). This is of the same central theme—the moral duty of mankind according to the precepts of the *Royal Law according to Scripture*.

By first establishing the central themes of the immediate context, *analogy-of-faith* may be conservatively applied to determine a clearer sense of the usage of phrases in their respective context. For another example, Curtis argues that the root word for “fulfill” (Matthew 5:17) is

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<sup>7</sup> This presupposition of the necessity of the Law’s passing is demonstrated in comments from Curtis on the necessity of prophecy to be fulfilled, “Matthew uses this word seventeen times, and in fifteen of them it clearly refers to prophecy being fulfilled or **coming to pass**. The law, which we read in the Old Testament and everything that has been said by the prophets, was going to ‘come to pass’ down to the minutest detail. And until it was all fulfilled, it was binding on the people of God... None of the law was to pass away until it was ALL accomplished. All of the law being accomplished would include all of the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled. Would it not? All of the prophetic scriptures had to be fulfilled.”

used 17 times in the Gospel of Matthew—15 times where the fulfillment of prophecy is the context. By defining the word “fulfill” in this sense, he strengthens his earlier implication that the mention of *the Law and the Prophets* establishes the fulfillment of all Bible prophecy as a central idea of the contextual theme. However, the appeal to the most common usage of the word promises nothing [but probability] concerning the specific usage of the word in Matthew 5:17. The only other time—besides Matthew 5:17—that the root “*pleroo*” is rendered as “*plErOsai*”, in its infinitive-aorist-active inflection, is Matthew 3:15. This is one of the other 2 times—besides Matthew 5:17—that Curtis dismisses because of the rarity of this usage. However, it being the only other time in the New Testament that the very same word is used, it is more likely that its usage will more fairly elucidate its meaning in ch.5.

Matthew ch.3 accounts of the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. John humbly objects to baptizing the Lord,

***And Jesus answering said unto him, **Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (Matthew 3:16)*****

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This retort by our Lord is given virtually no immediate explanation. Apparently, being baptized was an observance necessary for Christ’s obedience to be perfected. He was made under the Law, and did perfectly fulfill it (WCF 8.4). It is in the sense of our Lord’s willing obedience under the Law that His Righteousness satisfies the justice of God—both in 1) discharging the sinner from penal-debt and in 2) His merited righteousness for their justification. Even Full-Preterist David Green partly agrees Christ’s duties were sufficient to deliver the regenerate from the condemnation of the Law,

***Jesus fulfilled the Law through His perfect righteousness and obedience. He fulfilled the Law through the sacrifice of Himself for our transgressions of the Law. He fulfilled the Law through the imputation of His divine righteousness to us through faith in His blood. He fulfilled the Law through the pouring out of His Spirit, Who teaches us and enables us to love God because He laid down His life for us, (I Jn. 3:16) and to keep His commandments from our heart, and to love our brothers in work and in truth. (Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14) This is the perfect, Law-fulfilling righteousness that comes through the heavenly birth, and that surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. (Matt. 5:20,48; 18:3; Jn. 3:3) (Green)***

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However, Mr. Green also adds that Christ had an official duty to fulfill all the prophecies up unto the events of AD 70:

***Jesus fulfilled "the Prophets" by His birth, ministry, death and resurrection, by the pouring out of His Spirit, by the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, by the building up of His Church (the New Covenant Tabernacle) and by "the days of vengeance" that culminated in the destruction of the temple. (Lk. 21:22; 24:44-47)***

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Although Green is astute enough to recognize the fulfillment of prophecy *concerning Christ*, he never demonstrates from the immediate context how these ideas are central to Matthew ch.5. For, surely, if the Sermon on the Mount was about all these things, and if they were central to the correct interpretation, then Christ would have hinted this is what He meant. But rather, in this place, Christ speaks of the Law and the Prophets summed according to that great commandment,

***And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.***

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Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount was not a probationary period of law-bondage that expired in AD 70. We still love our enemies, we still pray the Lord's Prayer, we still seek God's Kingdom above all else. But Curtis arguments appeal only to the natural man's desire to be apart from God's Law. He concludes,

***The law, which we read in the Old Testament and everything that has been said by the prophets, was going to "come to pass" down to the minutest detail. And until it was all fulfilled, it was binding on the people of God.***

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The pronoun in the last sentence above, "it", refers to the nearest applicable antecedent. Curtis asserts that the Law and everything written by the Prophets were binding on the people of God. But Christ was not come to destroy the Law—but rather the works of the devil! It is not the Law that we were bound to—but we were subject to the condemnation of the Law, being slaves to sin.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the object of Christ's work, whether it is 1) righteous obedience unto the Father or 2) the outworking the fulfillment prophecy, is to redeem sinners from the liability of their debt—not to disarm the revealed instrument of God's justice.

