

Church Fathers Who Actually Believed the Second Coming Happened Already . . . With Quotes!

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THIS IS A BIG and controversial topic that I was truly excited to dive into headfirst. When I first encountered the idea that the Second Coming and End Times prophecies were fulfilled in the past, I immediately raised an eyebrow. How crazy is that!?

At first, I quickly dismissed it and continued along my Christian journey, as the concept seemed far too radical to be true. But everything changed when I was challenged with a Scripture I had no answer for. My immediate response was to fire back with questions and counterarguments, but the more I studied and listened to my friends' answers, the more it began to make sense. I couldn't believe it! Could a significant number of Christians today be mistaken about such a foundational belief? It seemed impossible.

Then came the pivotal moment. During one of our conversations, I asked the golden question: "If this is true, then how come none of the Church Fathers believed this? How come they didn't mention it?" My friend James simply replied, "But some did."

Wait a second! Who?!? And that's where this blog comes into play.¹ Over the past 15 years, I've been compiling my thoughts and notes, documenting every quote from Church Fathers that suggest they believed the coming of the Lord happened in the past. Some believed all of it happened and was fulfilled, and others believed mostly everything was fulfilled. I encourage you to keep reading with an open mind and open heart. Consider the facts and come to your own conclusion.

Understanding Fulfilled Eschatology and the Early Church

The concept that Christ's Second Coming occurred in the first century — often termed "preterism" or "fulfilled eschatology" or "victorious eschatology" — has its roots in early Christian interpretations of Scripture. While this view is not mainstream today, several prominent Church Fathers held this belief, interpreting key eschatological prophecies as fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Let's explore some of these Church Fathers and their writings that support this intriguing view.

Another important point to consider is that the perspectives of the Church Fathers varied on this issue. Some believed that all prophecies were fulfilled with the fall of the temple in AD 70, while others held that only certain prophecies were fulfilled during that time. Additionally, there were Church Fathers who initially believed that everything was fulfilled but later changed their stance – and vice versa. The key takeaway is that this belief is not a recent development; it was prominent and widely discussed throughout church history.

Let's take a look at the top 14 Church Fathers who, in my view, serve as strong examples of those who mostly believed in the fulfillment of the Second Coming (or at least a partial fulfillment) and considered the end times to be a thing of the past.

Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 263-339)

Eusebius, a prominent early church historian, connected the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 with the fulfillment of prophecies made by Jesus. He saw the destruction as a direct fulfillment of what Jesus predicted in the Gospels: *"All these things took place in this manner in the second year of the reign of Vespasian... it is fitting to observe how it was prophesied that these things should happen, and how our Savior's declaration was fulfilled in reality"* (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 7).²

St. John Chrysostom (AD 349-407)

John Chrysostom is known for his detailed exegesis of Scripture, particularly his homilies on Matthew, where he directly links the generation of the Apostles with the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies: *"For that this took place before the generation that then was did pass away, hear what He said, 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled'"* (John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, Homily 76).³

Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215)

Clement of Alexandria, a key early Christian theologian, believed that certain prophecies, such as the destruction of the temple, were fulfilled, but he did not fully adopt the belief that all end-times prophecies were fulfilled in the first century: *"The abomination of desolation is the desolation of the Temple, which has taken place"* (Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, Book VI, Chapter 6).⁴

Origen (AD 184-253)

Origen, an influential Christian scholar, interpreted some eschatological prophecies symbolically and acknowledged the fulfillment of certain events in the first century: *"All these things, therefore, as it is clear, were fulfilled, and what follows is also true"* (Origen, Commentary on Matthew, Book 24).⁵

St. Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430)

Augustine held to a partially preterist view, believing that some prophecies had been fulfilled in the past, particularly those regarding the fall of Jerusalem, while others were yet to come: *“For it is written that the generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled; and we see it was fulfilled... those predictions we read to be accomplished in the past”* (Augustine, City of God, Book XX, Chapter 5).⁶

