

Epic Fail in A.D. 70: Why Preterism Cannot Deliver Substantial Fulfillment

By Jeffrey Bramlett

Abstract

[Psa 12:6 KJV] 6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

This study asserts that the purity of the words of the LORD necessitates that eschatological prophecy has a specified order, content, and a required magnitude. Any claim of fulfilled prophecy must also be “pure” by explicitly correlating with actual events in the order, content, and magnitude specified in scripture.

Claims of fulfilled prophecy can be tested by determining if those claims are commensurate with the scripture’s explicit order, content, and magnitude. This paper uses these metrics to test preterists’ claim of fulfilled prophecy.

This paper concludes that the Preterist claims of fulfilled prophecy in the events up to and including the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. do not constitute fulfillment of the Olivet discourse or related prophecies. The preterist system fails the collation of scripture with history due to many systemic failures regarding the “labor pains”, the abomination of desolation, the climactic promises of cosmic upheaval, the visible Parousia, angelic ingathering, and universal judgment.

This paper concludes that fidelity to God’s pure words compels a future, global, and ordered realization commensurate with the promises given.

1. Introduction: Pure Words, Plain Performance

20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as the Holy Spirit carried them along. [2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV]

The prophetic words in scripture did not originate from the men who spoke them; these words have a purpose delegated from God. We do not seek to alienate those words from His intent and purpose by exaggeration, equivocation, or rhetorical surplus.

Therefore, any claim that prophecy has been fulfilled must be tested by whether history supplies plain performance that matches Scripture’s order, intent, and scale. This plain performance is the standard for accepting any claim of fulfillment.

Preterism proposes an early consummation of the Parousia, usually A.D. 70, for the prophecies in Matthew 24–25, Luke 21, and other relevant texts.

The central question is not if A.D. 70 was momentous. The critical question is: Does A.D. 70 satisfy the covenantal terms of scripture? This paper answers this question in the negative and proposes the rigorous verification of substantial performance (order, content, and magnitude) as the method to prevent hermeneutical escape.

2. Methodology: Substantial Performance as Verification

2.1 Definition and Scope

Prophecy in scripture doesn't foretell every single detail, but what it does specify are the essential details. These details must not be discounted or ignored when considering the fulfillment of scripture. When an order of events is provided in prophecy, that order is important; when the prophecy specifies content, that content is essential. Order and content must be executed to align with the intent of the prophecy, as prescribed in the scripture, with the magnitude achieved through fulfilled actions. This is essentially analogous to the principle of substantial performance in contract law, such that the concrete stipulations of the promise (order, content, magnitude) are accomplished to complete the purpose in the pledge itself. Applied to prophecy, this yields a threefold test:

- 1) **Order:** The scriptural sequence must be preserved, not a generalized sequence. Each specified occurrence in scripture must have a corresponding event in history. The historical events must occur in the prescribed order; a mixed-up order or missing occurrences is not providential; it is a chance. The nature of prophecy is to realize a fulfillment because the order is preserved in actual events. Chance excludes that realization; promoting chance to fulfillment is wishful thinking.
- 2) **Content:** The referents promised (Temple, land, people, Parousia, judgment, resurrection, etc.) must occur in the same terms as scripture specifies. Similarity cannot provide a valid comparison because what is similar is still different, and differences exclude correlation. The content must match the original intent, scope, and terms; otherwise, the prophecy was just a "bait and switch" deception.
- 3) **Magnitude:** The original intent is only fulfilled if the magnitude of the prophecy is equal to the magnitude of the fulfillment. Anything less is just like any broken promise, a deception.

2.2 Hermeneutical Guardrails

- **Grammatical-historical interpretation.** Figures, symbols, and types are recognized, yet always grounded in literal meaning. Visions (e.g., Tabernacle, Temple) terminated in literal structures; apocalyptic signs similarly clarify, rather than cancel, real-world referents. The following describes this in the best way:

"This is sometimes called the principle of grammatical-historical interpretation since the meaning of each word is determined by grammatical and historical considerations. The principle might also be called normal interpretation since the literal meaning of words is the

