

February 24, 2009 -- Covenant Radio has released an official position on the theological paradigm known as hyperpreterism. It is as follows:

3 MAIN BELIEFS OF HYPERPRETERISM

1. Jesus came back once & for all in the year AD70
2. The resurrection of the believers happened in the year AD70.
3. The judgment of the wicked & righteous happened in the year AD70.

These 3 points are driven by an over arching premise which is that Christian interpretation & indeed basic Christian understanding has been terribly in error for over 2000 years. Some hyperpreterists even claim there has been a 2000 year conspiracy to cover up the 3 beliefs above.

Now, why is it called HYPER-preterism? The word "hyper" in the theological sense means to go beyond the original intent or scope -- so HYPER-preterism is a belief that goes beyond an original version that was simply called preterism. Traditional/Historic preteristic beliefs do see some significance in the AD70 events (See Matthew 24:1-3, Mark 13:1-3, Luke 21:5-7,20) BUT classic preterism did NOT advocate the 3 beliefs mentioned above. Thus, hyperpreterism is considered HYPER just as much as HYPER-Calvinism goes beyond the original intent & scope of traditional/historic Calvinism.

Hyperpreterism is also Heterodox...a heresy. It is NOT a heresy just because we don't like it, nor is it a heresy because it is "new", nor is it a heresy because the majority oppose it. Hyperpreterism is a heresy because it is unlike anything ever taught in the history of Christianity...from the very founding to now. Hyperpreterism is as much outside of historic Christianity as is Mormonism & Jehovah's Witnesses. Hyperpreterists often call their system: Full Preterism, Covenant Eschatology, Consistent Preterism, Fulfilled Eschatology, or a new name bandied about in attempt to make it sound more legitimate, Biblical Preterism.

WHERE DID HYPERPRETERISM COME FROM?

The present day versions of hyperpreterism all originated in the 1970s with a man named Max King. King was a "church of Christ" minister who wrote several hyperpreterist books in the 1970-1980s. Hyperpreterism before that was mainly manifested among Universalists (people who believed no one would ultimately be condemned -- "everyone is saved"). Perhaps the most infamous group of pre-1970 hyperpreterists was a group in upstate New York in the late 1800s. This group was called the "Oneida Community" (search wikipedia.org). This group formed a commune & practiced their hyperpreterism to the extent of no longer having individual marriages but instead everyone having sexual relations with everyone else -- they thought this would be a "logical" conclusion if the resurrection is already passed & people are no longer given in marriage. (Mt 22:30)

Hyperpreterism died out and was revived again in the 1970s. Hyperpreterism is experiencing a resurgence & is beginning to show itself among the churches. Hyperpreterists typically don't (or can't) maintain their own congregations so instead, "lone ranger" hyperpreterists either try to influence existing congregations or they drop out of attending church and instead try to influence Christians.

HOW TO COMBAT HYPERPRETERISM

Hyperpreterism by design is an arrogant & egotistical system -- after all it claims 2000 years worth of Christian interpretation has been MAJORLY wrong, so trying to interact with a hyperpreterist one on one will be a frustrating & futile endeavor. Hyperpreterism redefines theological terms & definitions so although a Christian may think they are having a fruitful, scriptural discussion with a hyperpreterist, you must recognize that hyperpreterism like Mormonism & Jehovah's Witnesses may use Christian sounding terms & even appeal to the Bible -- but just like those other cults -- hyperpreterism is anything but Christian.

To combat hyperpreterism you MUST keep them on the main premise -- that they are trying to tell you that God could not or would not maintain within His Church a basic & correct understanding of the end times. Don't let hyperpreterists leave this premise no matter how much they claim to want to talk about "scripture" or have an "exegetical" conversation. Premises matter and the hyperpreterist premise is faulty to the core.

HYPERPRETERIST TACTICS

Hyperpreterists will try several tactics to break down the defenses (armor) of a Christian. A couple things they will do are:

1. Claim they are only using "Sola Scriptura/Bible alone" methods
2. Claim Hyperpreterism always existed in "seed" form.
3. Claim there has never been a Church council on eschatology.
4. Claim you are unloving or mean to not accept them.
5. Attempt to get legitimate teachers/preachers to validate them.

