

Fulfilled Prophecies

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Preterism - What Is Preterism and Fulfilled Eschatology?



By Dan Maines

What Is Preterism and Fulfilled Eschatology? By a Believer in the Fulfilled View

Let me take some time today to explain something that many people have either misunderstood or never even heard of. It is not a religion. It is not a denomination. It is simply a biblical understanding of something called eschatology.

What Is Eschatology?

Eschatology is a theological word that simply means "the study of last things" or "the study of end times." It comes from the Greek word *eschatos*, which means "last." When we study passages like Matthew 24, the book of Revelation, Daniel, or 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, we are engaging in eschatology. But the key question is this: When did these things take place, and who were they meant for?

What Is Preterism?

Preterism is one way of interpreting eschatology. The word "preterism" comes from the Latin word *praeter*, which means "past." In other words, a preterist believes that most or all of the prophetic scriptures related to the "end times" have already been fulfilled. These weren't predictions for thousands of years in the future. They were about things that happened in the first century.

Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 24:34**, "**Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**" That was His audience. He was talking to them, not to us. And everything He spoke of in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 came true in the judgment against Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The Different Forms of Preterism

There are a few different understandings under the preterist umbrella:

Partial Preterism: This view says many of the prophecies were fulfilled in 70 AD, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the Great Tribulation, but they believe Jesus' physical return and the final resurrection are still in the future.

Full Preterism: Also called "consistent" or "fulfilled eschatology." This is the view I hold. It teaches that all prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD, including the return of Christ, the

resurrection of the dead, the judgment, and the arrival of the New Heavens and New Earth.

Hyper Preterism: This is a term usually used by critics to attack full preterists. I do not use it for myself. I believe full preterism is not extreme, it is just consistent with what the scriptures actually teach.

Israel Only (I.O.): This is a more extreme fringe view that claims the Bible was only written to and for Israel, and that salvation, resurrection, and the New Covenant were exclusively for them. According to I.O., no one outside the bloodline of Israel has any part in the gospel. I strongly reject this view. Scripture teaches that the nations were always part of God's plan and were included in the promises through faith. Paul clearly wrote in **Galatians 3:28** that, "**There is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**" The gospel was for all nations.

Satan's Little Season (SLS): Some who claim to be preterists teach that we are now living in what they call "Satan's Little Season," a supposed time of rebellion and deception after 70 AD. But Revelation 20:7-10 already places that short season immediately after the millennium, not 2,000 years later. If the millennium ended in the first century, then so did Satan's role. The text says clearly in **Revelation 20:10**, "**the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire.**" That is not a delayed event, it was fulfilled. SLS is a man-made invention trying to explain the presence of evil today, but it undermines the finality of Christ's victory and ignores the spiritual nature of the kingdom. The judgment is over. The devil has been cast out. We are not in a delay period, we are in the everlasting reign of Christ.

What Is Fulfilled Eschatology?

Fulfilled eschatology is the belief that all biblical prophecies regarding the end times have already been fulfilled. That includes:

The coming of the Lord (Matthew 16:27-28)

The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21)

The resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

The judgment (Revelation 20:12)

The arrival of the New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21:1)

These things were not future to us, they were future to them. And they were fulfilled when and how Jesus said they would be.

Preterism Is Not a Religion

Let me be clear. Preterism is not a religion. It is not a denomination. I don't attend a "preterist church." I am just a believer in Jesus Christ who takes seriously what He said and who He said it to. This view is simply a lens by which we read the scriptures faithfully and in context.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:18** about some who said the resurrection had already happened. That does not condemn fulfilled eschatology. It simply shows that timing matters. If Paul could correct those who were saying the resurrection was past in the wrong generation, then surely we should pay close attention to when the Bible actually says it would happen.

Preterism Is More Common Than People Think

Many people are surprised to learn that even well-known and respected theologians have held some form of preterist view.

The late R.C. Sproul, one of the most influential Reformed theologians of our time, was a partial preterist. He believed that much of Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation referred to events in the first century.

He is not alone. Throughout history, various pastors, teachers, and scholars have acknowledged the past fulfillment of key biblical prophecies. In fact, nearly every major denomination today has members who believe at least some eschatological prophecies have already been fulfilled. So this is not some fringe movement. It is a growing realization among believers who are re-examining scripture in context.

Jesus Fulfilled It All

Jesus said in **Luke 21:22**, "**These are days of vengeance, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.**"

He didn't say some things. He said all things. That's what fulfilled eschatology is all about.

I do not base this view on tradition. I base it on scripture, in context, and on the words of Jesus Himself.

Conclusion

So if you're wondering why so many of us are no longer waiting for the end but are instead living in the fullness of the kingdom now, it's because we believe Jesus kept His word. He returned just as He said He would, when He said He would. The New Covenant has no more waiting for judgment. No more fear of doom. Just life, peace, and righteousness in His eternal kingdom.

Hebrews 12:28 says, "**Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude.**"

We're not waiting for the kingdom. We've received it.

And that's the heart of what it means to believe in fulfilled eschatology.

Amen.

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