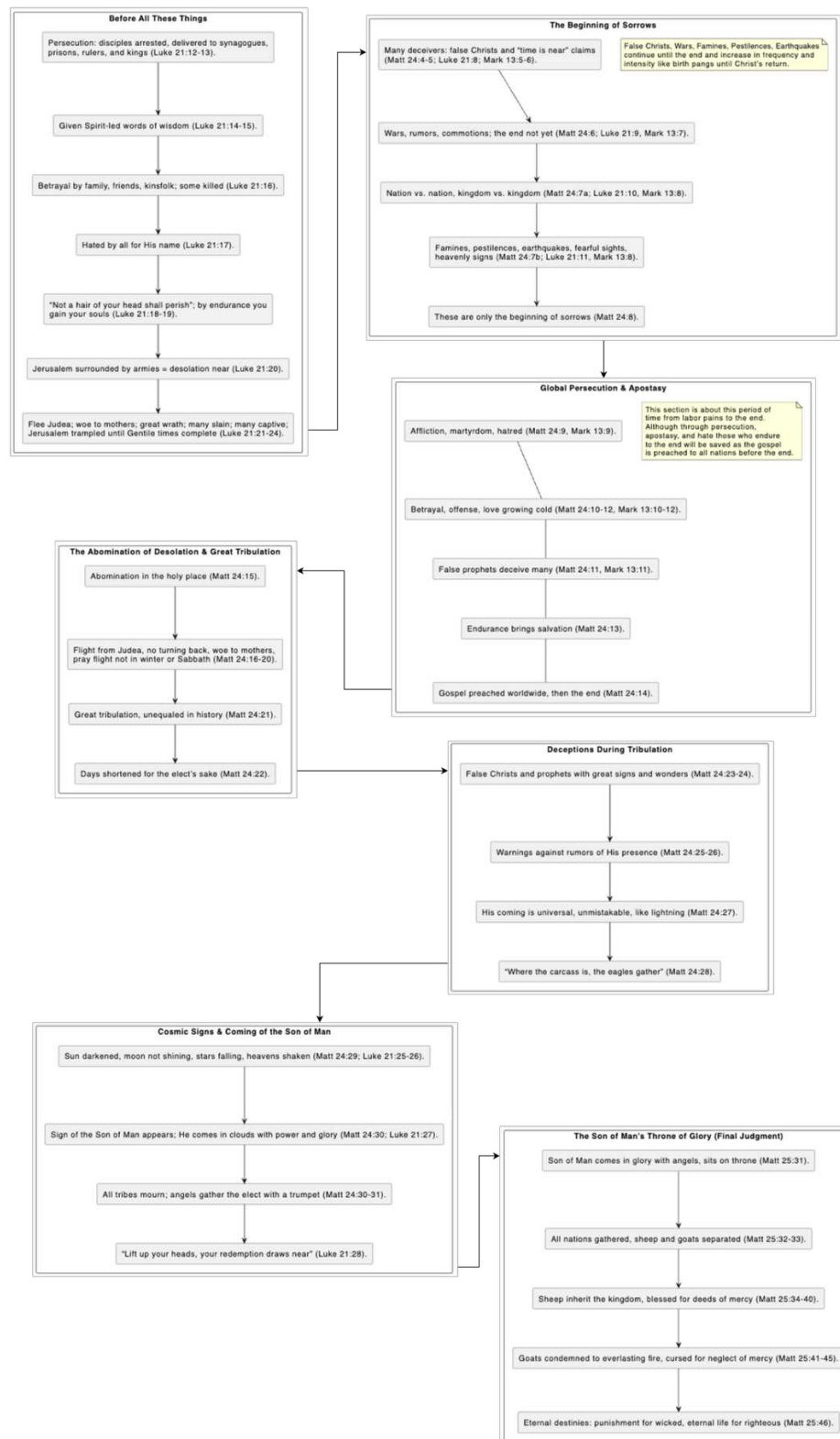
normal approach to their understanding in all languages. It might also be designated plain interpretation so that no one receives the mistaken notion that the literal principle rules out figures of speech. Symbols, figures of speech and types are all interpreted plainly in this method and they are in no way contrary to literal interpretation. After all, the very existence of any meaning for a figure of speech depends on the reality of the literal meaning of the terms involved. Figures often make the meaning plainer, but it is the literal, normal, or plain meaning that they convey to the reader." (Ryrie, 1965)

- **Audience relevance.** Exegesis must inhabit the author's audience horizon (first-century, Near Eastern, dyadic/collectivist setting) without modernizing idioms. This protects meaning (e.g., *genea*)¹ while retaining literal expectations for promised maxima. (Berkhof, 1960)
- **Apostolic constraints.** Prophecy is not subject to private recasting; it carries God's own intended sense.
- **Prophetic perfect.** Hebrew perfectives express certainty, not calendar completion; they cannot be used to truncate performance into an earlier horizon.

2.3 The Sequential Baseline of the Olivet Discourse

The synoptic accounts of the Olivet discourse (Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13) show a substantial sequence: (1) persecutions and betrayals; (2) Jerusalem encircled; (3) flight; (4) national distress and trampling; (5) "birth pangs" (false christs, wars, famines, earthquakes); (6) abomination in the holy place; (7) greatest tribulation; (8) cosmic upheavals; (9) visible Parousia in power and glory; (10) angelic gathering of the elect; (11) throne-judgment of the nations (Matt 25). These ordered events are the non-negotiable sequence for evaluating all fulfillment claims.

