

### The Olivet Discourse and Luke 17:22-37 – A Harmony

Texts are from the NAS95 Updated

Matthew 24:1-51	Mark 13:1-37	Luke 21:5-36	[Luke 17:22-37]
<p>24:1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.</p> <p>24:2 And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”</p> <p>24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying,</p> <p>“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”</p> <p>24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.</p> <p>24:5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.</p> <p>24:6 “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.</p> <p>24:7 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various</p>	<p>13:1 As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”<sup>1</sup></p> <p>13:2 And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.”<sup>2</sup></p> <p>13:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,<sup>3</sup></p> <p>13:4 “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?”<sup>4</sup></p> <p>13:5 And Jesus began to say to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.</p> <p>13:6 “Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He!’ and will mislead many.”<sup>5</sup></p> <p>13:7 “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.”<sup>6</sup></p> <p>13:8 “For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be</p>	<p>21:5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts,</p> <p>He said,</p> <p>21:6 “As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.”</p> <p>21:7 They questioned Him, saying,</p> <p>“Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”</p> <p>21:8 And He said, “See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them.</p> <p>21:9 “When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately.”</p> <p>21:10 Then He continued by saying to them, “Nation will rise against</p>	

<p>places there will be famines and earthquakes. 24:8 “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.</p> <p>24:9 “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.</p> <p>24:10 “At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.</p> <p>24:11 “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.</p> <p>24:12 “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.</p> <p>24:13 “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.</p> <p>24:14 “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.</p> <p>24:15 “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),</p> <p>24:16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.</p>	<p>earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>13:9 “But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.</p> <p>13:10 “The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.</p> <p>13:11 “When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>13:12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.</p> <p>13:13 “You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>13:14 “But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand),<sup>9</sup></p> <p>then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.</p>	<p>nation and kingdom against kingdom, 21:11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.</p> <p>21:12 “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake.</p> <p>21:13 “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.</p> <p>21:14 “So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;</p> <p>21:15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.</p> <p>21:16 “But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,</p> <p>21:17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.</p> <p>21:18 “Yet not a hair of your head will perish.</p> <p>21:19 “By your endurance you will gain your lives.</p> <p>21:20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.</p> <p>21:21 “Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those</p>	
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<p>24:17 “Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 24:18 “Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.</p> <p>24:19 “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 24:20 “But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.</p> <p>24:21 “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.</p> <p>24:22 “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.</p> <p>24:23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. 24:24 “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.</p> <p>24:25 “Behold, I have told you in advance.</p>	<p>13:15 “The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house; 13:16 and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat.<sup>10</sup></p> <p>13:17 “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 13:18 “But pray that it may not happen in the winter.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>13:19 “For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>13:20 “Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>13:21 “And then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, He is there’; do not believe him; 13:22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>13:23 “But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;</p> <p>21:22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.</p> <p>21:23 “Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days;</p> <p>for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 21:24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.</p>	
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<p>24:26 “So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them.                  24:27 “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.                  24:28 “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.</p> <p>24:29 “But 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 the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.</p> <p>24:30 “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.</p> <p>24:31 “And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER</p>	<p>13:24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, 13:25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>13:26 “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>13:27 “And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four</p>	<p>21:25 “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 21:26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.</p> <p>21:27 “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.</p> <p>21:28 “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”</p>	<p>17:22 And He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.                  17:23 “They will say to you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ Do not go away, and do not run after them.                  17:24 “For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.                  17:25 “But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.</p>
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<p>TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.</p> <p>24:32 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;</p> <p>24:33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.</p> <p>24:34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.</p> <p>24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.</p> <p>24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.</p> <p>24:37 “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.</p> <p>24:38 “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,</p> <p>24:39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.</p> <p>24:40 “Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.</p> <p>24:41 “Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.</p>	<p>winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>13:28 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.</p> <p>13:29 “Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>13:30 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.</p> <p>13:31 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>13:32 “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.<sup>21</sup></p>	<p>21:29 Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees;</p> <p>21:30 as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.</p> <p>21:31 “So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the Kingdom of God is near.</p> <p>21:32 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.</p> <p>21:33 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.</p>	<p>17:26 “And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:</p> <p>17:27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.</p> <p>17:28 “It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;</p> <p>17:29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and</p>
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<p>24:42 “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 24:43 “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 24:44 “For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is</p>	<p>13:33 “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come.”<sup>22</sup></p>	<p>21:34 “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; 21:35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. 21:36 “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about</p>	<p>brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 17:30 “It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 17:31 “On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 17:32 “Remember Lot’s wife. 17:33 “Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 17:34 “I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 17:35 “There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. 17:36 [“Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.”] 17:37 And answering they said to Him, “Where, Lord?” And He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.”</p>
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<p>coming at an hour when you do not think He will.</p> <p>24:45 “Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?</p> <p>24:46 “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.</p> <p>24:47 “Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.</p> <p>24:48 “But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’</p> <p>24:49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;</p> <p>24:50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,</p> <p>24:51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p>	<p>13:34 “It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.</p> <p>13:35 “Therefore, be on the alert — for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning —</p> <p>13:36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep.</p> <p>13:37 “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”<sup>23</sup></p>	<p>to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”</p>	
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<sup>1</sup> In our study here of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, along with Luke 17, I think that we can come to a better understanding of exactly what Jesus was seeking to communicate by comparing the four passages together as opposed to looking only at the text of each account individually.

