

Matthew 24
Olivet Discourse
Literary Devices Podcast

Ward on Words quote...Dr Mark Ward

I take it to be something of a calling to popularize careful academically careful linguistically sensitive Bible interpretation, hermeneutics and exegesis among lay people. And when I say lay people, a lot of people hear derision in that word. I don't I don't mean that at all. There is a difference between those people who have been in God's providence able to prepare over many years to teach and who have been gifted with that ability and the other faithful Christians who have other full-time jobs. I am able to give a kind of attention to Greek and Hebrew and I have been able over many years that I wouldn't want my Christian dentist to do. He needs to be studying up on how best to care for my teeth. I need to be studying up in my vocational time on how best to help him with his Bible interpretation. If we get in the habit of resenting others gifts and callings rather than clothing ourselves with humility, we're going to be in a world of hurt and division. I hope to show by the good food that I feed you viewers out there that I actually am called to this.

1) Authorial Intent: Internal Indicators in Matthew 24

a) Audience relevance

- i) Jesus speaks directly to “you” (the disciples) (vv. 4, 6, 9, 15, 20, 25, 33).
- ii) Fits most naturally if they would experience these things (i.e., within a generation).
- iii) Weaker if applied only to a far-future generation.

b) The Temple prophecy (vv. 1–3)

- i) The discourse is explicitly triggered by the destruction of the Temple.
- ii) Authorial intent cannot skip over this historical anchor.
- iii) Strong evidence that at least vv. 4–35 are about Jerusalem/AD 70.

c) “This generation” (v. 34)

- i) In Matthew, γενεά consistently means Jesus’ contemporaries (cf. 11:16; 12:41–42; 23:36).
- ii) No unambiguous example where it means “race” or “kind of people.”
- iii) Strong contextual indicator that fulfillment occurred within 40 years (AD 70).

d) Apocalyptic language (vv. 29–31)

- i) Matthew uses stock OT judgment imagery (Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31).
- ii) Jewish readers/hearers would understand this metaphorically for political-covenantal upheaval, not literal cosmic collapse.
- iii) Suggests Jesus was using known idiom to describe Jerusalem’s fall, not the end of the material cosmos.

e) The transition in v. 36

- i) The abrupt “But concerning that day and hour” (περὶ δὲ) often signals a shift of topic.
- ii) Supports the partial preterist claim: vv. 4–35 = AD 70 horizon, vv. 36ff = ultimate horizon.

2) External Historical Confirmation

- a) Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*) describes famine, false prophets, zealot messiahs, Roman armies with standards, cannibalism, and unparalleled tribulation—all resonating with Matthew 24.
- b) Early church tradition (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.5.3) records Christians fleeing to Pella, apparently heeding Jesus’ warning in vv. 15–20.

- c) Strong circumstantial confirmation that at least part of the discourse refers to AD 70.

3) Likely Authorial Intent (Unbiased Weighing)

- a) Strongest evidence: Jesus intended his disciples to see the Temple destroyed within their lifetime, as vindication of his prophetic word and judgment on Israel (vv. 1–35).
- b) Second strongest evidence: Jesus also spoke of a final, climactic coming/judgment that transcends AD 70 (vv. 36–51).
- c) Weakest evidence: That Jesus had in mind a wholly future Tribulation thousands of years later, disconnected from the Temple before him.
- d) Therefore:

The view most consistent with Matthew's authorial intent is the partial preterist reading:

- i) vv. 4–35 → AD 70 (end of the Old Covenant/Temple order).
- ii) vv. 36ff → future Second Coming and final judgment.
- iii) This integrates audience relevance, textual markers, and historical fulfillment while preserving future hope.

4) Overview (Big Picture)

- a) **Matthew 24:1–35** = Prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70.
- b) **Matthew 24:36–51** = Transition to the yet-future second coming and final judgment.
 - i) Synoptic Key: Luke 21 especially clarifies that much of the discourse concerns the Roman siege, while Matthew and Mark emphasize Jewish apocalyptic imagery.
 - ii) Theological Implication: The destruction of the Temple vindicated Jesus' identity and inaugurated the full expression of the New Covenant, but the consummation awaits Christ's bodily return.

5) Literary Devices in Matthew 24

a) Prophetic Hyperbole

i) Definition:

- (1) Exaggerated statements common in Hebrew prophecy, not meant to be taken literally but to stress totality or severity.

ii) Function:

- (1) Drives home the seriousness of judgment.

iii) **24:2** – “Not one stone will be left upon another.” → Hyperbolic emphasis of *total destruction*, common in OT prophecy (cf. Mic 3:12).

iv) **24:21** – “Such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.” → Exaggeration for effect, matching Dan 12:1.

b) Apocalyptic Imagery / Cosmic Metaphor

i) Definition:

- (1) Symbolic cosmic language (darkened sun, falling stars) used in Jewish apocalyptic texts to describe the downfall of nations or covenantal orders.

ii) Function:

- (1) Communicates earth-shaking political/spiritual change in vivid terms.

iii) **24:7** – “Nation will rise against nation... famines and earthquakes.” → Standard prophetic shorthand for upheaval, not always literal.

iv) **24:29** – “The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall.” → Direct allusion to Isa 13:10; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:10. Cosmic symbols represent *political covenantal collapse*.