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<i>Ordinal</i>	<i>Event / Marker</i>	<i>Matthew 24–25</i>	<i>Mark 13</i>	<i>Luke 21</i>	<i>Notes</i>
0	Setting & Questions	24:1–3	13:1–4	21:5–7	Disciples ask about Temple, sign, and consummation.
1	Persecutions & Betrayals	—	—	21:12–19	Arrests, synagogues, rulers; endurance required.
2	Jerusalem Encircled	—	—	21:20	Specific city-sign in Luke.
3	Flight to the Mountains	—	—	21:21	Urgent evacuation; no delay.
4	National Distress / Trampling	—	—	21:22–24	Wrath on this people; Jerusalem trampled by Gentiles.
5	Birth-pains cluster	24:4–8	13:5–8	21:8–11	False christs, wars/rumors, nation vs nation, famines, earthquakes (and pestilences in Luke); labeled “the beginning.”
6	Abomination of Desolation in the holy place	24:15	13:14	—	Pivot sign tied to Temple/sacrifice; triggers flight.
7	Great Tribulation	24:21–22	13:19–20	—	Unparalleled distress; days shortened.
8	Immediately after the tribulation: cosmic signs	24:29	13:24–25	21:25–26	Sun/moon darkened, powers shaken.
9	Visible Parousia of the Son of Man	24:30	13:26	21:27	Coming in power and great glory.

<i>Ordinal</i>	<i>Event / Marker</i>	<i>Matthew 24–25</i>	<i>Mark 13</i>	<i>Luke 21</i>	<i>Notes</i>
10	Angelic Gathering of the Elect	24:31	13:27	—	Four winds; global scope.
11	Throne of Glory: Nations Judged	25:31–46	—	—	Climactic assize; sheep/goats.

Labor-pains corollary. Because Jesus identifies the early cluster as “the beginning of birth-pains,” any historical-fulfillment proposal must first pass the labor-pains test by substantial performance (order, content, magnitude) before claiming progress to the later maxima.

3. Collation Protocol: From Text to History

- 1) **Textual Mapping** — Extract ordered events, named referents, and stated magnitudes from the prophetic locus classicus (Matt 24–25; Luke 21), with canonical cross-links.
- 2) **Historical Dossier** — Assemble first-century chronology (A.D. 30–73) with dated, sourced events: revolts, sieges, famine, desecrations, earthquakes.
- 3) **Collation Matrix** — Align each prophetic element with historical candidates; mark hits, near-hits, order inversions, substitutions, and magnitude deltas.
- 4) **Hermeneutical Checks** — Enforce the literal method, audience relevance, Petrine constraint, and prophetic-perfect awareness.
- 5) **Adjudication** — Affirm “fulfilled” **only** when order, content, and magnitude converge; otherwise, classify as anticipatory, typological, or unfulfilled.

4. Case Studies: The Preterist Failure in the “Labor Pains”

[Mat 24:8 ESV] 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

The metaphor of "labor pangs" (v. 8) used with Polysyndeton (v. 7), as well as Christ's own words, "ALL THESE", absolutely asserts that the events (false Christ's, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes) occur as "labor pains" and will undoubtedly increase in frequency and intensity as labor pains also increase in frequency and intensity as in human childbirth.

4.1 False Messiahs (Matt 24:5, 24)

Labor-pains criterion. As a component of the birth-pains complex, the surge of pseudo-Christ's must be distinctive and unmistakable and satisfy substantial-performance standards (order, content, magnitude) before any claim advances to Abomination of Desolation (AoD) and later maxima.

Scriptural demand. Deceivers will “come in my name,” say “I am the Christ,” deceive many, and perform great signs and wonders both before and after the AoD is in the temple.

Historical record. First-century lists (Samaritan cultist, the Egyptian, Menahem, John of Gischala, Simon bar Giora, emperor-cult claims) lack sign-attestation and do not show a surge of miracle-backed pseudo-Christ in Jesus’ name, deceiving multitudes. (Appendix D: Preterist False Christ Candidates)

Adjudication. Fails content (identity/signature) and magnitude (scope).

4.2 Wars and Rumors of Wars (Matt 24:6–8)

Framing principle. Because Jesus identifies wars/rumors, nation-against-nation, famines, and earthquakes as the beginning of birth-pains, they must present as a distinctive, unmistakable, escalating complex analogous to the certainty produced by true labor contractions. Ambiguous or ordinary background noise does not qualify. Hence, every fulfillment model must first demonstrate substantial performance of the labor-pains complex (order, content, magnitude) before claiming progress into the AoD, tribulation, and post-tribulational maxima.

Scriptural demand. Within the “birth-pangs” complex, wars/rumors, nation vs. nation, kingdom vs. kingdom co-occur with famine and earthquakes as intensifying contractions. Polysyndeton and the phrase “all these” bind them as a cumulative, escalating phenomenon.

Historical record. The A.D. 30–70 period shows comparatively fewer wars than the prior century and remarkable imperial stability save for the singular “year of four emperors.” This is the inverse of labor-pain escalation.