Thus, there is no theological necessity for Christ to remove the Law and the Prophets to deliver the saints from corruption. This is an apparent equivocation of the Old Covenant administration with the prophecies of the Old Testament. This common fallacy often goes unnoticed in Full-Preterism because the abstraction generally goes without any exegetical demonstration or formal argumentation.

Curtis begins his sermon by submitting a "real problem"—"that the Law and Heaven and Earth are connected – when one passes, they both pass." But Curtis does not frame his *problem*

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<sup>8</sup> Galatians 5 indeed speaks of the *heirs* as *free from the entangling yoke of bondage*. The bondage is not circumcision or the Law itself (cf. Romans 7:22-23). The Law is weak from the flesh because the strength of sin is the Law (Romans 7:5). Because the occasion of the Law is operated through the sin in the flesh (Romans 7:8-11), Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh (but without sin) to destroy sin in the flesh—not to destroy the Law which has no fault (Romans 7:12-13). The works of the flesh are all manner of deadly sin. The Apostle speaks of being made free from sin so that by virtue of the cross the believer may through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh. There is no doubt that the baptized are free from the condemnation of the Law (Romans 7:6), because they being baptized in Christ, are dead to it (Romans 6:14-15). Yet the Apostle warns that this liberty is no occasion to yield one's members to sin as a freedom to sin (Romans 6:15). Since a servant can only have one master (Romans 6:16-17, 6:20), the baptized are made free from the rule of sin and death (Romans 6:12-14, 8:2) that they may be made servants to their Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:18) in all the fruits of the Spirit that delivered them (Romans 6:19, 6:21-22, 8:4). Although it is true that the baptized are free from the Law (Romans 7:3, 7:6), it was sin that they were under the bondage of that through the power of the Law they were to earn the bondage of the death (Romans 6:23); Cf. Romans 8:12.



[sic] around antinomianism; he deals with persuading the reader that Heaven and Earth have passed. He treats the subject as if the Christian already holds that the Law has passed away. In this way, if he can establish a direct correlation between the passing away of the Law and Heaven and Earth's passing, he can show that Heaven and Earth have passed. In doing this, Curtis can make a case for his Full-Preterist platform.

Preston has the same approach—

***Has heaven and earth passed away? Ridiculous you say? Let us ask another question: Do you believe the Old Covenant has been done away? I dare say you will say it has. Few believers in Jesus would deny he has established his New Covenant. IF YOU BELIEVE THE OLD COVENANT HAS PASSED AWAY THEN YOU MUST BELIEVE "HEAVEN AND EARTH" HAVE PASSED AWAY!***

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To propose the absurdity to his audience, Preston takes for granted that they already accept his major premise: *the Old Covenant has been done away*. By asserting “Few believers in Jesus would deny he has established his New Covenant”, Preston implies that holding the Old Covenant has been done away is the Christian position. Indeed it is, but Preston goes on to use the idea of the Old Covenant as a heading for the Law.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Preston implies that the reality of the establishment of the New Covenant is correlated with the doing away with the Old Covenant. Indeed, there is a correlation, but Curtis puts the establishment of the New after the passing away of the Old.<sup>10</sup> He says,

***All of the prophetic scriptures had to be fulfilled. This included the prophecies of the New Heaven and Earth. The New Covenant is always associated with a New Age. This new age would not come about until all that the prophets had spoken was fulfilled...[Isaiah 65:17] had to be fulfilled before the law could pass away. Until God created a new heaven and earth, the old covenant remained in tack, every bit of it. So, if we are not living in the New Heaven and Earth today, then we are under the law, every bit of it.***

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Curtis uses “New Covenant”, “New Age”, and “New Heaven and Earth” interchangeably. He shows that the “new heavens and a new earth” of Isaiah 65:17 is a prophecy. He submits that the Law cannot pass until all prophecies are fulfilled. He loosely correlates Isaiah 65:17 with the New Covenant, but this gives no logical support for his case. He is saying that the age associated with the New Covenant would not come until all prophecies are fulfilled. He expects his audience to have already accepted that the New Covenant cannot come until the Old Covenant is past. If the Old Covenant is not past until all Bible prophecy is fulfilled, in AD 70, then Curtis implies that the New Covenant could not have come until then. This is, again, equivocation; he is forced to correlate the New Covenant with the New Heavens and Earth because he gives the Old Covenant this treatment.

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<sup>9</sup> Preston sometimes uses “Old Law”, “Mosaic Covenant with Jehovah”, “Old Israel’s covenant” interchangeably.

<sup>10</sup> In some other places Curtis does not take this position.