- v) **24:30** – “Son of Man coming on the clouds.” → Daniel 7:13 imagery: enthronement/vindication language, not literal meteorology.

c) Parallelism

i) Definition:

- (1) Repetition of thought in slightly varied form (synonymous, antithetic, or synthetic), common in Hebrew poetry and teaching.

ii) Function:

- (1) Emphasizes and reinforces meaning.

- iii) **24:7** – “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” → Synonymous parallelism for emphasis.

- iv) **24:40–41** – “Two men will be in the field... two women grinding at the mill.” → Balanced parallelism heightening the image of sudden separation.

d) Simile

i) Definition:

- (1) A comparison between two unlike things using *like* or *as*.

ii) Function:

- (1) Makes abstract truths concrete by comparison.

- iii) **24:27** – “As lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man.” → Uses simile to stress universality/visibility.

- iv) **24:37** – “As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” → Compares the suddenness of judgment.

e) Metaphor

i) Definition:

- (1) Direct comparison where one thing *is* another symbolically.

ii) Function:

- (1) Imaginative language to convey theological realities.

- iii) **24:8** – “All these are the beginning of the birth pains.” → Labor pain metaphor for preliminary crises before judgment.

- iv) **24:28** – “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.” → Graphic metaphor for inevitability of destruction (possibly with double meaning: vultures = Roman eagles).

f) Irony

i) Definition:

- (1) Expression of meaning by using language or imagery that signifies the opposite, highlighting contrast or absurdity.

ii) Function:

- (1) Sharpens the seriousness of misplaced trust.

- iii) **24:15–16** – The “abomination of desolation” (idols/armies) standing in the “holy place.” → Irony: what was supposed to be most sacred becomes the sign of desolation.

g) Allusion

i) Definition:

- (1) Indirect reference to another text, image, or tradition familiar to the audience.

ii) Function:

- (1) Evokes a rich background of meaning with few words.

- iii) Daniel: vv. 15 (abomination), vv. 30 (Son of Man), vv. 21 (tribulation).

- iv) Zechariah 12:10–14: tribes of the land mourning (v. 30).

- v) Isaiah & Joel: cosmic disturbances (v. 29).
- vi) Exodus imagery: trumpet and angelic gathering (v. 31) → alludes to Sinai and covenant renewal.

h) Parable / Mini-Parable

i) Definition:

- (1) Short narrative or comparison drawn from everyday life to illustrate a moral or eschatological truth.

ii) Function:

- (1) Engages imagination, conceals from outsiders, reveals to disciples.

iii) 24:32–33 – Parable of the fig tree. → Everyday agricultural lesson to interpret prophetic “seasons.”

iv) 24:45–51 – Faithful/unfaithful servant. → Extended parable illustrating readiness.

i) Inclusio (Framing Device)

i) Definition:

- (1) Literary “bookends” where a theme or phrase at the start and end frames a section, signaling unity.

ii) Function:

- (1) Helps readers mark off and interpret a passage.

iii) 24:2 (“not one stone left”) and 24:34 (“this generation will not pass away”) → Frame the first section (vv. 4–35) as fulfilled within that generation.

j) Repetition

i) Definition:

- (1) Reuse of words or phrases for emphasis or rhythm.

ii) Function:

- (1) Stresses importance, aids memory.

iii) “See that no one leads you astray” (vv. 4, 5, 11, 24). → Repetition of warning underscores urgency.

iv) “Watch therefore” (vv. 42, 44). → Echoes the theme of vigilance.

k) Contrast

i) Definition:

- (1) Juxtaposition of two opposing ideas or outcomes.

- (a) Definition - a literary device where two or more ideas are placed side by side in order to highlight their contrast, comparison or relationship.

ii) Function:

- (1) Highlights stark differences, forcing choice.

iii) 24:13 – “But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” → Contrasts apostasy vs. perseverance.

iv) 24:40–41 – One taken / one left. → Stark dual outcome in judgment.

l) Eschatological Irony / Reversal

i) Definition:

- (1) A prophetic twist where those who expect security face destruction, and the humble/faithful are vindicated.

ii) Function:

- (1) Subverts human assumptions and underscores God’s justice.

- iii) **24:48–51** – Wicked servant assumes delay and indulges; judgment comes unexpectedly. → Irony: false security leads to ruin.

m) Summary

i) **Matthew 24 weaves:**

- (1) Apocalyptic imagery (cosmic collapse for political/judicial upheaval),
- (2) Parables and similes (fig tree, Noah, lightning, servants),
- (3) Prophetic hyperbole (tribulation “unlike any other”),
- (4) Allusion to OT prophecy (Daniel, Isaiah, Joel, Zechariah),
- (5) Inclusio and repetition (framing the generation/time markers).

ii) **Together, these devices show Jesus speaking in the prophetic-apocalyptic idiom of Israel’s Scriptures, not in literalistic description. This is the key literary foundation for the partial preterist reading.**

6) **Setting of the Discourse (24:1–3)**

- a) **Context:** Jesus departs the Temple, predicting its destruction (“not one stone will be left upon another”).
- b) **Synoptic Parallels:** Mark 13:1–4; Luke 21:5–7.
- c) **Exegesis:**
 - i) The disciples ask two questions: (1) *When will these things be?* (the destruction of the Temple); and (2) *What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*
 - ii) In Jewish thought, the Temple’s destruction would signify the “end of the age” (not necessarily the end of the world).
- d) **Partial Preterist Point:** The discourse addresses both **the end of the Old Covenant age (AD 70)** and the **future final coming of Christ**.