Tertullian (AD 160-220)

Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, connected some end-times prophecies with the fall of Jerusalem, viewing them as fulfillments of what Jesus foretold: *“Therefore, when the disciples asked Him about the end of the age, it was of course with reference to what they had just seen: namely, that the stones of the temple had been thrown down”* (Tertullian, An Answer to the Jews, Chapter 13).⁷

Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 296-373)

Athanasius interpreted some prophetic passages symbolically and believed that certain events, including those related to the destruction of Jerusalem, were fulfilled, but he did not adopt a fully preterist position: *“It is manifest, therefore, that of the prophecy, which says, ‘And they shall look on Him whom they pierced,’ some part was fulfilled when they saw Him crucified”* (Athanasius, Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse 4, Chapter 4).⁸

Cyril of Jerusalem (c. AD 313-386)

Cyril of Jerusalem, a significant early Church Father, taught that the destruction of Jerusalem was a fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecies. In his *Catechetical Lectures*, he describes how the fall of Jerusalem aligned with what Jesus foretold in the Gospels: *“For it was Jesus Himself who spoke of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, and His words were fulfilled with precision in that generation. The city, which once was, is now in ruins”* (Cyril of Jerusalem).⁹

Irenaeus of Lyons (c. AD 130-202)

Irenaeus connected some prophetic fulfillments to events of the first century: *“For after our Lord rose from the dead, the disciples were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down upon them, were filled with all His gifts, and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things sent from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God”* (Irenaeus).¹⁰

Hippolytus of Rome (c. AD 170-235)

Hippolytus interpreted some prophecies as being fulfilled during the first century, particularly in relation to the coming of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem: *“The seventy weeks are cut short as determined, for they were finished at the time of Christ. They are completed at His coming. For Christ is the end of the law and the prophets”* (Hippolytus of Rome).¹¹

Epiphanius of Salamis (c. AD 310-403)

Epiphanius, known for his writings on heresies, connected the Roman invasion and destruction of Jerusalem with the fulfillment of most of Jesus' prophecies: *"And the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place... this prophecy was fulfilled in the very fact of the coming of the armies of Rome"* (Epiphanius).¹²

John of Damascus (c. AD 675-749)

John of Damascus, an influential theologian in the Eastern Orthodox Church, wrote about the fulfillment of some of Jesus' prophecies in the first century, particularly regarding the fall of Jerusalem. While he did not fully embrace a preterist view, he acknowledged that certain events described in the Gospels were fulfilled historically: *"The desolation of the Temple, the scattering of Israel, and the great tribulation that befell the city all came to pass as foretold. These things were not merely symbolic but were indeed fulfilled in the days of the Apostles"* (John of Damascus).¹³

Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335-394)

Gregory of Nyssa, an influential early Church Father and theologian, interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as a direct fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies. He believed that the tribulation and the fall of the city were significant events that aligned with what Christ foretold in the Gospels. Gregory saw these events as the culmination of specific biblical prophecies, marking the end of an era for the Jewish people: *"The tribulation and end of Jerusalem happened as Christ declared, fulfilling what was written"* (Gregory of Nyssa).¹⁴

Jerome (AD 347-420)

Jerome, one of the most prominent biblical scholars in early Christianity, emphasized that the destruction of the Temple and the ruin of Jerusalem were clear fulfillments of Jesus' warnings. In his commentaries, Jerome frequently referenced the events of AD 70 as key examples of prophecy fulfilled, viewing them as significant milestones in Christian eschatology. He held that these events were in direct fulfillment of Christ's predictions, which were recorded in the Gospels: *"The Lord's prophecies were fulfilled in the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple's destruction"* (Jerome).¹⁵

Honorable Mentions

Here are some honorable mentions of men of God throughout history who believed in a 100% fulfillment of end-time and Second Coming prophecies during the first century.

Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) – A Jesuit priest who was one of the earliest proponents of preterism in its more developed form, interpreting the Book of Revelation as primarily referring to events in the first century.

John Lightfoot (1602-1675) – An English clergyman and scholar who believed that many of the prophecies in the New Testament, including those in Matthew 24, were fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) – A Dutch theologian and jurist who interpreted much of the Book of Revelation as referring to events in the first century.

Johann Christian Overbeck (1750-1820) – A German theologian who held that most of the New Testament prophecies were fulfilled by the events of AD 70.

F.W. Farrar (1831-1903) – An Anglican cleric and author who argued that many prophecies in the New Testament referred to the destruction of Jerusalem and were fulfilled in the first century.

J. Stuart Russell (1816-1895) – A Scottish pastor and author of *The Parousia*, a significant work advocating for the belief that all prophecies, including the Second Coming, were fulfilled in the first century.

Milton Terry (1840-1914) – An American theologian who argued in favor of a fulfilled interpretation of Revelation and other prophetic texts.

Max King (1930-2023) – A modern theologian and a leading figure in developing and popularizing full preterism, often called “covenant eschatology,” in the 20th century.

Arthur Ogden (1920-2004) – An advocate of fulfilled covenant eschatology, who wrote and taught that all eschatological events were completed by AD 70.

David Chilton (1951-1997) – A Christian Reconstructionist author who later in life adopted and promoted full preterism, though he initially held a more partial preterist view.

Now here is a list of honorable mentions of Church Fathers and historians who held a partial-preterist-to-almost-full-preterist view.

Cyprian of Carthage (c. AD 200-258) – An early bishop and martyr, Cyprian saw the destruction of Jerusalem as a fulfillment of some of Jesus’ prophecies.

Ambrose of Milan (c. AD 340-397) – A prominent bishop and theologian, Ambrose interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as fulfilling significant eschatological prophecies while still expecting a future consummation of Christ’s kingdom.

Gregory the Great (c. AD 540-604) – As Pope and a key figure in the early Church, Gregory taught that some of the prophecies regarding tribulation and judgment were fulfilled in the first century.

John Cassian (c. AD 360-435) – A theologian and monastic leader, Cassian believed that some apocalyptic events had already occurred.

Andrew of Caesarea (AD 563-637) – An early commentator on Revelation, Andrew recognized that some of the prophecies in the New Testament were fulfilled in the first century while interpreting others as future events.

Theophylact of Ohrid (c. AD 1055-1107) – A Byzantine theologian, Theophylact saw the destruction of Jerusalem as a key fulfillment of prophecy.

Primasius of Hadrumetum (c. AD 500-567) – A North African bishop, Primasius viewed the fall of Jerusalem as a significant prophetic fulfillment but anticipated further eschatological events, including the resurrection.

Isidore of Seville (c. AD 560-636) – A renowned scholar and bishop, Isidore believed that the destruction of Jerusalem was a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies.

Bede the Venerable (c. AD 672-735) – An English monk and historian, Bede interpreted some of the apocalyptic prophecies as having been fulfilled in the first century but also believed in a future culmination of all things.

Ephrem the Syrian (c. AD 306-373) – A notable theologian and hymnographer, Ephrem believed that many of Jesus' prophecies were fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem.

Conclusion

I believe there are a few key takeaways here. Some Church Fathers believed that all prophecies were fulfilled by AD 70, while others believed that most were fulfilled during that time. Very few, if any, held the view that nothing was fulfilled at the fall of the temple. This event was monumental for Christianity, and it's something everyone should be aware of.

So, how should we approach this? In my view, we can gain valuable insights from these early Church Fathers, but the words that ultimately matter most are those of Jesus and the apostles as recorded in Scripture.