Adjudication. Fails magnitude/trajectory.

4.3 Earthquakes (Matt 24:7–8)

Labor-pains criterion. As part of the initial contractions, earthquakes must present a **recognizable, escalating pattern** coordinated with the other birth pains and satisfy **order, content, and magnitude** before later elements may be claimed as fulfilled.

Scriptural demand. Earthquakes in “many places,” coordinated with wars/famines, **increasing** as labor pains.

Historical record. Seven notable quakes (A.D. 30–63) are irregularly spaced, uncoordinated with war/famine, and cease before A.D. 66–73. (See Appendix B (Tacitus/Josephus seismic data), notes 1–7.)

Adjudication. Fails order (timing), content (coordination), and magnitude (scale).

4.3a Preterist Example Profiles: DeMar, Gentry, Preston on the Labor-Pains (Matt 24:5–8)

Purpose. To demonstrate how leading preterist writers attempt to correlate the labor-pains cluster (vv. 5–8) with first-century history, and to assess those attempts by the substantial-performance standard (order, content, and magnitude).

Gary DeMar (partial preterist).

- **Thesis.** All Olivet “signs” were fulfilled before A.D. 70; the birth-pains are preliminaries that escalated toward the destruction of the Temple.

- **Historical correlations proposed.** False Christs (Theudas, the Egyptian), wars/rumors (Caligula’s statue crisis; provincial unrest), famines (Acts 11; Josephus), earthquakes (Pompeii A.D. 62; Laodicea; Crete, etc.).

- **Assessment.** The items are generic and lack the unmistakable, escalating profile that Jesus invokes through the childbirth metaphor; moreover, the earthquakes do not covary with wars/famines in the required order and coordination.

Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. (partial preterist).

- **Thesis.** Matt 24:4–35 refers to A.D. 70 within “this generation”; birth-pains are troubles in Judea preluding the Temple’s destruction.

- **Historical correlations proposed.** Overlaps with DeMar: Theudas/Egyptian; Claudius famine; Laodicea quake(s); Pompeii A.D. 62; Caligula episode.

- **Assessment.** A similar preliminary framing still fails to meet the magnitude requirement (there is no apparent intensification across the period), and the cluster does not cohere as a distinctive, unmistakable onset that compels recognition that “the birth” has begun.

Don K. Preston (full preterist).

- **Thesis.** All Olivet prophecies—including cosmic signs—were fulfilled in A.D. 70; the labor pains are the definitive beginning of Israel’s covenantal end and lead straight to the consummation.

- **Historical correlations proposed.** False prophets deceiving the people (Josephus), Jewish War (A.D. 66–70), as a nexus of wars and rumors; Claudius’ famine; emphasis on earthquake frequency (Pompeii, Laodicea, Judea).

- **Assessment.** By collapsing beginnings into consummation, this model erases Jesus’ structural intervals and still lacks unmistakable labor pains with the required order (co-occurrence and sequencing) and magnitude (escalation) before A.D. 70.

Comparative summary (labor-pains vs. substantial performance).

- **Order.** None of the proposals shows the coordinated rise of wars–famines–earthquakes together as the initiating complex; timing is uneven and often pre-war (A.D. 30–63) rather than leading into A.D. 66–73 in an unmistakable pattern.

- **Content.** “False Christs” offered are dissidents without great signs and wonders and typically not “in my name,” missing key identifiers.

- **Magnitude.** Proposed phenomena do not demonstrate a clear escalation in intensity or frequency analogous to labor contractions; earthquakes, in particular, fail the intensification criterion (see Appendix B, notes 1–7 for primary-source samples).

Conclusion. Preterist exemplars provide lists of plausible parallels, but they do not meet the labor pains test as the unmistakable beginning of the sequence. By substantial-performance standards, the cluster remains unfulfilled, and subsequent claims (AoD → tribulation → cosmic signs → Parousia) cannot be legitimately advanced.

4.4 Abomination of Desolation (Matt 24:15–16; Dan 9:27; 11:31)

Scriptural demand. Seeing the abomination in the holy place triggers immediate flight; Daniel requires the removal of sacrifice and the setting up of an abomination inside the sanctuary well before the terminal destruction (an interval of days; Dan 12:11). Order = birth-pangs → AoD in the Temple → flight → desolation. The abomination is tightly coupled to the daily sacrifice and sanctuary (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11); Jesus reiterates its location as “standing in the holy place” (Matt 24:15).

Lexical–historical profile of the AoD (Temple, not army).

- **Temple locus:** It occurs in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, polluting the sanctuary and halting sacrifice (Dan 11:31; 12:11; Matt 24:15).

- **Iconic intrusion:** An image/idolatrous statue is set up in the Holy Place, displacing the regular sacrifice (Dan 11:31; 12:11; cf. Rev 13:14–15).⁴

- **Worship usurpation:** The perpetrator seeks divine honors “in the temple of God” (2 Thess 2:4).³, inaugurating a coerced worship regime (Rev 13:14–15).