Matthew 24:1 (ESV)¹ Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.

1) Context - The house is abandoned.

- a) Matthew’s two verbs where one would do, “went out” and “was going away,” draw attention to the significance of this departure.

i) **The “house” is abandoned...**

- (1) **Matthew 23:37–38** (ESV) ³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸ See, your house is left to you desolate.

ii) **those in it will not see Jesus again unless they change their minds (23:39).**

- (1) **Matthew 23:39** (ESV)³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

iii) **The place which he had hoped to preserve as a house of prayer (21:13)**

- (1) **Matthew 21:13** (ESV)¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

iv) **has proved as fruitless as the fig-tree which he has symbolically destroyed (21:18–20).**

- (1) **Matthew 21:18–20** (ESV)¹⁸ In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig

tree withered at once. 20 When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”

v) **While there is little direct verbal link with Ezekiel’s vision of the glory of God leaving the temple**

(1) **Ezekiel 10:18–19** (ESV) 18 Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. 19 And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.

(2) **Ezekiel 11:22–23** (ESV) 22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.

vi) **the reader might be expected to remember that powerful imagery,¹⁵ especially when Jesus immediately goes and sits on the Mount of Olives, the “mountain east of the city” where the Lord’s glory also stopped after going out over the east gate of the temple.**²⁶³

Matthew 24:2 (ESV) 2 But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

2) The destruction of the Temple prophesied

a) Jesus had laid some foreshadowing here

i) **John 2:19** (ESV) 19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

(1) It will be used against Him at the trial

(a) **Matthew 26:60–61** (ESV) 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward 61 and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’ ”

(2) And on the cross

(a) **Matthew 27:40** (ESV) 40 and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

b) The destruction synoptic

i) **Mark 13:1–2** (ESV) 1 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” 2 And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

ii) **Luke 19:43–44** (ESV) 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

¹⁵ Keener, 563, n. 92, gives numerous references to the Jewish tradition that “God’s presence departs from Israel or the sanctuary when their sin becomes unbearable.”

²⁶ In Ezek 43:1–5 the glory returns by the same route to the restored temple, though the Mount of Olives is not mentioned in that passage.

³ France, R. T. (2007). [*The Gospel of Matthew*](#) (p. 887). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

- iii) **Luke 21:5–6** (ESV) 5 And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, 6 “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

c) The proof Jesus is who He said He is

- i) **Deuteronomy 18:15–22** (ESV) 15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ 17 And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. 18 **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.** 19 And **whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.** 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ 21 And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.

Matthew 24:3 (ESV) 3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, **when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**”

3) The disciples two questions

- a) When
- b) What sign
 - i) The return
 - ii) The end of the age
 - (1) For the disciples these ideas were linked Jesus will I think illustrate that the destruction of the temple and the end of the old Covenant age were distinct from his Parousia.
 - (2) This age and the age to come
 - (a) What does this mean?
 - (i) Old covenant age to the New Covenant age
 - (ii) Age of Adam – Age of Christ

10) Signs Before the End of the Temple (24:4–14)

- a) **Parallels:** Mark 13:5–13; Luke 21:8–19.
- b) **Exegesis:**
 - i) **False Christs (v. 5):** Numerous false messianic claimants arose before AD 70 (cf. Acts 5:36–37; Josephus, *War* 2.13.4–5).
 - ii) **Wars & rumors of wars (vv. 6–7):** Conflicts within the Roman Empire and Jewish revolts in the 60s AD.
 - iii) **Famines & earthquakes (v. 7):** Documented in Acts 11:28; Josephus mentions famines and seismic activity.
 - iv) **Persecution (vv. 9–13):** Fulfilled in Acts (Stephen, James, Paul, etc.); note the “many will fall away” matches apostasy in early churches.
 - v) **Gospel to all nations (v. 14):** Paul affirms fulfillment (Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6, 23).

- (1) **Contested Proof:** Critics argue the gospel wasn't fully global. Partial preterists respond that "all nations" refers to the known world (οἰκουμένη)—fulfilled in the Roman Empire before AD 70.

11) Prophecies that warn Israel of her judgment but the end is not yet

Matthew 24:4–8 (ESV) 4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads **you** astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and **they will lead many astray**. 6 And **you** will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 **All these are but the beginning of the birth pains**.

a) Signs of judgment

- i) **Ezekiel 14:21** (ESV) 21 "For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!

b) Deception – pattern = white horse

- i) **Revelation 6:1–2** (ESV) 1 Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

(1) **psuedoChrists – promising all that only Jesus can give**

ii) See that no one leads YOU astray

iii) False Christs

(1) What is the spirit of antichrist?