In addition, Jesus' comment in Matthew 24:36, "Regarding that day and hour, no one knows, not even the *angeloi* of the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (cf. Mark 13:32), is key to realizing that Jesus knows that Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed and that he will return to restore the Kingdom of Israel, but he does not know the exact time of any of these events or even who will destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Maybe it will be the Romans, but it could be a nation later in history which follows Rome and its empire.

The temple of Jesus' day was a pet project of King Herod the Great who as an Edomite wanted to ingratiate himself to the Jews. Its construction as a replacement for the one built by Zerubbabel after the return of the exiles from Babylon 500 or so years earlier was begun over forty years before this conversation between Jesus and his disciples and was still not yet complete. It eventually became one of the seven wonders of the world so that it obviously was a beautiful building, and it is no surprise that the disciples comment on this fact.

This section of Matthew 24:1; Mark 13:1; and Luke 21:5 introduces the initial subject of their conversation—the temple and its aesthetic beauty that is so striking to the disciples.

Matthew and Mark mention that Jesus is leaving the temple. Matthew says that his disciples refer to the temple buildings in speaking to him. Luke says that some of them are talking presumedly among themselves about the temple and how beautiful a building it is. Mark tells us what one of the disciples actually says to Jesus in the midst of all them talking to one another, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"

In Mark we learn that the disciples call Jesus "Teacher," probably Rabbi in Hebrew. They consider him their instructor in all things divine and biblical. I guess they could have called him "Messiah" or "Lord," but probably their main way of addressing him was as Rabbi, the one who is their teacher.

<sup>2</sup> This section indicates Jesus' prediction of the complete destruction of the temple.

All three gospel authors quote Jesus to the effect that he refers to the temple and its beauty, and then he declares, by saying that not one stone will be left upon another, that it will be completely destroyed. Matthew and Mark are probably closer to what Jesus actually said when he poses a rhetorical question to the disciples. Of course they are looking at the temple, and the question is intended to focus their attention on it. Luke interprets Jesus' rhetorical question by having him speak directly about the temple and its associated buildings.

Matthew and Luke are probably closer to what Jesus said in the second part of his comments as he simply uses the future tense to describe the destruction of the temple by the fact that not one stone of its walls will be left on another. Luke interprets the future tense by adding that Jesus means that "the days will come" when all this takes place.