Hyperpreterism often claims it is merely reading/interpreting the Bible as it is written. Hyperpreterists will also pit their interpretation against 2000 years of Christian interpretation by claiming they don't follow the "Creeds" (this comes from its 'church of Christ' foundation). The word

Creed, in Latin simply means "belief". So, unless hyperpreterists are trying to claim they don't believe anything, they too have a "creed" -- its just that the hyperpreterist "creed" goes against everything that was ever considered Christian. Another tactic hyperpreterists try to employ under point #1 is to compare themselves with the Reformation & the Reformers like Martin Luther. The problem is, hyperpreterism would have been rejected by the Reformers as well. Hyperpreterists are more like the "radical reformation" (look up on wikipedia.org) which wanted to chuck everything & start over. The Reformers & especially Martin Luther, rejected the radicals as heretics.

Lastly on this point, hyperpreterists will often try to claim that Luther was teaching something never before taught in the Church -- this is categorically untrue. Luther was merely re-espousing long advocated beliefs that are found more than just in "seed" form both in the Bible & in historic Christian interpretation. (see Augustinianism for example).

Point #2 in hyperpreterists tactics is one used by so-called "conservative hyperpreterists". They want to pretend there are traces of hyperpreterism all throughout Christian history. What they do is find a quote by some theologian that sounds like preterism or hyperpreterism & then tell you it is a "seed" of their belief even if the overall premise & position of the theologian is clearly in opposition to hyperpreterism. The hyperpreterists attempt to find "seeds" of hyperpreterism under every little theological rock and it is merely wishful thinking. No serious theologian in history has ever advocated what hyperpreterists believe...now that in itself doesn't make hyperpreterism wrong, but it does make their claim to find "seeds" a dishonesty.

Point #3 is an oft repeated tactic of hyperpreterist followers who have picked up this line from hyperpreterist teachers -- most hyperpreterist followers (not all) have scant knowledge of Christian history.

First, the use of this tactic seems to miss the point as to why councils were called. Church councils were not called to impose a new belief on the Church but rather councils were primarily called only when a new heresy rose up. So, the reason there has never been a need for a specific council addressing eschatology is because there has never been a heresy divergent enough from the traditional teaching on eschatology. The point is, even with variances among the existing eschatological models -- ALL of the eschatological models AGREE on EXACTLY the 3 beliefs that hyperpreterism denies. This is significant.

Point #4 is used when all else fails. Hyperpreterists will begin to claim anyone who opposes them must "hate" them & want them to "go to hell" -- even if their opponents never use these words. Hyperpreterists will play the victim & persecuted in attempt to gain sympathy. Don't buy it.

Point #5 is used more by the hyperpreterist "leaders". They will try to get well known, respected teachers/preachers to say hyperpreterism is not a heresy & then they will cite these people in their defense. I've seen hyperpreterists do with people such as Gary DeMar & James Jordan. Hyperpreterists will also attempt to join legitimate groups such as ETS or a local seminary & use this as "proof" they are valid.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is, hyperpreterism is just as NON-Christian as is Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. We should treat hyperpreterism & hyperpreterists the same way we treat Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. That doesn't mean we have to "hate" them -- as Christians really shouldn't hate anyone -- but we most certainly should not go around acting like hyperpreterists are Christian brothers & sisters. And we should be suspect of everything they "teach" as it is all tinged with their hyperpreterism (hyperpreterism ISN'T just about eschatology -- it affects everything as all of our beliefs affect our other beliefs). Remember, Mormonism also claims to follow Jesus, even to the point of promoting itself as "Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints". Don't be fooled. Hyperpreterism is a heresy & anyone advocating it in principle or by name is a heretic. Pray for them to be released from this horrible error.

It is the position of Covenant Radio, including its host, that this paradigm of hyper preterism needs to be called for what it is. ***It is a heterodox movement and position.*** We realize that this will annoy some people that are followers of this theological movement and that is *not* the intention of this official statement. The intention is to make clear to all the listeners and potential guests where Covenant Radio sees this paradigm and why it is to be rejected as a viable position eschatologically.