**The Significance of AD 70 in Early Church History: Quotes  
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If the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled so much of biblical prophecy, then why is this not reflected in the views of the early church? Why is it that ***all of the early fathers***, when referring to Revelation and Matthew 24, see these as future events? (H. Wayne House & Tommy Ice)

(Greg) Bahnsen and (Kenneth) Gentry desire their readers to believe many ancient fathers were preterists regarding Daniel’s Seventy Weeks, the first portion of Christ’s Olivet Discourse, and/or Revelation. **This statement has proven to be false.** (Ron J. Bigalke, Jr., professor at Tyndale Theological Seminary)

Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. (Daniel 9:24 ESV)

And thus Christ became King of the Jews, reigning in Jerusalem in the fulfillment of the seven weeks. And in the sixty and two weeks the whole of Judaea was quiet, and without wars. And Christ our Lord, “the Holy of Holies,” having come and fulfilled the vision and the prophecy, was anointed in His flesh by the Holy Spirit of His Father. (Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215))

Vespasian, in the first year of his empire, subdues the Jews in war, and there are made 52 years, 6 months. For he reigned 11 years. And thus, in the day of their storming, the Jews fulfilled the 70 weeks predicted in Daniel…” (Tertullian (AD 145-220))

The weeks of years, which the prophet Daniel had predicted, extending to the leadership of Christ, have been fulfilled. (Origen (AD 185-254))

Accordingly the times must be inquired into of the predicted and future nativity of the Christ, and of his passion, and of the extermination of the city of Jerusalem, that is, its devastation. For Daniel says, “both the holy city and the holy place are exterminated together with the coming Leader, and that the pinnacle is destroyed unto ruin.”

And so, the times of the coming Christ, the Leader, must be inquired into, which we shall trace in Daniel; and, after computing them, shall prove Him to be come, even on the ground of the consequences which were ever announced as to follow His advent; in order that we may believe all to have been as well fulfilled as foreseen. (Tertullian (AD 145-220))

There are not lacking those who apply this passage to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus…These things are referred by some to those sufferings which were inflicted by the Romans upon the Jews…these things happened in part to Jewish Christians, who escaped the evils inflicted on Jerusalem by the Romans… (Andreas of Cappadocia Caesarea, On Revelation (AD 431-506))

Some refer this to the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian… Here, then, is manifestly shown to the Evangelist what things were to befall the Jews in their war against the Romans, in the way of avenging the sufferings inflicted upon Christ. (Arethas of Caesarea, *Commentary on Revelation*, 6th Century)

And I looked and there went out another horse that was red. That was the reign of Nero, red with the blood of many humans. And he who sat upon it, namely Nero himself, it was given to him, that is, permitted by God to take peace from the earth. (Alexander Minorita, *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, c. 1230))

That signified the reign of Vespasian and Titus. Black, because they had risen up obscurely. And it should be noted that the proceeding horse was red because then the blood of Romans was shed. Here it is black because he blackened other people with death.

*And he who sat upon it had a pair of balances in his hand.* This was Titus presiding over the empire from the authority of his father. He would weigh the punishment upon Jerusalem, that is, *so that might come upon her all the righteous blood which was shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel even to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah*, as Matthew 23:35 says. (Alexander Minorita, *Exposition of the Apocalypse,* c. 1230)

And so it was given to Nero to sit upon the red horse, upon the Roman Empire, that he might remove peace from the earth and that they might kill one another on account of the murders he committed even against Romans…

Therefore, a great sword was given to him, since it was given to him by divine permission, that he might kill the great Apostles and that he might begin the first great persecution against the faithful. (Peter Auriol, *Compendium of the Literal Sense of the Entire Divine Scripture*, c. 1319)

And so the black horse represents the kingdom of the Romans under Vespasian and Titus, either by reason of their animosity, since the color black is a sign of animosity in a horse, or because in that time the Roman kingdom blackened and exterminated Judea. (Peter Auriol, *Compendium of the Literal Sense of the Entire Divine Scripture*, c. 1319)

…that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are Christians, think otherwise. (Justin Martyr (100-150))

There is indeed a millennial reign mentioned by St. John; but the most, and those pious men, look upon these words as true indeed, but to be taken in a spiritual sense. (Ephiphanes (315-403))

This same historian (Papias) also gives other accounts, which he says **he adds as received by him from unwritten tradition**, likewise certain **strange parables of our Lord**, and of His doctrine and some **other matters rather too fabulous**. In these he says there would be a certain millennial after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; **which things he appears to have imagined**, as if they were authorized by the apostolic narrations, **not understanding correctly those matters which they propounded mystically in their representations**. For he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses; yet **he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers**, urging the antiquity of man, **were carried away into similar opinions**; as, for instance, Irenaeus, or any other that adopted such sentiments. (Eusebius Pamphilius (AD 260-340))