- **Timed interval:** A measured period (about 3½ years) follows the AoD to the decreed end (Dan 9:27; 12:11).

- **Typological precedent:** Antiochus IV Epiphanes installed pagan sacrifice and an idol within the sanctuary (1 Macc 1:54).², establishing the paradigm of in-sanctuary desecration rather than a mere military presence at the city’s perimeter.

- **Technical sense:** In Second Temple/halakhic terms, the phrase functions as a technical designation for maximal sanctuary profanation via idolatrous intrusion, not as a cipher for approaching armies.

Historical record. Christians fled to Pella before the siege; Titus encircled and sealed the city, cutting off escape routes. Roman standards were set up after the Temple burned, not placed in the holy place in advance.⁵ Thus, the Roman army identification in A.D. 70 reverses Jesus' order, relocates the locus from the sanctuary to the city, and removes Daniel's interval.

Excursus: Why “the army = the abomination” fails.

- 1) **Location:** Jesus' “in the holy place” specifies sanctuary; an army cannot “stand” there before city entry.
- 2) **Ritual axis:** Daniel's linkage is to sacrifice daily and sanctuary pollution, not to troop movement.
- 3) **Action:** AoD is set up; armies are deployed. The verbs and ritual context diverge.
- 4) **Timing:** Daniel's 1,290-day interval requires an advanced installation of the abomination; Roman standards were displayed after destruction.
- 5) **Type:** The Antiochus pattern is an idolatrous installation inside the sanctuary—an exact match to Daniel's description and a mismatch for siege logistics.

Adjudication. Fails order and content at the discourse's key signal event. Invoking symbolic “abominations” (e.g., armies) substitutes the text's sanctuary-centered desecration with a city-level encirclement and erases Daniel's timing constraints.

4.5 Example Application: Luke 21:22 and the “All Prophecy in A.D. 70” Claim (Preston)

Preterist claim. “All things written” (Luke 21:22)⁶ entails that all Old Testament prophecies—coming of the Lord, judgment, resurrection, new creation, kingdom—were fulfilled in A.D. 70; “all” means all, and the “Day of the Lord's vengeance” is always a historical (not final) day of the Lord. (Preston, 2023)

Ground-truth response (order–content–magnitude).

- **Order broken:** Scripture's sequence—persecution → armies → abomination → tribulation → cosmic signs → visible coming → resurrection → kingdom—extends beyond A.D. 70's local judgment. A.D. 70 covers only part (armies, destruction), not the universal maxima.
- **Content altered:** “Coming of Christ” is redefined as Roman armies; “resurrection” as spiritual renewal; “new creation” as covenantal shift. Substitution ≠ fulfillment. The what must match the text.
- **Magnitude diminished:** Local Judean catastrophe is not global cosmic upheaval, universal judgment, or the resurrection of all. Scale must equal promise.

- **Historical/Patristic control:** Josephus records none of the post-tribulational maxima; early church writers after A.D. 70 still expected a future Parousia/resurrection/kingdom—contradicting “total fulfillment.”

- **Fallacy exposure:** Equivocation on “all”; false dilemma (either all in A.D. 70 or Jesus is false); category mistake (covenantal vengeance texts ≠ cosmic eschatology).

Conclusion (example). Luke 21:22 addresses covenantal vengeance on Jerusalem; it cannot be universalized to exhaust all prophecy. The totalization claim collapses under substantial performance tests and is contradicted by both historical evidence and the early Church.

5. The Decisive Climax Absent in A.D. 70

Even where early elements overlap (persecution, siege, devastation), the terminal maxima are missing:

- **Cosmic upheaval** (sun darkened, moon not giving light, stars falling, powers shaken) *immediately after* the tribulation.
- **The visible Parousia** of the Son of Man with power and great glory.
- **The angelic gathering** of the elect from the four winds.
- **The throne of glory** with all nations assembled (Matt 25).

A.D. 70 provides no credible candidates for these. Given their programmatic role, their absence is fatal to preterist claims.

6. Hermeneutical Consolidation

6.1 Literal Hermeneutic vs. “Over-Literalism”

Literal (plain) interpretation does not deny figures; it insists that figures rest on reality. The preterist charge of “over-literalism” is a category mistake: recognizing symbols is not license to de-realize their referents. To spiritualize Temple, land, people, Parousia, and judgment is not to interpret figures but to **replace** the promised content.

6.2 Audience Relevance without Reduction

Entering the first-century honor–shame world corrects Western individualistic readings (e.g., corporate *genea*). Yet audience relevance curbs anachronism; it does not cancel literal maxima or shrink global phenomena to local events.

6.3 No Private Un-loosing

Petrine constraints forbid recasting divine promises into human allegory. “Private interpretation” is precisely the move that detaches promise from performance.

