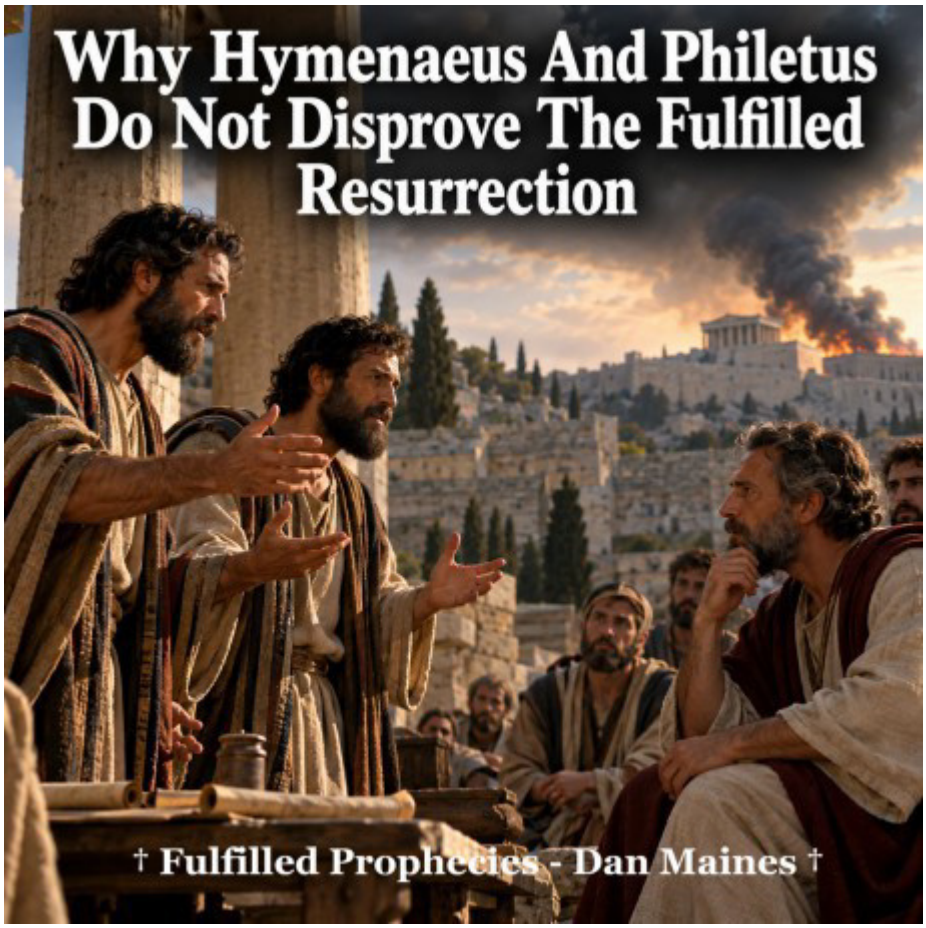
# Fulfilled Prophecies



Why Hymenaeus And Philetus Do Not Disprove The Fulfilled Resurrection




By Dan Maines

**Why Hymenaeus And Philetus Do Not Disprove The Fulfilled Resurrection**

**Introduction**

† One of the most frequently used arguments against Full Preterism comes from Paul's warning about Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:17-18. These two men were teaching that the resurrection had already taken place, and Paul condemned their teaching because it was upsetting the faith of believers.

† Futurists and even some Partial Preterists use this passage to

argue that anyone who believes the resurrection was fulfilled in AD 70 is repeating the same error. However, this argument overlooks something extremely important. Paul wrote his warning before AD 70, while the resurrection was still future to his original audience (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15).

† The question isn't whether Hymenaeus and Philetus were wrong. Paul clearly said they were. The question is why they were wrong, when they made their claim, and whether their error can legitimately be applied to believers who recognize the fulfillment of prophecy in AD 70 (2 Timothy 2:17-18; Matthew 24:34).