(a) **1 John 2:18** (ESV) 18 Children, it is the **last hour**, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, **so now many antichrists have come**. Therefore we know that it is the **last hour**.(of what)

(b) **1 John 2:22** (ESV) 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

(c) **1 John 4:3** (ESV) 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

(d) **2 John 7** (ESV) 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

c) Military and political disputes – pattern = red horse

i) Wars and the rumors of wars – can only be signs in times of peace

(1) **Revelation 6:3–4** (ESV) 3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

(2) Pax Romana 17BC

(3) In Rome itself after the death of Christ 4 emperors came to a violent death in the space of 18 months

d) Famine

i) Suetonius Writes of continuous droughts

ii) Tacitus of death of crops and famine

iii) Josephus mentions famine in Judea

(1) **Revelation 6:5–6** (ESV)5 When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”

e) Earthquakes – beginning of birth pangs

i) Earthquake at the death of Christ

ii) Earthquake at the resurrection

iii) Earthquake that released Peter from prison

iv) Recorded in Crete, Rome, Phrygia, Laodicea, Campania, Pompeii, Judea

f) Birth pangs – the beginning of sorrows

Matthew 24:9–14 (ESV)9 “**Then** they will deliver **you** up to tribulation and put **you** to death, and **you** will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And **because lawlessness** will be increased, the **love of many will grow cold**. 13 But the one who **endures** to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

12) Stand firm in Difficult times

a) Tribulation that effects believers

i) First persecutions recorded in Acts

(1) Peter and John arrested Acts 4

(a) Commanded not to preach & threatened by the Sanhedrin

(2) The Apostles arrested and placed in prison Ac 5.18

(a) Commanded not to teach in Jesus name 5.28

(3) The persecution escalated resulting in the death of Stephen 6.12-13, 7.58-60

(4) A great persecution in Acts 8 sends the Jerusalem church throughout Judea and Samaria

(5) Men and women dragged from their homes put in prison 8.1-2, 9.1-2, 26.9-10 and put to death 26.10

(6) Herod in order to please the Jews begins to persecute the believers resulting in the murder of James the Son of Zebedee and the arrest of Peter

(7) Paul, Peter, and Joh all write about the intense persecution they endured

b) Many will fall away, betray, and hate

i) Savage wolves

(1) **Acts 20:29–30** (ESV)29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

ii) False teachers

(1) 1&2 Tim

iii) False prophets

(1) **Acts 13:6** (ESV)6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.

- (2) **2 Corinthians 11:13–14** (ESV) 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
- (3) **1 John 1:4** (ESV) 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
- (4) **2 Peter 2:1–3** (ESV) 1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

iv) Lawlessness

- (1) Homosexuality
- (2) Incest
- (3) Prostitution
- (4) Fornication
- (5) General unrighteousness
 - (a) **1 Corinthians 6:9–11** (ESV) 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

v) Endurance – the perseverance of the saints

- (1) **Matthew 10:22** (ESV) 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
- (2) **1 John 5:4–5** (ESV) 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- (3) **Revelation 14:12–13** (ESV) 12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

vi) Proclamation of the gospel

- (1) Whole world – oikoumene – inhabited world...roman empire
 - (a) **Colossians 1:23** (ESV) 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which **has been proclaimed in all creation** under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
 - (b) **Colossians 1:6** (ESV) 6 which has come to you, **as indeed in the whole world** it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,
 - (c) **Romans 10:18** (ESV) 18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for **"Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."**

(d) **Romans 1:8** (ESV)⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith **is proclaimed in all the world.**

13) The Abomination of Desolation (24:15–22)

a) **Parallels:** Mark 13:14–20; Luke 21:20–24.

b) **Exegesis:**

i) **Daniel Reference (v. 15):** Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

ii) **Luke's Clarification (Luke 21:20):** "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies" explains Matthew's "abomination."

iii) **Flight from Judea (vv. 16–20):** Literally fulfilled in AD 66–70 when Christians fled to Pella (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.5.3).

iv) **Great Tribulation (v. 21):** The unparalleled horrors of AD 70—Josephus reports famine, cannibalism, over a million dead.

(1) **Contested Proof:** Some futurists argue this refers to a future Antichrist. Preterists note Luke equates it with the Roman siege.

Matthew 24:15 (ESV)¹⁵ "So when **you see the abomination of desolation** spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

1) Let the reader understand...

a) **Daniel 12:10** (ESV)¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

2) The sign that Jesus gives.

a) Abomination of Desolation

i) **Daniel 9:27** (ESV)²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

(1) **Depending on interpretation choice this can refer to AD 70 – Peter Gentry Dan 9**

ii) **Daniel 11:31** (ESV)³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

(1) **Refers to Antiochus IV**

iii) **Daniel 12:11–13** (ESV)¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. 13 But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

(1) **May refer to AD 70 or End of Days**

iv) **2 Thessalonians 2:1–4** (ESV)¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

(1) **Probably refers to End of days**

b) **How fulfilled in AD 70?**

i) James B Jordan quotes

(1) False worship is Idolatrous worship. When the Jews rejected Jesus and kept offering sacrifices, they were engaged in idolatry...This was the wing of abominations of Dan 9.27 that took place in the temple. It is why the temple was destroyed. A full picture of this is provided in Ezekiel 8-11...There you will see that when the apostate Jews of Ezekiel's day performed the sacrifices, God viewed it as an abomination. He called the Holy Shrine a "temple of jealousy, that provokes to jealousy" The Jews had treated the temple and the ark as idols, and so God would destroy them, as he did the golden calf. Ezekiel sees God pack up and move out of the Temple, leaving it empty or desolate. Once God left the armies of Nebuchadnezzar moved in and destroyed it.

(a) **Matthew 23:37-39** (ESV) 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

3) The exit out of Judea

Matthew 24:16-18 (ESV) 16 then let those who are **in Judea flee to the mountains.** 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.

a) The suddenness in which the tragedy happens.

i) Just get out.