6.4 The Prophetic Perfect

Certainty idiom is not completion; it guarantees performance without timestamping it. Using the perfective to force first-century fulfillment confuses rhetoric with realization.

7. Time-Text Clarifications: Imminence without Diminution

The “taste death” sayings cannot be satisfied by Transfiguration (a vision), Pentecost, or A.D. 70; none delivers angelic session, visible Parousia, or world judgment. “This generation” as corporate lineage accounts for Jesus’ polemics without imposing a 40-year expiration date on global promises. Imminence functions as certainty and readiness, not as proof of a compressed, local consummation.

8. Revelation’s Assemblies and the Prophetic Program (Excursus)

The Hebrew texture of the Apocalypse (OT allusions, temple imagery, kingdom promises) and the nature of its assemblies underscore an Israel-centric, Day-of-the-Lord horizon. This strengthens the case that the Olivet maxima belong to a still-future consummation rather than to a first-century closure.

9. Theological Stakes: Promise, Character, and Hope

If covenantal restoration language was never intended literally, the speeches of God were “eminently calculated to deceive.” The saints of Hebrews 11 died in faith, not receiving the things promised; their hope was not for metaphors but for the very things spoken. The integrity of God’s character and the coherence of biblical theology require that His promises be kept in the order, content, and magnitude He declared.

10. Synthesis and Verdict

Order is inverted (AoD timing, flight, post-trib signs), content is substituted (pseudo-Christ without signs; “abominations” not in the holy place), and magnitude is diminished (local crisis for global consummation). On the only defensible criterion—substantial performance—preterist fulfillment claims fail. A.D. 70 is a grave and anticipatory judgment, not the eschatological telos.

11. Research Appendix: A Reproducible Collation Rubric

- **Extract:** List verse-level events and promised referents.
- **Assemble:** Build a dated historical timeline with primary sources.
- **Align:** For each prophetic element, mark Order (✓/X), Content (same/substituted/absent), Magnitude (≥/≈/≪).
- **Audit:** Apply hermeneutical guardrails (literal, audience relevance, Petrine constraint, prophetic perfect).
- **Adjudge:** “Fulfilled” only if all three converge; otherwise, categorize accordingly.

Synopsis Table: Olivet Sequence vs. A.D. 66–73 (Collation Summary)

Prophetic Element	Scriptural Signal	A.D. 66–73 Evidence	Substantial Performance
Wars & rumors; nation vs. nation	“All these” = labor-pains increasing; must be unmistakable and initiate the sequence	Fewer/peripheral wars; empire largely at peace	Fail (magnitude/trajectory; lacks distinctive labor-pains profile)
False Christs with great signs	Come “in my name,” say “I am Christ,” deceive many, do signs	Dissidents/pretenders without sign-attestation	Fail (content/magnitude)
Earthquakes many places, coordinated, intensifying	Part of birth-pangs cluster	7 quakes (A.D. 30– 63), irregular, uncoordinated, cease before war	Fail (order/content/magnitude)
AoD in holy place → flight	AoD triggers flight; interval before desolation	Flight to Pella before siege; city sealed; standards after burning	Fail (order/content)
Cosmic signs; visible Parousia; angelic gathering; throne-judgment	Post-tribulational maxima	Absent in historical record	Fail (magnitude)

Contribution to the Literature

The requirements of fulfillment—order, content, and magnitude—are not arbitrary but the concrete features of the principle of substantial performance. This paper contributes to the literature by demonstrating that preterism fails to correlate history with Scripture at these critical points. To remain relevant, preterist interpreters resort to spiritualized “connections” that substitute metaphorical language for genuine realization. By contrast, this study presents a reproducible framework that requires the exact collation of prophecy and history, thereby preserving both the integrity of the text and the trustworthiness of God.

Conclusion

Because God’s words are pure, His promises demand plain performance. The disciplined application of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic, audience relevance, apostolic constraints, and Hebraic rhetoric requires verification in actual history through the triad of

order, content, and magnitude. By that standard, A.D. 70 is not the fulfillment of the Olivet maxima. The church, therefore, awaits the literal, visible, global Parousia and the judicial session of the Son of Man—the only outcome commensurate with God's promises.