This presents an issue that affects the Full-Preterist view of the establishment of the New Covenant. If the Full-Preterist puts the establishment of the New Covenant after the fulfillment of all prophecy, and the New Covenant was a prophecy (e.g. Isaiah 55:3, Jeremiah 31:31-33, 32:40, Ezekiel 37:26), then prophecy will never be fulfilled.<sup>11</sup> Christ pointed to His ministry of service as mediator through His own shed blood (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25). The writer of Hebrews explains,

***But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)***

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The emphatic adverb of time “now” (*nuni*) contrasts between the *former* Mosaic administration of the services of the Old Covenant (cf. 8:5ff). The adversative conjunction “but” (*de*) emphasizes this contrast further. “He has gotten” (*teteuchen*) is in the perfect-active. The ministry of the New Covenant was something He had obtained and was continuing to be possessing. He “is” (*estin*) the mediator; the verb is in the indicative present-tense. The presently administered service of the everlasting covenant “has been established” (*nenomothetetai*)—indicative, perfect-passive. This verse was doubtlessly, without controversy from Full-Preterists, written before AD 70. The Old Covenant was still ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:13), and Christ had already become the mediator of a New Testament at the offering of Himself and obtaining our Redemption (cf. ch.9). The Greek verb tenses of Hebrews 8:6 (and other verses) demand the establishment of the New Covenant before AD 70.

Curtis continues on the same note,

***But I know of no Christian who would say that ALL the Old Testament Scriptures are binding on us. If they did, they would have to be keeping the Sabbath, and the feasts, and they would have to be sacrificing animals. Are we bound by the Old Covenant Law today? No!***

***...we are not under the law. And if we are not under the law, then heaven and earth must have passed away.***

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Approaching the issue as if he has already established a necessity for heaven and earth to pass away in order for the Old Covenant administration to have been abrogated, Curtis implies that the Law must be passed because all prophecies have been fulfilled. Again, he places the timing of this in AD 70, after the New Testament was completed in writing. The issue that he avoids is the reality that the New Testament writers (e.g. Paul) held that the first century Church was no longer *under the Law*—before AD 70.<sup>12</sup> Thus, there is no necessity for all Bible prophecy to have been fulfilled already in order for the saints to be in the New Covenant. If it were possible back-then to be under the administration of the New Covenant before all prophecy was fulfilled, and if we are of the same dispensation of God’s saving graces upon the Church, then

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<sup>11</sup> Preston understands this when he writes, “The Old Covenant predicted the coming of a New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:29ff. Did the Old Covenant pass away before that predicted New Covenant was delivered? If so the Old Covenant passed away before it had fulfilled its purpose in bringing Israel to a New Covenant!”

<sup>12</sup> Romans 6:14-15, 7:20, 8:1-4, Galatians 3:13, 3:23, 3:28, 4:5, 5:18.



we too may be under the same administration under the same Head in the same body, even if *all* Bible prophecy has not been fulfilled.

There are two common cases levied against this. 1) A minority of Full-Preterists have argued that the first-century saints before AD 70 were a special type of first-fruits dispensation of a covenantal overlap. This is a fanciful conjecture, but even upon entertaining the notion, such an interpretation cannot be used to restore the argument for the necessity of all Bible prophecy to be fulfilled in order for the saints to partake in the blessings of the New Covenant.

The second common argument, touched upon by Preston, is the *already-but yet not* explanation (2). In dealing with a common objection to his position, Preston defines the explanation,

***There is in scripture something the scholars call the "already but not yet". Simply put, the writers of the Bible often spoke of certain things as PRESENT REALITIES in certain texts while in other passages they spoke of the same things as COMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE! In other words, they said they had them [the blessings], but they did NOT [fully] have them yet! This is true of the passing of the Old Law!***

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To say the least, this is not a popular position in Full-Preterism and Fulfilled Eschatology because Futurists commonly use the explanation as a defense against Preterism. Central to the argument is paradox. In such a paradoxical view, the Full-Preterism cannot take time-statements literally. Instead of exegeting Colossians 2:14f, he appeals to a couple other texts. First he writes,

***In Ephesians 2 Paul taught about the passing of the Law and that the cross was the power of that passing. It is equally clear from Paul's other writings that he believed the full passing of the Law was future to him!***

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Preston does not quote the text—he doesn't even cite it. No doubt, we know he is referring to Ephesians 2:14-15ff. Yet Preston does not allow this text to speak of past-fulfillment. In haste, he interprets that the passage to say that the Law was “passing.” One Full-Preterist even goes on to suggest this text was fulfilled in AD 70!<sup>13</sup>

***For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby...(Ephesians 2:14-16)***

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The explanatory conjunction “for” (*gar*) explicates the reason that the gentile converts have been made in Christ without being circumcised under the Old Covenant administration (2:11-13). “He” (*autos*) is the subject of the first noun clause of v.14. The pronoun refers to

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<sup>13</sup> Green strangely writes, “The separation and enmity between Jew and Gentile and between man and God (which was based on the Law) was abolished in A.D. 70. (Eph. 2:14-15)”; his proof-text but contradicts his assertion.