† We must distinguish between declaring a prophecy fulfilled before its appointed time and recognizing that fulfillment after the time Jesus established had passed. Those are two completely different claims (Daniel 12:1-2; Luke 21:22).

† Let's examine the Scriptures in their historical setting and see why Paul's warning doesn't overturn the fulfilled resurrection.

**The Error Of Hymenaeus And Philetus**
**2 Timothy 2:16-18**

But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,
and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,
men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

† Notice exactly what Paul condemned. These men were claiming that the resurrection had already taken place. Paul didn't say the resurrection would never occur. He identified their declaration of completed fulfillment as false at the time they were making it (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

† Paul was writing during the first-century transition between the Old Covenant and the completed establishment of the New Covenant order. The resurrection was still approaching, and the appointed time hadn't yet arrived (Hebrews 10:37; Daniel 12:1-

2).
† Their teaching upset the faith of some because it contradicted what the apostles were still expecting. Paul continued to describe the resurrection as an approaching event involving the dead in Christ and those who remained alive until the Lord's coming (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
† Scripture doesn't explain every detail of what Hymenaeus and Philetus believed. It doesn't tell us whether they denied any future resurrection altogether or misunderstood its nature. What it explicitly identifies is their false claim that the resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:18).
† Therefore, we shouldn't invent additional doctrines for these men. We should examine the actual accusation Paul made and the historical timing of that accusation (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

**Paul Was Still Expecting The Resurrection**
**1 Corinthians 15:51-52**
Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
† Paul included himself and his original audience in the expectation of the resurrection. His words, "we will not all sleep," show that he anticipated some believers would remain alive when the promised change occurred (1 Thessalonians 4:15).
† This expectation belongs to the first-century church, not to an audience thousands of years removed from Paul's generation. The apostles were living during the approaching conclusion of the Old Covenant age (Matthew 24:3, 34; Hebrews 10:37).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the resurrection concerned the completion of Christ's victory over covenant death, the raising of those who had died in faith, and the transformation of the living covenant community into the completed New Covenant order (Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).
† Hymenaeus and Philetus were wrong because they

announced that this promised event had already occurred while Paul was still teaching that it remained ahead of them (2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

**The Resurrection And The Coming Of Christ**
**1 Thessalonians 4:15**
For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
† Paul again included himself among those who might remain alive until the coming of Christ. He wasn't describing an event necessarily thousands of years away. He was addressing the expectations and concerns of living first-century believers (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).
† The Thessalonians were concerned about believers who had already died. Paul reassured them that the dead in Christ wouldn't be excluded from the promised resurrection and gathering (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
† The resurrection and the coming of Christ belonged together. They weren't disconnected events separated by thousands of years. The resurrection was associated with the Lord's coming and the completion of His promised victory (1 Corinthians 15:23-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
† That's why the timing matters. Before the coming of Christ, claiming that the resurrection had already happened contradicted apostolic teaching. After its fulfillment, recognizing what Christ accomplished doesn't repeat that premature announcement (2 Timothy 2:18; Matthew 24:34).

**Daniel Established The Timing Of The Resurrection**
**Daniel 12:1-2**
Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.
Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake,

these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.
† Daniel connected the resurrection with a particular time of distress. He didn't present the resurrection as an isolated event without historical context (Daniel 12:1-2).
† The time of distress, the deliverance of God's people, and the resurrection are presented together. This connection is essential because Jesus later identified the great tribulation with the judgment approaching His own generation (Matthew 24:21, 34).
† Daniel's resurrection prophecy concerned the people living under the covenantal promises given to Israel. Its fulfillment marked the vindication of the righteous and the judgment of the wicked at the conclusion of that covenant age (Daniel 12:1-3; Matthew 24:30-34).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the resurrection reached its appointed fulfillment in AD 70, when the Old Covenant order came to its final historical end and Christ's promised judgment was manifested against Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 8:13).
† Hymenaeus and Philetus were declaring the resurrection completed before that appointed covenantal conclusion. Their error doesn't establish that the resurrection must remain future forever (2 Timothy 2:18; Daniel 12:1-2).