Matthew 24:19-20 (ESV) 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

b) The suffering which will occur

i) The journey will be difficult.

(1) **Deuteronomy 28:49-57** (ESV) 49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, 50 a hard-faced nation who shall not respect the old or show mercy to the young. 51 It shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your herds or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. 52 "They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you. 53 And you shall eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you. 54 The man who is the most tender and refined among you will begrudge food to his brother, to the wife he embraces, and to the last of the children whom he has left, 55 so that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because he has nothing else left, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns. 56 The most tender and refined woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because she is so delicate and tender, will begrudge to the husband she embraces, to her son and to her daughter, 57 her afterbirth that comes out from between her feet

and her children whom she bears, because lacking everything she will eat them secretly, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your towns.

Matthew 24:21 (ESV) 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

c) Great tribulation

- i) **Luke 21:22–24** (ESV) 22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. 23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

(1) **The limits of great tribulation and great distress is Jerusalem not global**

- (a) **Acts 7:11** (ESV) 11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food.

(i) **Same word for tribulation**

d) Such as has not been nor shall be again.

- i) Tends to be used as a hyperbolic saying but also anchors the event in history not at the end of history

(1) – **occurs 12 times in the Bible**

- (2) by indicating that no tribulation before or after this one would rival it, Matthew may suggest that it is a tribulation within history, not necessarily the final one⁴

- (a) Accordingly it appears to me, that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews,^{5c} are not so considerable as they were⁶

- ii) **Ezekiel 5:9** (ESV) 9 And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again.
- iii) **Exodus 11:6** (ESV) 6 There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.
- iv) **Daniel 12:1** (ESV) 1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.
- v) **Luke 21:20–24** (ESV) 20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, 22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. 23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

⁴ Keener, C. S. (1997). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, Mt 24:21–28). InterVarsity Press.

^{5c} That these calamities of the Jews, who were our Savior’s murderers, were to be the greatest that had ever been since the beginning of the world, our Savior had directly foretold, Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19; Luke 21:23–24; and that they proved to be such accordingly, Josephus is here a most authentic witness.

⁶ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). [The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged](#) (p. 544). Hendrickson.

Matthew 24:22 (ESV) ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

e) The severity of this time

i) **Zephaniah 1:14–18** (ESV)¹⁴ The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. 15 A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. 17 I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

f) The shortening of those days

g) For the sake of the elect

i) Because of the presence of the remnant in Jerusalem

(1) These true people of God will not be spared the experience of the siege⁶⁷⁸ but will be enabled to survive through it both physically (v. 22) and spiritually (v. 24).⁶⁸⁹ And it is because of their presence among the people of Jerusalem that the siege will not be more protracted and disastrous.⁷⁹⁰¹⁰

14) False Christs & Heavenly Signs (24:23–31)

a) **Parallels:** Mark 13:21–27; Luke 21:25–28.

b) **Exegesis:**

i) **False Messiahs (vv. 23–26):** Historically recorded in the first century.

ii) **Coming of the Son of Man (vv. 27–31):**

iii) Language of **cosmic disturbance (vv. 29–30)** is apocalyptic imagery, not literal astronomy (cf. Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:31). Such imagery signifies political collapse and divine judgment.

(1) “Coming on the clouds” echoes Daniel 7:13–14—a vision of Christ’s enthronement, not a descent to earth. In AD 70, the Son of Man was vindicated as Judge through Jerusalem’s destruction.

iv) **Angels gathering the elect (v. 31):** Can refer to gospel proclamation drawing believers into the New Covenant community after AD 70.

(1) **Contested Proof:** Critics argue vv. 29–31 are the final Second Coming. Partial preterists counter with the time text (v. 34: “this generation”) and OT apocalyptic precedent.

⁷⁶⁸ pace Eusebius: see p. 914, n. 59.

⁸⁶⁹ Dan 12:1, which is probably echoed in v. 21, may also lie behind v. 22b, in that it speaks of “your people, everyone whose name is found written in the book” being delivered from the unparalleled time of distress. Cf. also Isa 59:8, where judgment is held back “for my servants’ sake.” G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Last Days* 419, n. 124, argues, however, that there is no real parallel in Jewish apocalyptic to the idea of the days being “cut short.”

⁹⁷⁰ Carson, 502, wishes to separate v. 22 from v. 21 (and even places a paragraph break between them), seeing v. 21 as referring specifically to the siege of Jerusalem but v. 22 as more generally about “the entire period of which vv. 15–21 are only a part;” this requires, improbably, that “those days” in v. 22 must have a different meaning from the same phrase in v. 19 (and the resumptive “then” of v. 21). By this unusual exegesis Carson aims to separate “those days” in v. 29 (where it picks up the language of this verse) from the period of the siege, and thus to argue that vv. 29–31 describe a distant event unconnected with AD 70 (504–505). The proposal seems to be determined by a prior assumption as to the scope of the passage as a whole rather than a natural understanding of what this verse says in context. See further below on v. 29.

¹⁰ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 916). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

Matthew 24:23–26 (ESV) ²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.