Christ (v.13). The theme *the peace of us*, the subject complement, renames the one making [*poiEsas*; cf v.10] both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision one in Christ Jesus. The verbal for “who hath made” is translated as a parenthetical participial clause describing the subject. Preston suggests there was an ongoing effect of the cross. This first part cannot be an ongoing paradox, because the verbal is an aorist referring to a whole, single, event.

The last dependent clause begins with the simple connective conjunction “and” (*kai*) to coordinate another idea to the present peace of Christ’s reconciliation. The metaphorical middle wall between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision has accordingly “broken down” (*lusas*). The word for “broken down” is also a participle describing the present reality of Christ and the peace the saints had of Him. It too is an aorist. It cannot, in this context, refer to a gradual dissolution of the Law.

The first clause of v.15 is actually subordinate to the previous verse. The explicative “having” is added for translation. The clause gives the subject complement. The enmity (*echthran*) between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision was the middle wall between them. That enmity was broken down in the flesh of Christ Jesus (*en tE sarki autou*).

The next clause (*ton nomon tOn entolOn en dogmasin*) is best rendered as an object complement to rename the accusative. This phrase is not simply “the Law”, but the injunction that is in ordinances (e.g. circumcision).<sup>14</sup> These word used for ordinances (*dogmasin*) is only also found in the Colossians section that Preston avoids. The normal reading is that these laws can be distinguished from “the Law”, their precept. Never else, besides the Colossians section, does Paul treat the Law in this way. He does not pluralize the word for Law except for the genitive phrase used here and in Colossians, where the law mentioned is *of the commandments or precepts*.

This is the exegetical precedent for the abrogation of ceremonial laws under the New Testament in the Protestant position.<sup>15</sup> Paul clearly is applying this to his immediate audience as a present reality to argue for the ordination of uncircumcised gentiles into the New Covenant dispensation.<sup>16</sup> Here, these ordinances that pointed to the gifts and sacrifices of Christ’s ministerial services and offering, were the administration of carnal ordinances for the purifying of the flesh, but were weak through the flesh. These particular ordinances prefigured the flesh of Christ’s offering, and were through His services perfected. His obedience unto death, the supreme object of the laws of the old administration, is the operation establishing the new administration. Thereby, the saints who are baptized into Him under the New Covenant are buried in the same Covenant of Grace as the dispensation of the Law (the same substance),<sup>17</sup> and are accordingly discharged from their liabilities in the flesh.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Colossians 2:13-14, where the same central ideas of gentiles, in the uncircumcision of their flesh, having the “handwriting of ordinances” against Paul—a Jew—and the Colossians, taken away. Sharing the same central theme, these two verses point to Christ’s finished work at the cross—fulfilling the ordinances that typified Christ’s Atonement and priestly services of offering.

<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 9:9-10

<sup>16</sup> Galatians 5.

<sup>17</sup> This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come: which were, for that time,

The gentiles were afar off, but being reconciled as they became converted into the same body of Christ. Paul does not call the Law itself an *enmity*, except for the ceremonial laws that separated gentiles from Christ, the commonwealth of Israel, and the covenants of promise. Because the flesh of the gentiles was not patterned after the exemplar of the Jews, who were sanctified through the ceremonial ordinances, the exemplar was an enmity because it was too weak to profit them in the flesh.

Although Preston offers no exegesis for Colossians 2:14ff in his place, he does go on to argue that Colossians 2:16f teaches that the ceremonial laws prophesied of future things coming to fulfillment in AD 70, before they could pass.

***In that passage [Colossians 2:16f.] Paul told the Colossians not to be judged in regard to meat and drink, feast days, and Sabbaths. These were all part of the legislation of the Old Law. But notice, in verse 17 Paul says they all foreshadowed Christ--they were "shadows of things to come". [Please note those things were still viewed as coming! They had not fully arrived yet!]***

***Jesus said "the law" was predictive in nature...***

***In addition, in Hebrews 10:1-4 the writer says the Law was a shadow of good things to come, [once again those things were viewed as not yet fully come].***

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Let us first consider the Colossians section in its context—

***In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:***

***Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.***

***And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;***

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sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations. (WCF 7.5-6)

<sup>18</sup> Romans 2:25-28, Galatians 3:3.

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*

*And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

*Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,*

*(Touch not; taste not; handle not;*

*Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

*Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (Colossians 2:11-22)*

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Paul has addressed the Church at Colossae, telling them to beware of philosophy and deceit that is after the tradition of men (v. 4, 8, 16, 18). He exhorts them to be dogmatically established in Christ through the Faith (1:9-10, 23, 2:2, 2:6-7, 10, 3:15-17). He points to the virtue of Christ and their establishment in Him. This echoes themes already addressed by Paul in Ch.1.