**Jesus Identified The Generation Of The Great Tribulation Matthew 24:21**
For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.
† Jesus used language corresponding to Daniel's description of an unparalleled time of distress. This connects His warning about Jerusalem with Daniel's prophetic setting (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:15-21).
† The tribulation wasn't an event Jesus placed thousands of years beyond His disciples. He warned those living in Judea to flee when the approaching danger became evident (Matthew

24:15-20; Luke 21:20-21).
† The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70 provides the historical setting for understanding the fulfillment of these warnings. The same prophetic context includes the promised deliverance and resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2; Luke 21:20-22).

**Matthew 24:34**
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Jesus established the time limitation. He said that His own generation wouldn't pass away until all these things took place. We have no biblical authority to redefine that generation as people living thousands of years later (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).
† If Daniel connected the resurrection with the great tribulation, and Jesus placed that tribulation within His generation, then the resurrection must be understood within that same prophetic framework (Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:21, 34).
† This is the central difference between the fulfilled perspective and futurism. We accept the time statements Jesus gave rather than moving their fulfillment into an indefinite future (Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 21:32).

**Jesus Said All Written Prophecy Would Be Fulfilled**
**Luke 21:22**
because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
† Jesus identified the approaching judgment against Jerusalem as the days of vengeance. He connected those events with the fulfillment of what had been written in the prophetic Scriptures (Luke 21:20-24).
† Daniel's resurrection prophecy was part of those prophetic writings. From the fulfilled perspective, we can't separate the resurrection from the first-century fulfillment Jesus announced (Daniel 12:1-2; Luke 21:22).
† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 marked the conclusion of the Old Covenant age. It wasn't the destruction of the

physical universe, but the judgment of the covenant system that had rejected its Messiah (Matthew 23:37-38; Hebrews 8:13).
† That's why recognizing the resurrection as fulfilled in AD 70 doesn't contradict Paul. It recognizes the completion of what Paul was still awaiting when he wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

**The Coming Of Christ Was Near**
**Hebrews 10:37**
FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.
† The writer of Hebrews told his original audience that Christ's coming would occur in a very little while. Those words communicated genuine nearness to the believers receiving the letter (Hebrews 10:36-39).
† The passage doesn't describe a delay of thousands of years. It encourages believers to persevere because the promised coming was approaching (Hebrews 10:35-39).
† This expectation agrees with Paul's anticipation of the resurrection and Jesus' promise concerning His generation (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Matthew 24:34).
† Hymenaeus and Philetus were wrong to announce fulfillment before the appointed time. But once the promised coming occurred, the circumstances underlying their error no longer remained the same (2 Timothy 2:18; Hebrews 10:37).

**John Was Told The Time Was Near**
**Revelation 22:10**
And he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.
† John was specifically instructed not to seal the prophecy because its fulfillment was near. This contrasts with Daniel, who was told to seal his prophecy until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4; Revelation 22:10).
† The fulfilled perspective recognizes the first-century urgency of Revelation. Its opening and closing statements repeatedly emphasize that the events were approaching (Revelation 1:1-3;

Revelation 22:6-10).
† We shouldn't accept the nearness of these prophecies when discussing their original audience and then abandon that nearness when discussing the resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2; Revelation 22:10).
† The timing of fulfillment must remain consistent throughout Scripture. The resurrection, judgment, and coming of Christ belonged to the approaching completion of the Old Covenant age (Matthew 24:3, 34; 1 Corinthians 15:23-26).