And to give you confidence, when you have thus truly repented, that there remains for you a trustworthy hope of salvation, hear a story that is no mere story, but a true account of John the Apostle that has been handed down and preserved in memory. When after the death of the tyrant (Nero) he removed from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, he used to journey by request to the neighboring districts of the Gentiles… (Clement of Alexandria (150-215))

After these things, when the Gospel was increasing by the hands of the Apostles, Nero, the unclean and impure and wicked king, heard all that had happened at Ephesus. And he sent and took all the procurator had, and imprisoned him; and laid hold of S. John and drove him into exile; and passed sentence on the city that it should be laid waste. (*History of John, the Son of Zebedee*, 4th century)

The Revelation, which was made by God to John the Evangelist, in the Island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero the Emperor. (Preface, *Revelation*, AD 616)

How fortunate is that church, upon which the apostles poured out all their teachings with their own blood, where Peter suffers a passion similar to the Lord’s, and Paul is crowned with the death like that of John (the Baptist), where the apostle John afterwards, submerged in boiling oil, suffered nothing and is exiled on an island. (Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics*, AD 202)

Moreover, Tertullian relates that he (John) was sent by Nero into boiling oil. (Jerome, *Against Jovinian*, AD 393)

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a disciple of John the Theologian and friend of Polycarp, wrote *The Lord’s Gospel* in five books...Papias says in the second book that John the Evangelist and his brother James were slain by the Jews. (Philip of Side, *Christian History*, AD 439)

John has been deemed worthy of martyrdom. For Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis, having been an eyewitness of him, saying in his second book of the Dominical Oracles, that he was killed by the Jews, having evidentially fulfilled, with his brother the prediction of Christ concerning them. (George the Sinner, *Chronicle*, c. 840)

Great and excellent is the martyrdom of Jesus…to him followed the faithful martyr Stephen whom the Jews stoned. Simon also and Paul were perfect martyrs. James and John trod in the footsteps of their Master Christ. Also other of the Apostles thereafter in divers places confessed, and proved themselves true martyrs. (Aphraates of Ninevah, c. 344)

Only after the Apostles were dead. (John Chrysostom, AD 400)

…against the more ancient testimony of Papias and against the weight of the tradition preserved by the Syrian church. (E. Lipinski, *The Apocalypse and Martyrdom of John at Jerusalem*, 1969)

After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, **having taught righteousness to the whole world**, and come to the extreme limit of the west. (Clement of Rome (AD 30-100))

And in like manner He spoke in plain words the things that were straightway to happen, which we can now see with our eyes, in order that the accomplishment might be among those to whom the word was spoken. (Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215))

**Crysostom (John of Antioch) (347-407)**

* Matthew 23:36 – For I will ask them, did He send prophets and wise men? Did they slay them in the synagogue? Was their house left desolate? Did all vengeance come upon that generation? It is quite plain that it was so, and no man gainsays it.
* Matthew 24 starts with the disciples questioning about the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
* Matthew 24:1-2 – And these two things did they ask him, when shall these things be? That is, the overthrow of the temple and, what is the sign of thy coming? But Luke says the question was one concerning Jerusalem, as though they were supposing that then is also his coming.
* The hearing of wars and rumors of wars is speaking of wars outside of Israel, and not to be of their concern until the war within the city, upon the holy city, is evident.
* That God himself takes part in the war on the Jews, in that not only is the battle of physical armies mentioned, but also famines, pestilence and earthquakes, showing that God himself is in the battle against them.
* That the faithful will not be harmed, but will go on living so that they fulfill the gospel being preached to the whole world before the end; and he states that by “the end” it means **end of the downfall of Jerusalem**.
* He goes on to show how Paul indeed went on to preach into “all the earth” and “to every creature under heaven” and how it was “bringing forth fruit in every creature under heaven. “ Stating:
  + Which also is a very great sign of Christ’s power, that in twenty or at the most thirty years the word had reached the ends of the world. “After this therefore,” says He, “shall come the end of Jerusalem.” For that he intimates this was manifest by what follows.
* He states that the abomination spoken of by Daniel is indeed the armies spoken of by Luke that surround Jerusalem and made it desolate.
* Matthew 24:16-18 – is speaking of the calamities coming upon the Jews. When the armies come, do not seek refuge inside, do not return inside to grab clothing, but flee. In praying that their flight be not in winter or Sabbath, he states:
  + His discourse is addressed to the Jews, he is speaking of the ills that should overtake them. For the apostles were not to keep the Sabbath day, neither be there when Vespasian did those things. For indeed the most of them were already departed this life. And if any was left (…*some* of you standing here here…), he was dwelling then in other parts of the world.
* He professes that this “great tribulation” was upon the Jews in that first century. He states that it was Jewish flesh being spoken of when it said “had the days not been shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” He discusses how the elect believing Jews among them were led out from among the unbelieving ones before their destruction, and how the temple and law were indeed made to cease.
* That all of these things would come upon that generation of Jews Jesus was speaking to, having made mention of the stain of blood on them.