Paul correlates their baptism with the Old Covenant circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12).<sup>19</sup> He does not say one replaces the other, for he says that the circumcision made without hands—not baptism—replaces the circumcision of the flesh. Paul refers to the circumcision of Christ that puts off the uncircumcised body of flesh hiding their life in Christ. In Ch.3:9, speaks of this as putting off the old man with his doings. By the body of Christ, being buried with Him in baptism—through the Law of the New Covenant—they were already dead to the law of the Old. In another place, Paul said, “*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto*

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<sup>19</sup> The participial phrase “buried with Him in baptism” is subordinate to v.12. The phrases “in whom also” (*en ho kai*—v.11) and “in which also” (*en ho kai*—v.12) establish a syntactical parallelism. Thus, although the sacrament of baptism does not replace the circumcision of the flesh [the *circumcision of the heart* supersedes circumcision], it is a seal for being buried with Him, which is the effect of the circumcision of Christ under the New Covenant administration, i.e. the putting off the body of sins in the flesh.

God.” They were thereby *circumcised* when their flesh was *uncircumcised* (Colossians 2:11-13). In Christ *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.*” No doubt, they were under Covenant, for Christ had the authority to establish special sanctions and administer spiritual circumcision to those under His headship through the blood of the New Covenant.

The believers are said to be risen with Christ, by virtue of their union with Him. The present participle “being” (*ontas*) of v.13 does not indicate tense; Paul is not accusing his audience of being dead in their sins. Quite the contrary, it describes the condition of the accusative when Christ quickened them. They were uncircumcised, but He forgave their sins. This absolutely requires a New Covenant; there is no way that Christ could forgive the sins of gentiles outside the Old Covenant, unless there were brought into a new covenant. The Scriptures demonstrate that it is through Christ’s sacrifice at the cross that they are forgiven. No doubt, they had the New Covenant before AD 70—and they were not required to be circumcised or observe other ceremonial traditions of the Old Covenant administration.

Notice, they were risen (*sunEgerthEte*), aorist indicative passive; and they were quickened together (*sunezOopoiEsen*), aorist indicative active. The aorists refer to a past regeneration since they were no longer dead in sins—being revived. The participles cannot disagree with the tense of the main verbs here. Thus, the subordinating clause “having forgiven you of all trespasses” (*charisamenos humin panta ta paraptOmata*) cannot refer to a future forgiveness in AD 70. Similarly, the subordinating “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances” (*exaleipsas...*) neither can refer to a future event. The taking the handwriting of ordinances out of the way refers to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Likewise, at the cross, He spoiled principalities and powers; this does not refer to a future event in AD 70 because the grammar does not allow for it. The text teaches of the virtues and victory of Christ in His passion.

It is for these reasons that Paul is justified in telling gentiles that they should let no man judge them in meat or in drink, or in respect of holydays, or new moon, or Sabbath days. Paul does not disagree with Jesus in Matthew 5 by liberalizing the standard terms of the Law, but he does acknowledge that specific ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant are not binding on them because they have spiritual circumcision in Christ, being baptized into the New Covenant.

But Preston teaches that v.17 speaks of future things to come, that the Old Covenant was still in force until AD 70 brought the New Covenant realization to completion. The verse says,

***Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.***

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Preston submits that the Old Covenant was a shadow of things that had not yet been realized until AD 70. The pronoun “which” (*ha*) refers to the previous verse. The ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant administration are in mind. The word “are” is in the present singular, perhaps describing the whole of the Old Covenant in its then present ministry. The ordinances against them were taken out of the way of the saints, but still remained present in their administration of the Jewish economy until its dissolution. That administration is a shadow

(*skia*). The genitive construction<sup>20</sup> “of the things to come” (*tOn mellontOn*) describes the source of that shadow. The present participle does not grammatically indicate the tense of whether the things had already come in reality or whether they were still future. However, the absolute adjective has a future sense to it, but that sense is relative to the administration of the Old Covenant—the subject complement that it modifies—not to Paul and his immediate audience.

Further, the reality of the shadow is described as the body of Christ in the dependent clause “but the body is of Christ”. One is insubstantial, the other is markedly substantial. Surely the Old Covenant was not only a shadow of things in AD 70!<sup>21</sup> The body of Christ, in this context, has been associated with past work and real fulfillment.

Apparently, Preston boldly uses the participle not as a verbal, but as a finite verb. He has the same error on Hebrews 10:1-4.<sup>22</sup> Let us consider the passage,

***For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)***

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The first part of the sentence’s independent clause is “for the Law” (*gar...*) which introduces the subject. “Having” (*echOn*) would have some Full-Preterists suppose that this indicates that the time the writer of Hebrews wrote this, that the good things to come had not yet come.<sup>23</sup> Yet “the good things to come” were already come in the first Advent and in the coming of the Gospel.