1. *“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened”* (Matt 24:34). In Matthew 24, Jesus makes it perfectly clear that the generation He was talking to would not pass away until all of these events took place. I did a deep dive into Matthew 24 and I encourage you to read it.¹⁶

2. *"Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom"* (Matt. 16:28). To further this thought, Jesus says here that some of the apostles "standing in front of Him" would not die until THEY saw the Son of Man coming. See also Mark 9:1.
3. *"Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened"* (Luke 21:32). In Luke, Jesus says that the generation He is speaking to would not pass until all of these things happened. A biblical generation is about 30-60 years, the time in which a whole generation of people pass away. For example, in 130 years our entire generation will be no more. Nobody will be alive then who is alive today. The entire generation would have passed away.
4. *"When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes"* (Matt 10:23). Jesus now states that the apostles will not even finish going through the towns of Israel before He comes.
5. *"For, 'In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay'"* (Heb 10:37). The phrase "in just a little while" also supports the idea that the coming of Christ was imminent in the first century. The people of Hebrews were being persecuted and they needed a Savior. Paul encouraged them that He was coming and was not going to delay.
6. *"You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"* (James 5:8-9). Who is "you"? This is a letter to a particular group of people. He is instructing them (the ones receiving the letter) to be patient and stand firm. Why would they have to be patient and stand firm for the coming of the Lord if that coming was not for them?
7. *"Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour"* (I John 2:18). Lots here. I John says that the last hour was the time when the letter was written. John also said that many antichrists had already come, and this was how they knew it was the last hour. He related the antichrist to the coming as a sign of the times.
8. *"The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place"* (Rev 1:1). Revelation was written by John on Patmos to seven literal churches in Asia. He was telling these Churches about events that would happen very soon. I wrote another article on the word *soon* in relation to Jesus coming soon.¹⁷ Why would John tell people about events that would happen soon if the events he was writing them about had nothing to do with them? It doesn't make sense. If it was not going to happen to them, John would have been clear, just like in the book of Daniel when Daniel was told by the angel that the events were not for him.

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan 12:4 ESV). “He said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end” (Dan 12:9 ESV).

9. *“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done”* (Rev 22:12). Lastly, and, honestly, there is so much more, John wrote to the seven churches in Asia and mentioned again that He was coming soon, but He also mentioned rewards and that He would give them out. So, what are the rewards? The rewards are often understood as the blessings and eternal rewards that believers receive based on their faithfulness and deeds. According to broader biblical teachings, these rewards can include:
 1. **Eternal Life** – The ultimate reward for those who believe in Christ (John 3:16).
 2. **Crowns** – Various crowns are mentioned in the New Testament as rewards for different forms of faithful service, such as the crown of life (James 1:12) and the crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8).
 3. **Authority and Responsibility** – In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:21), those who are faithful with what they are given are rewarded with greater responsibilities in God’s kingdom.
 4. **Fellowship with God** – Being in the presence of God and Christ in eternity is considered the ultimate reward (Rev 21:3-4).

We have ALL of these currently, and I do not know of a Pastor who preaches or teaches differently. So, if we have all the rewards that come from His coming, why would He need to come again?

Again, I am only bringing all of these points up for us to think about things differently. We are all growing in our walk with God, and I truly believe this is a season of refining our beliefs to truth that will sharpen our doubled-edged sword.

We are in a season where Christians are called to not be busier, but to be more effective, and our effectiveness comes with truth because it is the truth that sets us free! ✝

1. This article was first published at <https://soh.church/church-fathers-that-believed-the-second-coming-happened-already/>.
2. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm>
3. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200176.htm>
4. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02106.htm>
5. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf09.xv.iii.html>
6. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120120.htm>
7. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0308.htm>

8. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/28164.htm>
9. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310108.htm>
10. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103301.htm>
11. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0504.htm>
12. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3803.htm>
13. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3304.htm>
14. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2903.htm>
15. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3004.htm>
16. <https://soh.church/matthew-24-explained/>
17. <https://soh.church/jesus-is-coming-soon/>