Appendix A: Scripture Timeline (Expanded Notes)

- **Persecutions & Betrayals (Lk 21:12–19):** legal/religious venues; Spirit-given testimony; endurance as necessary condition.
- **Jerusalem Encircled (Lk 21:20):** concrete, localizable sign; pairs with flight directives.
- **Flight (Lk 21:21):** urgency idiom (no return for cloak); winter/Sabbath considerations (Mt 24:20).
- **National Distress / Trampling (Lk 21:22–24):** “days of vengeance,” captivity among the nations, Gentile trampling until times fulfilled.
- **Birth-pains (Mt 24:4–8; Mk 13:5–8; Lk 21:8–11):** distinctive, escalating complex (false christs, wars/rumors, nation vs nation, famines, earthquakes; pestilences in Luke); labeled the beginning and must be unmistakable before later elements can be claimed.
- **Abomination of Desolation (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; cf. Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11):** in the holy place; linked to sacrifice cessation; set up inside sanctuary; triggers flight; interval before decreed end.
- **Great Tribulation (Mt 24:21–22; Mk 13:19–20):** unparalleled severity; days shortened for the elect’s sake.
- **Cosmic Signs (Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24–25; Lk 21:25–26):** immediately after the tribulation; celestial and terrestrial upheaval.
- **Parousia (Mt 24:30; Mk 13:26; Lk 21:27):** visible, public appearing of the Son of Man with power and great glory.
- **Angelic Gathering (Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27):** elect gathered from four winds; global scope.
- **Glory-Throne Judgment (Mt 25:31–46):** all nations assembled; judicial separation; eternal destinies.

Appendix B: Seismic Data from Classical Sources (Tacitus; Josephus)

Purpose. Provide primary-source exemplars of earthquake reports often cited in preterist correlations of Matthew 24:7–8, and show why these data do not satisfy the Olivet labor-pains criterion (order, content, magnitude) as a distinctive, escalating complex.

B.1 Tacitus, *Annals* (Selections)

- 1) **A.D. 17–19 — Asia Minor catastrophe.** “Twelve famous cities of Asia fell by an earthquake in the night ... vast mountains collapsed ...” (*Annals* II).¹

- 2) **A.D. 23–28 — Cibyra & Aegium relief.** Senate remits tribute after quakes (*Annals* IV).²
- 3) **A.D. 48–54 — ‘Frequent shocks’; Apamea remitted.** Repeated notices with fiscal relief (*Annals* XII).³
- 4) **A.D. 60–62 — Laodicea overthrown, self-recovered.** (*Annals* XIV).⁴
- 5) **A.D. 62 — Pompeii damaged.** (*Annals* XV).⁵

Summary. Tacitus records notable but scattered seismic events. They do not concentrate within A.D. 30–63 as an intensifying pattern nor co-vary with wars/famines to form an unmistakable labor-pains onset.

B.2 Josephus, *The Jewish War* (Selections)

- 1) **Herodian quake with mass casualties.** In Herod’s seventh year (approximately 30 B.C.E.), a spring earthquake killed “thirty thousand men” (*War* 1.19).⁶ Monumental—but **pre-gospel** and uncoordinated with the later cluster.
- 2) **Idumean encampment storm with earthquake (Jerusalem).** “Prodigious storm ... thunderings ... and ... an earthquake” during the civil tumult (*War* 4.4).⁷ Singular and **siege-embedded**; not a multi-region, escalating complex.

Summary. Josephus gives two conspicuous references—a **pre-A.D. 30** catastrophe and a **siege-embedded** prodigy. Neither yields the **recognizable, escalating pattern** across many places that the labor-pains metaphor demands.

B.3 Notes and Cross-References

- For the Olivet **labor-pains** criterion and why ambiguous background phenomena do not qualify as the **beginning**, see §2.3 and §§4.1–4.3.
- For the **Synopsis Table** contrasting Scripture vs. A.D. 66–73, see the table before §11.

Footnotes for Appendix B

1. Tacitus, *Annals* II (A.D. 17–19) on the Asia Minor earthquake sequence.
2. *Annals* IV on relief for Cibyra & Aegium after earthquakes.
3. *Annals* XII reporting frequent shocks and fiscal remissions (e.g., Apamea).
4. *Annals* XIV noting Laodicea’s quake and self-recovery.
5. *Annals* XV on the A.D. 62 Pompeii damage.
6. Josephus, *The Jewish War* 1.19 on the Herodian earthquake with c.30,000 deaths.
7. *The Jewish War* 4.4 on the “prodigious storm ... and ... earthquake” during the Idumean encampment.

Appendix C: Lexicographic Note — Thayer on γενεά (genea)

γενεά, -ᾱς, ἡ, (ΓΕΝΩ, γίνομαι [cf. Curtius, p. 610]); Sept. often for גִּידּוּ; in Greek writings from Homer down; 1. a begetting, birth, nativity: Herodotus 3, 33; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1, 2, 8, etc.; [others make the collective sense the primary

significance, see Curtius as above].

2. passively, that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family;

a. properly, as early as Homer; equivalent to *νηϋψη*, Genesis 31:3, etc.; *σῶζειν Παχάβην κ. τὴν γενεὰν αὐτῆς*, Josephus, *Ant.* 5.1.5. the several ranks in a natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy: Matthew 1:17 (cf. Philo, *vit. Moys.* i. § 2).

b. metaphorically, a race of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character; esp. in a bad sense a perverse race: Matthew 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; Luke 16:8; [Acts 2:40].