Matthew 24:15 – Luke, to show the abomination spoken of in Daniel will take place when Jerusalem is captured, recalls these words of the Lord in the same context: *When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation is at hand.* For Luke very clearly bears witness that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled when Jerusalem was overthrown. (Augustine, The Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers, Vol 6, pg 170)

So the Jews are indulging in fiction, and transferring present time to future. When did the prophet and vision cease from Israel? Was it not when Christ came, the Holy One of holies? It is, in fact, a sign and notable proof of the coming of the Word that Jerusalem no longer stands, neither is prophet raised up nor vision revealed among them. (Athanasius (AD 296-372))

And it is natural that it should be so, for when He that is signified had come, what need was there any longer of any to signify Him? And when the Truth had come, what further need was there of the shadow? On His account only they prophesied continually, until such time as Essential Righteousness has come… For the same reason Jerusalem stood until the same time, in order that there men might premeditate the types before the Truth was known. (Athanasius (AD 296-372))

What more is there for their expected one to do when he comes? To call the heathen? But they are called already. To put an end to prophet and king and vision? But this too has already happened. To expose the God-denyingness of idols? It is already exposed and condemned. Or to destroy death? **It is already destroyed.**

What then has not come to pass that the Christ must do? What is there left out or unfulfilled that the Jews should disbelieve so light-heartedly? The plain fact is, as I say, that there is no longer any king or prophet nor Jerusalem nor sacrifice nor vision among them;

yet the **whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God**, and the Gentiles, forsaking atheism, are now taking refuge with the God of Abraham through the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Athanasius, On the Incarnation, Ch. VI)

Now, however, that the devil, that tyrant against the whole world, is slain, we do not approach a temporal, my beloved, but an eternal and heavenly. (Athanasius, Festal Letter 256, Pt 3)

For no more does death reign, but instead of death henceforth is life, since our Lord said, “I am the life,” so that everything is filled with joy and gladness…but now that **death and the kingdom of the devil is abolished**, everything is entirely filled with joy and gladness. And God is no longer known only in Judaea, but **in all the earth.** (Athanasius, Festal Letter 256, Pt 3)

For the death of Isaac did not procure freedom to the world, but that of our Savior alone, buy whose stripes we are all healed. For He raised us up the falling, healed the sick, satisfied those who were hungry, and filled the poor, and what is more wonderful **raised us all from the dead: having abolished death**... (Athanasius, Festal Letter 6, Pt 9)

But the Jew who slew him (Christ), and would not believe in Him, because if behooved Him to die and rise again, were yet miserably wasted by the Romans, and utterly rooted out from their kingdom, where aliens had already ruled over them, and were dispersed through the lands, and are thus by their own Scriptures a testimony to us that we have not forged the prophecies about Christ. (Augustine, *City of God*, Bk 18, ch 46)

Moreover understand this also, my brothers. When ye see that after so many signs and wonders in Israel, even then they were abandoned, let us give heed, lest haply we be found, as the scripture says, many called but few chosen…

Therefore the Son of God came in the flesh to this end, that He might sum up the complete tale of their (Jews) sins against those who persecuted and slew his prophets.

Again, it was revealed how the city and the temple and the people of Israel should be betrayed. For the scripture says; and it shall be **in the last days**, that the Lord shall deliver up the sheep of the pasture and the fold and the tower therefor to destruction. And it so happened as the Lord had spoken. (Barnabas, 1st century, 4:14, 5:11, 16:3-4)

Thus, according to divine will, the minds of all being inflamed, the temple was destroyed, three hundred and thirty-one years ago. And this last overthrow of the temple, and final captivity of the Jews, by which, being exiles from their native land, they are beheld scattered through the whole world, furnish a daily demonstration to the world, that they have been punished…on other occasions they were often given over to captivity on account of their sins, yet they never paid the penalty of slavery beyond a period of seventy years. (Severus (353-429))