The destruction of the temple will indicate another judgment on Israel, the chosen people of God, by Him as He had already brought about in 722 B.C. and 586 B.C. on the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah respectively. Assuming Jesus has studied Daniel, especially 9:20-27, he must realize that the Jews will reject him and make him a sacrificial offering to God by crucifying him. Nevertheless, God will patiently wait 3½ more years (the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> "week" of Daniel 9:24-27) for the Jews to repent of their "abomination" of crucifying the Messiah. If they do not, God will invoke His promise to Daniel to commit Himself irrevocably to destroying the temple and Jerusalem again (and then again (!) expelling the Jews from the land). Inevitably the Jews do not repent. As we learn from the book of Acts, they continue to reject the gospel at all levels of society, especially their leadership in the Sanhedrin. And relatively soon after the end of the 3½ years grace period, they angrily reject the gospel when the apostle Paul proclaims it to them in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13). Paul tells them that he is turning his focus from them to the Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch. Nevertheless, Paul keeps trying to persuade the Jews to embrace Jesus as their Messiah in other cities such as Iconium (Acts 14), Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17), Corinth (Acts 18), and Ephesus (Acts 19).

As a result, two more judgments of the Jews are going to occur before Jesus the Messiah establishes the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, i.e., all Israel (cf. Acts 1)—the judgment in A.D. 70 & 132-135 and the judgment of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord immediately before Jesus returns. This also means one more exile of the Jews from the land of Israel during A.D. 132-135 before they are finally restored to the land in prosperity, success, and with their permanent king, the Messiah—again, when Jesus returns and all the remaining, living Jews become authentic believers in God and in Jesus.

The destruction by the Romans of the Jerusalem and the temple takes place in A.D. 70, while the exile mostly takes place 60 years later in A.D. 132-135 in the midst of the Bar Kochba revolt. At that time, the Jews were scattered by the Romans never to return until the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Zionist Movement which culminated in the modern state of Israel coming into existence in 1948. However, the recent immigrations of Jews during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that have continued until today should not yet be considered the final restoration of the Jews to the land, because this will occur after the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord when God judges and kills all the unbelieving Jews worldwide—as described in the book of Revelation.

Then, Jesus will return, and God will change the hearts of the "144,000" Jews who have been protected from the invasion and destruction caused by the Man of Lawlessness and his army (cf. 2 Thessalonians; Daniel 11,12; and Revelation). Consequently, present-day Israel is the main arena in which God's last judgment of the Jews will take place before the return of Jesus and before he restores the Kingdom of Israel. Nevertheless, Revelation 16:17-20 indicates that all unbelieving Jews throughout the world will experience God's judgment during this time by being killed by earthquakes—[Revelation 16:17](#) "Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done.' [18](#) And there were



flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth [land], so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. 19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”

<sup>3</sup> This section indicates that Jesus and his disciples have left the temple mount, crossed the Kidron Valley to the east where the Garden of Gethsemane is located, and climbed up the Mt. of Olives where they can look down to the west on the temple. Mark adds the detail that the mountain is “opposite the temple,” meaning that it stands in contrast to it. This section also indicates that the disciples are curious about Jesus’ statement regarding the destruction of the temple and ask him an important question (or questions).

Luke does not mention that they are on the Mt. of Olives. He also is the most general and says that “they” questioned Jesus, referring to the “some” who were talking among themselves about the temple. Mark is the most specific and says that Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Jesus privately. Matthew is in the middle and says that the disciples asked him privately. He could be referring to only Peter, James, John, and Andrew, but more likely they began the questioning with Jesus and then the whole group, once they saw these four start to pose the question to Jesus, joined them because they were curious too. And the “privately” means that they are the only ones who hear Jesus answer them. For the time being, this instruction and teaching are for his close disciples only.

<sup>4</sup> This section contains the question(s) that the disciples ask Jesus in the light of his statement regarding the destruction of the temple and its buildings. The question is basically, “When will this happen?” But Matthew’s account indicates that they are thinking of more than the temple’s being destroyed. And Luke tells us that once again they address Jesus as “Teacher,” i.e., Rabbi.