Dr. Owen writes,

***“The apostle in this whole discourse designs to prove that the law, with all the rites of worship annexed unto it, was a type of the good things that were really and actually exhibited in and by the gospel, or by the Lord Christ himself in the discharge of his office.***

***Wherefore they are called “good things to come” with respect unto the time of the administration of the law. They were so whilst the law or first covenant was in force, and whilst the institutions of it were continued. They had, indeed, their original in the church, or were “good things to come,” from the first promise. They were more declared so to be, and the certa***

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<sup>20</sup> Harris comments that the genitive “is either obj. (‘these things foreshadow what was to come’) or poss./subj. (‘these things are a shadow cast by future events’)”; notice his translation does not have a futurist bias.

<sup>21</sup> The first advent and His kingly and priestly duties—not the Second Advent, or His coming upon Jerusalem—are supplied in the context; Cf. Hebrews 8:5-7.

<sup>22</sup> In addition, in Hebrews 10:1-4 the writer says the Law was a shadow of good things to come, [once again those things were viewed as not yet fully come].

<sup>23</sup> One Full-Preterist submitted that there was only one coming referred to in Hebrews 10:1 when he wrote, “You don’t hold to these time texts as AD 70? That there is a TIME TEXT written to an AUDIENCE about HIS COMING?” and “Vince - do you acknowledge that A) Hebrews 10 is about a "COMING" to judge? Do you agree that this is about the 2nd Coming of Christ (Hebrews 9:28)? Do you agree that there are time texts involved?” and associated it with Hebrews 9:28b and Hebrews 10:27 and 29...”



***inty of their coming more confirmed, by the promise made unto Abraham. After these promises, and their various confirmations, the law was given unto the people. Howbeit the law did not bring in, exhibit, or make present, the good things so promised, that they should no more yet be to come. They were still “good things to come” whilst the law was in force.” (Owen, 1840)***

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“Having” (*echOn*) is not the main verb, but also is a present participle. It assumes the tense of the main verb “make” (*explicative omitted for diction and implied by “dunatai”*). Because “make” is in the base tense (indicating purpose), the tense is not specified. “Having a shadow of good things to come” is no indication of when the good things came because it is a participial phrase describing *the Law* of the Old Covenant administration. The coming of the good things is spoken of, as Owen states, in relationship to the Law’s shadow-casting.

“Can” (*dunatai*) is neither a tense indicating action, it is rather a modal auxiliary verb which helps the main verb. In the Greek, it takes the indicative present middle/passive deponent. The object of the prepositional phrase is neither the subject that “makes” but it is with those sacrifices (which are shadows) by which the Law cannot perfect the worshipper. It is not that the Law is faulty; but rather, the instrumentation of the Law, by which worshipping comers could not meet the ends thereof (c.f. Hebrews 9:9), that necessitated the image of good things to come for their undue perfection.

“Which they offered year by year continually” is only a dependent adjective clause interjecting the second part of the independent clause containing the predicate. Upon exegetical examination, there is no legitimate grammatical evidence that “the good things to come” refer to the Second Coming.<sup>24</sup>

Full-Preterists also sometimes hold that Hebrews 9:8 teaches that the way into the Holiest was not made manifest until AD 70 when the Temple was removed.<sup>25</sup> Yet the “standing” is not the physical architectural integrity, but the standing of as a figure for that present time before Christ’s coming.

The Authorized Version renders it,

***Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;***

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<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the common Full-Preterist interpretation (i.e., that this passage refers to the second coming that was then yet to come) has no substantial continuity based on general proximity and similarity of language to argue Hebrews 10:37 and 39 teach of the very same event of Hebrews 9:28b, when the first coming (cf. Hebrews 9:11, 9:14-17, 9:26, 10:5-10, 10:12, 10:20) is the central idea of Hebrews 10:1ff in context.

<sup>25</sup> Another Full-Preterist wrote, “Just as the shadows of the Law passed at the time of the new order, so too was that the time that Jesus would be ‘seen’ reigning with all authority in heaven and earth. The Most Holy Place was ‘disclosed’ by removing what was preventing it - the Temple. As the Temple was being unseen, Jesus was being seen (in his glory via the sign of the Son of man in heaven).”

The gifts and the sacrifices “stood” only in imposed meats and drinks, diverse washings, and carnal ordinances. This is how the writer of Hebrews speaks of the standing of the first Temple as a past thing, and the administration of the Old Covenant ordinances which were fulfilled in the time of reformation, i.e. Christ’s being come a high priest of good things that were to come. Thus, the way into the Holiest was made manifest (Hebrews 9:11-14ff, 9:24, 10:19-22ff).