**The Resurrection Was Christ's Victory Over Death**
**1 Corinthians 15:54**
But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.
† Paul connected the resurrection with the victory over death. From the fulfilled perspective, the death being defeated was fundamentally the covenant condemnation introduced through Adam and overcome through Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26).
† Physical death continues today, but believers aren't separated from Christ by covenant condemnation. Those who belong to Him possess eternal life and have passed from death into life (John 5:24; Romans 8:1-2).
† The resurrection completed the transition from the condemnation associated with Adam and the Old Covenant order into the life established through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 8:1-4).
† This doesn't mean Christians no longer experience biological death. It means biological death doesn't prevent believers from being with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23).
† Hymenaeus and Philetus were wrong about when the resurrection had occurred. Their error doesn't determine the nature of the resurrection or establish that Christ's victory must remain unfinished today (2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

**Paul Said God's Foundation Remained Secure**
**2 Timothy 2:19**
Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.
† After warning about Hymenaeus and Philetus, Paul reassured Timothy that God's foundation remained secure. False teaching couldn't overturn God's knowledge of those who belonged to Him (2 Timothy 2:17-19).
† Paul's concern wasn't simply that someone used the words "already taken place." His concern was that a false declaration was leading believers away from the truth and upsetting their faith (2 Timothy 2:18).
† We must examine doctrine according to Scripture rather than assuming that every statement about fulfilled prophecy is equivalent to the error Paul condemned (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15).
† The fulfilled perspective doesn't teach that the resurrection happened before Paul wrote his letters. It teaches that the resurrection was fulfilled afterward, within the generation Jesus identified (Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:34).

**The Kingdom Was Already Present**
**Colossians 1:13**
For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
† Paul didn't tell believers that they would have to wait thousands of years to enter Christ's kingdom. He said they had already been transferred into it (Colossians 1:12-14).
† The kingdom was already present during the apostolic age, even while the final transition from the Old Covenant order was approaching completion (Luke 17:20-21; Hebrews 12:28).
† The resurrection's fulfillment didn't create a different Savior or another gospel. It completed the promises associated with Christ's covenantal victory (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Hebrews 9:26-28).
† We live today as members of Christ's established kingdom.

We're not waiting for another resurrection event to establish what Christ has already accomplished (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:22-28).

**Historical References**

† Flavius Josephus, in The Jewish War, Books VI and VII, described Jerusalem's destruction, the burning of the temple, and the devastation that followed the Roman siege in AD 70. His historical record establishes the reality of the judgment Jesus had warned would come upon Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24).

† Josephus wasn't writing a Christian explanation of the resurrection, and he didn't identify AD 70 as its spiritual fulfillment. His testimony supports the historical setting of Jerusalem's destruction, not the theological interpretation by itself (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:20-22).

† Eusebius, in Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5, recorded the tradition that Christians in Jerusalem were instructed to leave the city and relocate to Pella before its destruction. This tradition corresponds with Jesus' warning that His followers should flee when Jerusalem's judgment approached (Luke 21:20-21).

† Eusebius wrote centuries after these events, so his account should be recognized as a later historical tradition rather than an eyewitness report. Nevertheless, it preserves an early Christian understanding of the significance of Jerusalem's destruction (Matthew 24:15-21).

† Neither Josephus nor Eusebius provides an eyewitness account of the covenantal resurrection. Our understanding of its fulfillment must come from the prophetic connections and timing established in Scripture (Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:34).

**How It Applies To Us Today**

† We shouldn't allow a warning about premature fulfillment to become an argument against fulfillment itself. Hymenaeus and Philetus were condemned for declaring the resurrection completed before its appointed time, not for believing that God's

promises would eventually be fulfilled (2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).
† We must examine the audience, historical setting, and timing of every passage. Removing Paul's warning from its first-century context changes the issue he was addressing (2 Timothy 2:16-19; Matthew 24:34).
† We shouldn't build doctrine on assumptions about what Hymenaeus and Philetus might have believed. Scripture identifies their error, and we should remain within what Scripture actually reveals (2 Timothy 2:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:15).
† We can rejoice that Christ has fulfilled His promises. Our confidence rests in His completed victory, not in an expectation that He must return to finish something left undone (Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 10:37).
† The fulfilled perspective doesn't remove our hope. It establishes our confidence in the faithfulness of Christ, who accomplished what He promised within the generation He identified (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:22).
† We now live in the blessings of the New Covenant, with direct access to the Father through Jesus Christ. We don't need to return to the shadows of the Old Covenant or wait for another covenantal age to begin (Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18-22).