4) The exhortation about reports of the coming Messiah

a) The reason not to listen to reports of the coming Messiah.

i) Deception

(1) Anyone who offered new hope of divine intervention would be eagerly listened to, and the more so if they were able to offer “signs and wonders” to support their claim. And such miraculous proofs were, according to Josephus, offered by several of the nationalist leaders he mentions: he mentions specifically the parting the Jordan (*Ant.* 20.97), the collapse of the city walls (*Ant.* 20.170), the uncovering of Moses’ sacred vessels (*Ant.* 18.85), as well as more generally “conspicuous wonders and signs” (*Ant.* 20.168) and God-given “signs of freedom” (*War* 2.259). These “sign prophets”⁷¹¹³ drew on the biblical tradition of authenticating signs (see above on 12:38), and NT writers do in fact expect such “signs and wonders” to accompany the true work of God¹²

b) The responsibility we have

i) Do not believe it

Matthew 24:27–28 (ESV) ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

c) The revelation of the true messiah will be unmistakable.

i) The display of His coming.

(1) Lightning from the east to the west is local not global...it will be a global coming but it is not yet

ii) The devastation His coming.

(1) **Amos 5:18–19 (ESV)** ¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, ¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.

Matthew 24:29 (ESV) ²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. The exaltation of the messiah in all His glory

d) Signs in the sun, moon, and stars

i) **Isaiah 13:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.

(1) Prophecy concerning God bringing down Babylon and using the Medes to do it

(a) **Isaiah 13:17–19 (ESV)** ¹⁷ Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold. ¹⁸ Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children. ¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

(i) 539 BC Babylon destroyed

¹¹⁷³ The term is used in a study covering the period AD 40–70 by P. W. Barnett, *NTS* 27 (1981) 679–697.

¹² France, R. T. (2007). [*The Gospel of Matthew*](#) (pp. 916–917). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

(ii) Jerusalem is like Babylon

(b) **Ezekiel 32:7** (ESV) ⁷ When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light.

(i) **Egypt conquered**

ii) **Joel 2:30–31** (ESV) ³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

e) Shaking of the heavens

i) All that can be shaken will be shaken so that only what cannot be shaken will remain

(1) **Hebrews 12:26–29** (ESV) ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” ²⁷ This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Matthew 24:30–31 (ESV) ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the **sign of the Son of Man**, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

f) The sign of the Son of Man in heaven – exalted after destruction

i) Dan 7 vindication of the Son of Man over the kingdoms of this world

ii) The sign is that the Son of Man is enthroned in heaven

(1) **Daniel 7:13–14** (ESV) ¹³ “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

(2) **Acts 2:25–36** (ESV) ²⁵ For David says concerning him, “ ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; ²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. ²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ ²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’ ³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- g) The tribes of the land will mourn
 - i) the context suggests that Zech. 12:10, 14 is inferred by Matthew in this instance, in which case 'the tribes of the Land [of Israel]' is a more appropriate translation."⁸⁴
 - (1) **Zechariah 12:10** (ESV) ¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.
 - (2) **Zechariah 12:14** (ESV) ¹⁴ and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.
- h) Coming in the clouds Dan 7 exaltation to the throne
 - i) Coming – not always physical – coming in judgment is possible
 - (1) **Revelation 2:5** (ESV) ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.
 - (2) **Revelation 2:16** (ESV) ¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.
 - (3) **Revelation 3:3** (ESV) ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.
 - ii) Jesus stated that His coming in judgment would be before the last apostle died: "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"
 - (1) **Matthew 16:27–28** (ESV) ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. ²⁸ Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."
 - (2) **John 21:1–3** (ESV) ¹ After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.
 - iii) On the clouds
 - (1) **Isaiah 19:1** (ESV)¹ An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.
 - (2) **Psalms 104:3–4** (ESV) ³ He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; ⁴ he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.
- i) Saving the elect

- i) **Joel 2:32** (ESV)³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

15) The Parable of the Fig Tree & the Timeframe (24:32–35)

- a) **Parallels:** Mark 13:28–31; Luke 21:29–33.

- i) **Exegesis:**

- (1) The fig tree shows signs before summer—so too the signs before Jerusalem’s fall.
- (2) **“This generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (v. 34):**
 - (a) Preterist key verse. “This generation” (ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη) consistently means the contemporary generation (cf. Matt. 11:16; 12:41–42; 23:36).
 - (b) Hence, events of vv. 4–34 occurred within ~40 years (fulfilled AD 70).
 - (c) **Contested Proof:** Futurists reinterpret “generation” as “race” (Jewish people) or “this type of people.” Preterists argue the consistent Matthean usage demands the plain meaning.

Matthew 24:32–35 (ESV)³² “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

5) Explanation of the fig tree

- a) The message is simple

- i) When you see leaves you know summer is near
- ii) When you see these things you know times up

- (1) This is simply a proverbial-type saying which draws a simile from observation of the natural world; the fig tree is used because it is the most prominent deciduous tree in Palestine, and one whose summer fruiting was eagerly awaited.¹¹¹³² The appearance of its new shoots is a clear harbinger of summer, and once they appear the observer may know for sure how long it will be before the fruit is ready.¹¹¹⁴³ In the same way the occurrence of the preliminary events (the “devastating pollution” and the Roman advance and siege) will inform Jesus’ disciples clearly that the process which will end in the temple’s destruction is under way¹⁵

- b) The meaning of this generation

- i) Refers to 40 years
- ii) Refers to 70-80 yrs
- iii) Refers to those listening at the time
- iv) Refers to those listening at that time

- c) The mention of heaven and earth passing away

- i) The words of this prophecy are confirmed

¹³¹¹² I take it, with the majority of interpreters, that “the fig tree” is generic, not a reference to a particular tree; the romantic idea that Jesus is talking about the same fig tree which he had cursed in 21:18–20 returning to life as a sign of the end is set out and rightly criticized by W. R. Telford, *Temple* 214–215.