3. the whole multitude of men living at the same time: Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 1:48; Luke 21:32; Philippians 2:15; esp. of the Jewish race in one period: Matthew 11:16; 12:39, 41f, 45; 16:4; 23:36; Mark 8:12, 38; Luke 11:29f, 32, 50; 17:25; Acts 13:36; Hebrews 3:10; *ἄνθρωποι τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης*, Luke 7:31; *ἄνδρες τῆς γεν. ταύ.*, Luke 11:31; *τὴν δὲ γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται* (Acts 8:33 from Isaiah 53:8 LXX).

4. an age (i.e., the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation), **~30–33 years** (Herodotus 2, 142; Heraclitus in Plutarch, *def. orac.* c. 11); in the N.T. common in plural: Ephesians 3:5; Acts 14:16; Colossians 1:26; Acts 15:21; Luke 1:50; etc.

Comment: Thayer confirms multiple senses; **context** must decide. Frequent **moral/lineage** usage in the Gospels justifies reading “this genea” as a corporate stock under judgment in many instances rather than a rigid 40-year timetable.

Appendix D: Preterist False Christ Candidates

Purpose. A working set of every commonly cited figure (with dates), primary references, and a brief description/evaluation against the Olivet criteria.

List of Preterist Candidates

Candidate	Date(s)	Primary references	Description & evaluation
Samaritan prophet	36 CE	Listed among claimants.	Samaritan agitator at Gerizim; no documented claim to be <i>the</i> Messiah in Jesus’ name ; no attested great signs deceiving many . Fails identity/attestation.

Candidate	Date(s)	Primary references	Description & evaluation
Herod Agrippa (“King”)	44 CE	Listed among claimants.	Royal pretensions/praise (Acts 12) are not messianic self-claims in Jesus’ name . Fails identity.
Theudas	45 CE	Acts 5:36; Jos. <i>Ant.</i> 20.97–99	Styled a prophet ; promised a Jordan sign, but was suppressed; no messianic self-claim in Jesus’ name ; no delivered signs deceiving many . Fails identity/attestation.
The Egyptian	52–58 CE	Listed among claimants; not Messiah per Meyer.	Noted as a dissident/prophet (Acts 21:38); standard scholarship: did not pretend to be the Messiah. Fails identity.
Anonymous prophet	59 CE	Listed among claimants.	Unnamed; no evidence of in-Jesus’-name claim or great signs deceiving many . Fails identity/attestation.
Menahem son of Judas	66 CE	Listed among claimants.	Rebel leader in war onset; political-military role, not miracle-working messianic claimant. Fails identity/attestation.

Candidate	Date(s)	Primary references	Description & evaluation
John of Gischala	67–70 CE	Listed among claimants; not Messiah.	Behaved “like a king,” but did not claim to be the Messiah. Fails identity.
Vespasian	67 CE	Listed among claimants.	Roman general/emperor; later imperial propaganda, not Jesus-name messiahship. Category error.
Simon bar Giora	69–70 CE	Listed among claimants.	Judean rebel commander; no messianic claim in Jesus’ name ; no great signs deceiving many . Fails identity/attestation.
Jonathan the weaver	73 CE	Listed among claimants.	Late post-war agitator; no evidence of messianic identity in Jesus’ name or miracle attestation. Fails identity/attestation.

Scholarly control. “We possess **no historical record** of any false Messiahs having appeared previous to the destruction of Jerusalem ... Simon Magus, Theudas, the Egyptian, Menander, Dositheus ... did **not** pretend to be the Messiah” (H. A. W. Meyer).

Illustrative dossiers (expanded).

Order-Performance Check (Dating vs. A.D. 66–70 Window). - **Pre-war timing:** Samaritan prophet (36), Herod Agrippa (44), Theudas (45), the Egyptian (52–58), and the anonymous prophet (59) all **precede** A.D. 66. They cannot serve as the **labor pains onset that initiates the Olivet sequence into the War**.

- **Theudas** — Acts 5:36; Jos. *Ant.* 20.97–99 (full quotation in file). Promised a sign (Jordan), **did not** deliver; beheaded; movement dispersed. **No** messianic claim **in Jesus' name**; **no** “great signs and wonders.”

- **Judas the Galilean** — Acts 5:37; Jos. *Ant.* 18.4–6, 18.23: political revolt; theological slogan “God alone our ruler,” not messiahship claim **in Jesus' name**; **no** signs dossier.

- **John of Gischala** — Behaved “like a king,” still **no** messianic claim.

Labor-pains control.** Even if these figures were granted, they are **not** shown to co-vary with wars/famines/earthquakes as an unmistakable **beginning** complex (polysyndeton; “all these”). They are a **motley** set of dissidents without the identity/signs profile or the escalating pattern; therefore, the labor pains remain **unresolved**, and later elements cannot be claimed.

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