**Galatians 5:16**
But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
† Understanding fulfilled prophecy should strengthen our daily walk with Christ. We aren't called to spend our lives fearing an approaching prophetic catastrophe. We're called to walk by the Spirit and live according to the righteousness Christ has established (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:16).
† The fulfillment of prophecy doesn't eliminate our responsibility to live faithfully. It gives us confidence that God's promises are trustworthy and that His kingdom is already established (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).
† That's why the fulfilled perspective should produce gratitude,

peace, love, and faithful service. We're living in the reality of Christ's completed covenantal work, not waiting for His victory to become effective (Galatians 5:22-25; Colossians 2:13-15).

**Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Who were Hymenaeus and Philetus?
**A:** They were men identified by Paul as having departed from the truth by teaching that the resurrection had already taken place. Their teaching was upsetting the faith of some believers (2 Timothy 2:17-18).
**Q:** Why did Paul condemn their teaching?
**A:** Because they declared the resurrection completed while Paul was still teaching that it remained future to his original audience. Their announcement was premature (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).
**Q:** Does Paul explain exactly what these men believed about the resurrection?
**A:** No. Paul identifies their false claim about its timing, but he doesn't provide a complete explanation of their understanding of its nature. We shouldn't add details Scripture doesn't reveal (2 Timothy 2:17-18).
**Q:** Does 2 Timothy 2:18 prove Full Preterism is heresy?
**A:** No. The passage condemns a claim made before the resurrection's appointed fulfillment. Full Preterism places that fulfillment afterward, in AD 70. The disagreement must be evaluated through the resurrection prophecies and their timing, not merely through the fact that both discussions concern a completed resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:34).
**Q:** How do we know the resurrection belonged to the first-century fulfillment?
**A:** Daniel connected the resurrection with an unparalleled time of distress. Jesus connected that distress with the great tribulation and placed its fulfillment within His generation (Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:21, 34).
**Q:** Was the resurrection supposed to involve physical bodies coming out of graves?
**A:** The fulfilled perspective understands the resurrection

primarily as the completion of Christ's victory over covenant death, including the raising of the faithful dead and the transformation of the living covenant community. This interpretation connects the resurrection with the removal of condemnation and the completion of the Old Covenant age (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 54-57).

**Q:** If the resurrection was fulfilled in AD 70, what happens when believers die today?

**A:** Believers are immediately with the Lord. They don't enter Hades to await another covenantal resurrection. Paul expressed his desire to depart and be with Christ and described being absent from the body as being at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23).

**Q:** Doesn't 2 Timothy 3 warn about people gathering teachers who tell them what they want to hear?

**A:** The warning about accumulating teachers according to personal desires appears in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. The proper response is to examine all teaching through Scripture, including the audience and timing of prophecy. Disagreement alone doesn't establish that someone has rejected sound doctrine (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15).

**Q:** Does recognizing fulfilled prophecy mean Christians no longer need to walk in obedience?

**A:** Absolutely not. Paul instructed believers to walk by the Spirit, demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, and live according to their calling in Christ. Fulfillment establishes our confidence in Christ, not permission to live in disobedience (Galatians 5:16, 22-25; Ephesians 4:1).

**Q:** What is the most important distinction between Hymenaeus and Philetus and the fulfilled perspective?

**A:** Hymenaeus and Philetus declared the resurrection completed before the appointed fulfillment. The fulfilled perspective recognizes its completion in AD 70, after Paul's letters and within the generation Jesus identified. The issue is the timing of fulfillment, and that timing must be established from Scripture (2 Timothy 2:18; Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:34).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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**Source Index**

† 2 Timothy 2:16-18, 2 Timothy 2:19, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Corinthians 15:54, 1 Thessalonians 4:15, Daniel 12:1-2, Matthew 24:21, Matthew 24:34, Luke 21:22, Hebrews 10:37, Revelation 22:10, Colossians 1:13, Galatians 5:16

† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books VI-VII; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5

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