¹⁴¹¹³ Except, of course, in the case of a fig tree which flouts the natural order, as in 21:18–20 (see comments there).

¹⁵ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 929). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

- d) As surely as summer follows spring you may be sure that the preliminary events I have mentioned will lead directly to the “end” (vv. 32–33);
 - i) It will all be over before this generation is finished (v. 34);
 - ii) You can rely on my prediction (v. 35).¹⁶

16) The Unknown Day & Hour (24:36–44)

- a) **Parallels:** Mark 13:32–37; Luke 17:26–37.
 - i) **Exegesis:**
 - (1) **Shift in focus (v. 36):** Partial preterists typically see a transition here.
 - (2) The phrase “but concerning that day and hour” suggests a new subject—pointing to the ultimate return of Christ (Second Coming).
 - (3) Noah analogy (vv. 37–39): The sudden, global, and final nature of judgment.
 - ii) **Partial Preterist Point:** vv. 36ff. extend beyond AD 70 to the final parousia.
- 1) Three aspects of Christ’s 2nd coming
 - a) The time is unknown.
 - i) Suddenness of the flood breaking into normal life.
 - b) People will not be ready.
 - c) Disciples must always keep the watch.
 - i) Keep watch does not mean “look for” or “anticipate immediately,” but borrows the image of a night watchman at his post (Mt 24:42; 25:13; Ladd 1974b:208): the believer must remain prepared for the Lord’s coming, **remaining alert and awake and aware** (26:38, 40–41, 43–46).
 - ii) Householder unprepared for the burglar.
 - (1) Vigilance in lifestyle ready for reckoning.
- 1) The impossibility of knowing when Jesus will return.

Matthew 24:36 (ESV)³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

- a) Reasons for a new subject
 - i) “But about ...” (*peri de*) occurred similarly in 22:31 to mark a change of subject, when Jesus turned from the specific question which had been asked to deal with the basic theology which prompted it. Paul uses the same phrase several times in 1 Corinthians (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12) to move from one of the issues raised by his correspondents to another (cf. also 1 Thes 4:9; 5:1; Acts 21:25). In each case *peri de* is the rhetorical formula for a new beginning. The analogy with 1 Corinthians indicates that here the phrase marks the transition from the first of the two questions asked in v. 3 to the second.²¹⁷⁷
 - ii) “That day and hour” is the first mention in this discourse of a *singular* “day” or “hour,” in clear contrast to the plural “those days” which has been used in vv. 19, 22, 29 for the period of the Roman war. The singular “day” (or, in some MSS, “hour”; see p. 932, n. ¹⁸⁶) will recur in 24:42, the “hour” in 24:44, and both “day” and “hour” in 24:50 and 25:13; in each case the term is now singular. This shift in terminology marks the change of subject.

¹⁶ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 928). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

¹⁷²⁷ Cf. also the use of *περί δέ* to introduce a new subject in *Did.* 6:3; 7:1; 9:1; 11:3 (A. J. P. Garrow, *Gospel* 93ff and *passim* uses this distinctive idiom as a marker for a compositional layer of the *Didache*, the “peri layer”). J. A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem 172–174* spells out the literary function of the phrase within the NT.

¹⁸⁶ Some later MSS have “hour” instead of “day”, and the presence of this reading in most OL MSS shows that it arose early. But the weight of the earlier MSS is against it. And since the “day” and the “hour” are closely associated throughout this passage (see vv. 36, 44, 50; 25:13) the meaning is hardly affected.

The demonstrative “*that* day” serves to remind the reader of the “day” of the *parousia* which was the subject of the second part of the disciples’ question. See also below on v. 36 for the idiom “that day” as a recognized term for the day of judgment.

- iii) Whereas vv. 4–35 have spoken of an event whose time can be predicted (v. 34) and for whose coming signs can be given (so especially v. 15), from here on Jesus speaks of an event whose time is both unknown and unknowable, and which will therefore come without prior warning. If even Jesus himself, who has just given a solemn and confident prediction of the time when “all these things” are going to happen, confesses himself ignorant of “that day and hour,” it is surely obvious that the subject has changed.²¹⁹⁸
 - iv) The event predicted in vv. 4–35 has been described as the “coming of the Son of Man,” using the participle *erchomenos* which echoes the vision of Dan 7:13–14. The only mention of the *parousia* in that section was to say that it will *not* be like the events of those days (v. 27). But now the term *parousia* (which does not occur in the Greek translations of Dan 7:13–14) comes into play in vv. 37, 39. Since this was the term used in the second part of the disciples’ question, it is clear that it is that second issue which is now being addressed.²²⁰⁹
 - v) Negatively it should be noted that whereas vv. 4–35 were linked by repeated uses of temporal connections (“then,” “in those days,” “immediately after,” “it is near”) there is no such temporal introduction to this paragraph. Its contents stand apart from the historical sequence hitherto described.²¹
- b) No man knows...
 - i) Chuck Smith - 1981
 - (1) Hal Lindsey – 1988
 - ii) Ed Whisenant – 88 reasons 89 reasons
 - iii) Harold Camping Sept 6 1994, 21 May 2011, Oct 2011
 - c) The son doesn’t know??
 - i) Christ’s words disclose his voluntary limitation of the independent exercise of his divine attributes (cf. Phil 2:6–8). Jesus was obviously not bodily omnipresent while he walked on earth. Mark 6:5 describes some restrictions on his omnipotence. Here we have a limitation on his omniscience.²²