As demonstrated, Ephesians 2:14-15ff establishes the reality of the fulfillment of ceremonial laws before AD 70. Preston, however, claims that other remarks from Paul negate this.

***In II Corinthians 3 the apostle discusses the passing of the Law written and engraven in stones, the Old Covenant. In verse 11 he says "If what is passing away [that is the Old Law, DKP] was glorious, what remains is much more glorious". [NKJV] The reader will please notice the PRESENT TENSE of the verse! Reader, this passage was written over 20 years after the Cross, yet Paul said the Old Law was passing, not had passed, away!***

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Even if we accept Preston’s insistence that the Old Covenant is the Law, what we find is absolute paradox. First he argues that the passing of the Law was a *present reality in certain texts* and that it was also a *future hope*. He argues also that “something realized is no longer anticipated-no longer the object of hope!” This contradicts his own definition of the *already-but yet not* definition. Preston says,

***Something realized is no longer anticipated-no longer the object of hope!***

...

***In [2 Corinthians 3] verse 12 Paul says "Seeing then that we have such hope". What hope was that? Please go there right now and see for yourself that it was the passing away of the Old Law! Paul, TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS, called the passing of the Old Law a HOPE!<sup>26</sup>***

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In this place Preston aims to show an example of a passage that teaches an imminent future fulfillment of the passing of—what he calls—“the Old Law”.<sup>27</sup> If Preston can demonstrate an apparent contradiction in the Scriptures, then he can employ his *already-but yet not* key without much objection. But to project this fulfillment to AD 70, he defines it as the object of hope, viz. something that was a future reality not seen by Paul when he wrote those things.<sup>28</sup> He appeals to Romans 8:24 to show that “hope that is seen is no hope”. Thus, in this place he says that the passing of the Old Law is not realized. The contradiction is devastating to his argument.

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<sup>26</sup> Preston offers no exegesis for this erroneous interpretation. The central theme of the clause “seeing then that we have such hope” (v.12) is concerning the saints’ trust that God has equipped them as able ministers of the New Covenant administration. Somehow, Preston holds that the text says that the saints were hoping that the glorious ministry of Moses would be exhausted.

<sup>27</sup> Evidently, Preston argues as if *the Law* and *the Old Covenant* administration are the same things.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Hebrews 7:19

Preston also attempts to demonstrate that the Law was passing, but had not yet in the least past away.<sup>29</sup> Matthew ch.5 stated that not one jot or tittle would pass away, but Preston insists that it was in the process of passing away. He means that not one jot or tittle had actually passed, but that the whole of the Law was gradually waxing away. But this is not satisfactory since the ordinances were no longer being practiced.<sup>30</sup> Uncircumcised converts were being baptized the Church, none were suffered to observe the feasts, and no Christian would dare offer a sacrifice at the Temple after the Lord gave His body once and for all.

The implications of Full-Preterism are dangerous. They categorically affect the rudimentary foundations of systematic theology. Curtis writes,

***Jesus said that "all" the law had to be fulfilled. This would not only include all prophecy but it would include all the legal mandates of the law. The penal aspects of the law would have to be fulfilled before it could pass away.***

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By this, Curtis does not mean satisfying the demands of God's justice through the Atonement.<sup>31</sup> He submits that the punishment of apostate Israel in AD 70 is sufficient enough to deliver the Church from the condemnation under the Law.

***Before the law could pass, all of the legal or punitive elements of that old covenant had to be inflicted because of the violation of that Covenant... There were punitive elements of the Old Covenant which were said to take place at the coming of the Lord in Malachi 3. These punitive aspects of the "Law" had to come to pass before the law or heaven and earth could pass away. If a law passes away, then the punitive elements of the law are no longer binding. If there are no speeding laws, then you can't get a speeding ticket.***

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Curtis compares our accountability to the justice of our Holy God to petty traffic laws. *If there is no law against it, then there is no penalty to be accountable for.* This stinks of antinomianism. This is not the Christian view of propitiation.<sup>32</sup> Preston makes the same mistake—

***If a law or covenant has been abrogated, are any of its penalties or promises applicable anymore? Yes, or No?***

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hebrews 7:11-12, 7:18, 8:13

<sup>30</sup> Romans 2:26-27, 3:30, 4:9, 14:17, 1 Corinthians 7:19, 8:8, Galatians 4:9, 4:21, Colossians 2:16-17, 2:20-23, Hebrews 9:9-10, 13:9

<sup>31</sup> Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 10-20.

<sup>32</sup> Without any exegesis on the text he comments on, Curtis leaves out the slaying of the Son of God on Calvary, "Isaiah said that in order to inaugurate the New Heaven and Earth, God was going to slay his old people. If the Church is currently the people of God who are waiting for the new heaven and earth, who is God going to have to slay to bring in that new Heaven and Earth?"

