

What is the difference between full and hyper-preterism?

response by Ward Fenley

It seems that about once a year a reminder needs to be made about the difference between full and hyper preterism.

Full preterism is simply the view that all eschatological events necessary to secure complete redemption for all believers, past, present, and future have been fulfilled. Full preterism is not universalism. Full preterism does not deny the need for faith in Jesus Christ. It merely says that the redemptive events necessary for eternal life (i.e., the cross, resurrection) were accomplished. The Parousia comes through *the* faith of Jesus Christ. That is, it is called *the* Faith because it is given by God. Therefore it is called "the righteousness of the faith" in reference to Abraham. And all who believe believe because they were given faith and considered a part of Him to Whom the promise was made, i.e. "to His Seed, which is Christ." Full preterism affirms the gates of the city are always open (Isaiah 60; Revelation 21) for those who were promised everlasting life before the age began. God will give them faith and will give them His Parousia or Presence, through Whose Presence they are immediately placed in the holiest and made the righteousness of Christ.

Hyperpreterism is not universalism. Hyperpreterism is the belief that no one after AD 70 will have eternal life and that no soteriological benefit (i.e. salvific benefit) extends beyond AD 70. They (hyperpreterists) may believe that those particular events happened, but because they do not believe they apply past AD 70, they, by sheer virtue of their own confession, do not believe in the need for forgiveness of sin. After all, if you don't believe Christ died for you since you were born after AD 70, then you do not believe the Gospel as it is clearly portrayed in the Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 And, brothers, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and in which you stand; (2) by which you also are being kept safe, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, (4) and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

Notice that mandatory within the Gospel elements is to believe "that Christ died for *our* sins." If one believes that Christ only died for those pre-AD 70, then they do not believe Christ died for their sins or the sins of anyone else post AD 70. Again, hyperpreterism is not the Gospel. Belief in the Gospel is to believe that Christ's work was for *you*.

Please mark the distinctions, as there is always going to be someone or some idea purporting to affirm errant definitions of full preterism and hyperpreterism.

Again, neither full preterism nor hyperpreterism is universalism. First of all, a hyperpreterist could not be a universalist because, according to the hyperpreterists, no one after AD 70 has eternal life. This view clearly denies universalism. After all, universalism says that all men everywhere throughout all time have or will have eternal life through any path they take.

And please make the distinction between universalism and universal redemption. Universalism teaches that all roads lead to eternal life. Universal redemption teaches that Christ effectually redeemed all men unrestrictively and that is why all men have or will have eternal life.

Biblical redemption teaches that Christ's death effectually brought about redemption for all He intended to redeem. And the Gospel is that those whom Christ intended to redeem either do believe or one day will believe. To go beyond this affirmation is to step into the mind and knowledge of God. We simply assume that all who confess Jesus as Lord, His Resurrection, and salvation solely by grace are His. We are to make no judgments about who is or who is not elect or who is predestined. Paul simply declares that we as believers are a part of the church, which was predestined to eternal life. If you have true faith given by Christ, that faith will continue, for "we are not of those who draw back unto perdition, but we are of those who believe unto the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39), "unless you have believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:2). There are some who have believed in vain:

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out so that it might be revealed that they were not all of us.

Though I have heard some say that one's affirmation of fulfilled eschatology either shows one's damnation or salvation, I do not believe this to be so. All of us are at different places in our theological journey, learning as God's gracious Providence commands. We learn no faster or slower than He dictates. We cannot judge one's salvation simply because they are supposedly learning at a slower pace. After all, we preterists above all know that God has been ever so long-suffering toward us, and will always be continually long-suffering toward us as He gradually and eternally removes the baggage of humanism from our minds. The throwing off of baggage is an eternal process, but it is a process that is God-ordained for the eternal acknowledgement by God's children that His mercies indeed endure forever and that His compassions fail not. Physical death does not stop the process of learning; for how could we possibly exhaust the knowledge of the unsearchable riches, holiness, and power of the eternal God? If we were ever able to come to a complete knowledge of God, then would we not be God? Knowing how long-suffering the eternal God will be with our eternally finite knowledge should cause humility and more long-suffering toward others who might not be where we *think* they should be, especially in light of the fact that if they don't immediately believe what we think they should believe, then that is God's absolute sovereignty over their hearts. He knows what is best for them at any given time in the scheme of their eternal pursuit of truth.

Thanks for reading.

Ward