Matthew 24:37–39 (ESV) 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

- 2) The illustration of His coming
 - a) God’s patience

¹⁹²⁸ The suggestion sometimes offered that Jesus was prepared to speak in broad terms of the “generation” of the *parousia* but now admits that he cannot specify the precise time for it within that generation is robustly dismissed as “beyond the bounds of credibility” by A. I. Wilson, *When* 225. Those who have nonetheless adopted this “incredible” interpretation have been governed more by their assumption that vv. 29–31 are about the *parousia* than by the wording of the discourse as a whole, which clearly now introduces a new and different “day and hour” and contrasts the knowability of the one with the unknowability of the other. Wilson goes on, “It surely places unbearable strain on Matthew’s credibility as a redactor and/or on Jesus’ credibility as a teacher to claim that Jesus is referring to the same event in vv. 33–4 and in v. 36.”

²⁰²⁹ A. I. Wilson, *When* 227, notes also that in this section where the *parousia* is explicitly in view “there is no mention of any of the attendant circumstances related to the ‘coming Son of Man’ found in Dan. 7 and in other texts in Matthew (clouds, glory etc).”

²¹ France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (pp. 936–938). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

²² Blomberg, C. (1992). *Matthew* (Vol. 22, p. 365). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

- i) **2 Peter 3:3–4** (ESV)3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”
- ii) **2 Peter 3:9–10** (ESV)9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

b) The problem of not being ready

- i) Judgment took them all away = flood

c) The pattern

- i) Like the Days of Noah - For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

(1) The Lost

(a) Distracted

- (i) Opposite of vigilance

(2) Believers obedient to the directions of the Lord

(a) Not surprised

- (i) **1 Thessalonians 5:4–6** (ESV)4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

Matthew 24:40–41 (ESV)40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

3) The interpretation some taken some left.

a) The understanding

- i) One taken in judgment.
- ii) One taken into the ark.
- iii) Both believer and unbeliever working together and on that day they will be separated

(1) The different fates of two apparently similar people (as also the different fates of Noah and his contemporaries) raise the issue of “readiness:” what is it that will determine who is and is not “taken”? The example of Noah suggests that it is not purely arbitrary, and the rest of the discourse will explore the basis of the division between the saved and the lost,²³

Matthew 24:42–44 (ESV)42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

4) Therefore, Be Ready

a) The problem

- i) We do not know when He is coming.

b) The preparation

- i) Be ready.

²³ France, R. T. (2007). [The Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 941). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

- (1) Noah and his family may not have been able to predict the exact date of the flood (and are unlikely to have lain awake waiting for it), but when it came, they were ready, while the rest of the world was caught out.²⁴

- (a) Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem providing instruction for the faithful when they saw the warning fulfilled.

17) Exhortations to Watchfulness (24:45–51)

- a) **Parallels:** Luke 12:35–48.

- i) **Exegesis:**

- (1) Parables about faithful vs. wicked servants emphasize readiness.
 - (2) Application: vigilance applies to both AD 70 (for the first-century disciples) and the final day of judgment.

Matthew 24:45–47 (ESV)⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

5) The parable of the servant

- a) Comparison between the wise and the fool

- i) **Matthew 7:24–27** (ESV)²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

- b) Wise servant

- i) We stay alert not by artificially and perpetually stirring expectation that he will come at a given time, but by living in such a manner that we would have no cause for shame if he did come at any time, since he may in fact do so²⁵
 - ii) Wise Stewardship
 - (1) to give them their food at the proper time
 - (2) Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

- iii) Requirement

- (1) Faithfulness

- (a) **1 Corinthians 4:2** (ESV)² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

- (b) **Hebrews 11:6** (ESV)⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- iv) Reward

- (1) His condition
 - (a) Blessed
 - (2) Future consequence
 - (a) he will set him over all his possessions.

²⁴ France, R. T. (2007). [The Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 943). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

²⁵ Keener, C. S. (1997). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, Mt 24:45–51). InterVarsity Press.

Matthew 24:48–51 (ESV) 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

c) Wicked servant

i) Wicked stewardship without the masters presence

(1) He is not coming back

(a) **2 Peter 3:9–10** (ESV) 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

(b) **1 Timothy 2:3–4** (ESV) 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

ii) Conduct

(1) uncaring toward the needs of others

(a) begins to beat his fellow servants.

(2) Self-indulgence.

(a) and eats and drinks with drunkards.

iii) The surprise coming.

(1) the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know.

iv) The consequences

(1) Destruction

(a) Cut in pieces.

(2) Destiny

(a) Put him with the hypocrites.

(b) Weeping and gnashing of teeth

v) Neither slave knew when the master would return, but for the first slave that did not matter because he was ready at any time. It is only the irresponsible who need worry about the *parousia*, and yet it is precisely they who do not worry about it and will suffer as a result.²⁶

²⁶ France, R. T. (2007). [The Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 945). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.