*Now common sense says that if a law is no longer in effect then its penalties or promises are voided. Well, consider this in light of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17-18...*

*Major Premise: No promise or penalty of a covenant is applicable if that covenant has been abrogated.*

*Minor Premise: But Paul applied Old Covenant penalties to Israel, Acts 13.*

*Conclusion: Therefore the Old Covenant penalties were still applicable.*

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Preston never levies a case in defense of his insistence the Law must pass. He argues for it as if it were accepted by his audience. The passing away of the Law is something Preston submits was *hoped* for—a blessing. He uses the words “law” and “Old Covenant” interchangeably, and applies them both to Matthew 5:17-18. The main problem with his view is that he holds an antinomian view of the Law.<sup>33</sup> By holding that the Law—what Paul called “holy” and “spiritual”—is something discountable, Preston and others imply that the Law no longer has jurisdiction over mankind. If it truly no longer exists, being passed away, then unbelievers are no longer accountable to a just God. If the penalties of the Old Covenant have been poured out in full upon apostate Israel in AD 70, then the penalties are not “still applicable” to anyone. In other words, as Curtis says,

*If there are no speeding laws, then you can't get a speeding ticket.*

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This is the grace and mercy of hyper-preterism. The gospel they preach is the good news that apostate Israel bore the sins of many so that God could stop judging the world. “*Are we bound by the Old Covenant Law today? No! Hopefully, we learned in our last study that we are not under the law. And if we are not under the law, then heaven and earth must have passed away.*” This is how Curtis uses the words “Old Covenant Law” and “the law” interchangeably. He apparently thinks that the Old Covenant is something we would be under if any Bible prophecy remained unfulfilled. However, the Old Covenant economy was Jewish,<sup>34</sup> but the whole world is in sin under a covenant of works.<sup>35</sup> The universal standard of judgment, the Law, was contained in the Jewish Old Covenant administration, but when that order dissolved in the first-century the Church did not continue without His Law. The Scriptures teach,

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.(Jeremiah 31:33)*

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<sup>33</sup> In another place, Curtis preached, “Do you believe that the Ten Commandments, written with the finger of God upon the Tables of Stone, are the rule of life for a Christian today?” My reply to that question is: “NO!” (Curtis, 2006) cf. (Reisinger, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Deuteronomy 4:1, 4:13, 4:45, 5:22, 33:2-4, Psalms 78:5, 103:7, 147:19, Malachi 4:4, Luke 12:48, Romans 3:2, 9:4, etc.

<sup>35</sup> Romans 2:12, Ephesians 2:11-12; Deuteronomy 27:26, Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 1:18-21, 3:9, 3:23, 5:10-14, Galatians 3:12, 3:22, James 2:10, Revelation 20:12-15.

No doubt; the Christian delights in the Law of God after the inward man.<sup>36</sup> But Curtis proposes a kind of *Replacement Theology*<sup>37</sup>—

***Because of Israel's violation of the covenant, Jehovah (the God who keeps covenant) determined to annul the old covenant and make a new covenant with a new people. "On that Day" God would break the covenant, take his flock who had broken the covenant, and bring them to slaughter...***

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### ~Conclusion~

When Full-Preterists appeal to the agreed premise that Christians are no longer under the Old Covenant laws to support their claim that all Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, they have a tendency to compromise other easily inferred propositions of Scripture. Although Full-Preterists may be correct to insist that the Old Covenant age ended c. AD 70, the opinions examined above fundamentally differ from the foundational categories of the debate. To support their peculiar arguments, they must take certain crucial assumptions (e.g. the grammatical elements of their exegesis such as verb *mood*, and the assumption that *the Law was destroyed in AD 70*) and employ artificial hermeneutical applications (e.g. *the already-but not yet* explanation). The implications of this common Full-Preterist interpretation are aberrant to Christian dogmata and lacking in exegetical warrant.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Psalms 40:8, Isaiah 42:21, Matthew 5:20, Romans 3:28-31, 7:25, 8:4, 10:4, 13:8-10, 1 Corinthians 9:21, Galatians 2:19, 5:18-23, Hebrews 10:15-16, James 2:8-12.

<sup>37</sup> “The New Covenant, as mediated by Christ, is a brand NEW covenant, which totally replaces the Old Covenant.” (Curtis, 2006); “The Old Covenant has NO place in the New Covenant! Why is that so hard to understand? The New Covenant replaced the Old. And believers today live under the New, not the Old Covenant” (Curtis)

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~Addendum~

**Selections from Westminster Confession of Faith**

**7.2** The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

**7.3** Man, by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

**7.4** This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

**7.5** This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come: which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament.

**7.6** Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations

**19.1** God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it: and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

**19.2** This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the four first commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six our duty to man.

**19.3** Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.

**19.5** The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the



authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

**19.6** Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs, and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof; although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and not under grace.

**19.7** Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

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