All three authors state the first part of their question, “When will these things [the destruction of the temple and its buildings] happen?” They are obviously looking for the timing of the destruction of the temple buildings. Will it be sooner or later? Will it be during their lifetimes or after? In other words, they are puzzled. Here is the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who will restore the Kingdom of Israel, but the Jews are stubbornly refusing to embrace him as such. Now, Jesus says that the temple will be destroyed, thus indicating that God will unleash His judgment again on the Jews—as He did around 600 B.C. What does this mean in terms of Jesus’ role as king and Messiah? In other words, Jesus’ disciples are still working on understanding God’s response to the Jews’ obstinacy in embracing him as the Messiah in the light of His promises to Abraham to form his descendants into a “great nation” (Genesis 12:1-3).

Mark and Luke add the question of what will be the “sign” that can be observed by the Jews as Jesus’ prediction is in the process of being fulfilled and taking place. They are asking for a description of the events leading up to such a catastrophe that will occur with respect to them and their kinsmen, the nation of Israel? Therefore, it should not surprise us that the disciples think that there will be signs when the temple is destroyed., etc. The Old Testament describes signs of various kinds (famines, earthquakes, diseases, etc.) that either occurred during previous events, e.g., through Moses at the Exodus, or will occur in the future, e.g., Joel’s predictions of astronomical events at the end of the age. Are they surprised by Jesus’ prediction? Perhaps not in the light of the repeated rejection of him as the Messiah by especially the Jewish leadership. But how will God end up fulfilling His promise to make of the Jews the greatest nation in history?

Matthew puts this latter question in terms of 1) the sign to be observed by the Jews of Jesus’ *parousia* (τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας) and 2) the sign to be observed by the Jews of the end of the age (τὸ σημεῖον... τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος). Thus, Matthew makes more explicit what the disciples are doing with the whole idea of the destruction of the temple. This will involve Jesus’ *parousia* (παρουσία), which means more than just his return. In their minds, it is his grand visit to the Jews that introduces himself to them as their king and that brings about the goal of this age which is for God to fulfill his promise to the Jews and make of them the greatest nation and people in human history (cf. Genesis 12:1-3). This will be the culmination and finalization of this age, when the Jews finally exercise authority over the Gentiles rather than the other way around, when they become the head and the Gentiles become the tail (cf. Deuteronomy 28:13). Ever since Egypt, when that Gentile nation ruled over them, the Jews have felt the oppression or persecution of Gentile nations, including after the forming of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The Arab nations still hope for their destruction, and the United States rules over them in the sense that they are so dependent on it for their military power and survival.

Revelation 21 does indicate that God will destroy the present realm after the Kingdom of Israel has run its course and then create an entirely new and eternal realm.

Since Luke and Mark present the question in very much the same terms, while Matthew provides more detail, it probably means that Luke and Mark state the question as it was really asked by the disciples, and Matthew edits the question by adding more detail in order to make it clearer that they are concerned about both the destruction of the temple and Jesus’ setting up the Kingdom of Israel.

The four men of Mark’s account (and then the rest of the disciples who join them in the other two accounts), who ask the question, probably assume that the destruction of the temple will be at the same time as the culmination of the age (cf. Matthew 24:3), when Israel’s enemies invade the land and subjugate the Jews and afterwards Jesus sets up his kingdom on the land of Israel for a long time (the “thousand years” of Revelation 20). They are also probably assuming that the temple will be rebuilt under the leadership of the Messiah. In addition, they are assuming that both these events, the destruction of the temple and Jesus’ restoring the Kingdom of Israel, will happen fairly soon, because they have not yet grasped the fact that he is going to die, rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven in order to return at a time much later than the present. Previous passages in the

gospels that say that the disciples are not understanding Jesus when he talks about his death and resurrection show that they are not yet clear on all the events involved in his fulfilling his role as the Messiah. Acts 1 demonstrates this as well when they ask Jesus if he is “restoring the kingdom to Israel,” but he has to put them off by saying that it is not for them to know the timing of this event. They probably do not really grasp the fact that this restoration takes place much later until Pentecost and the Holy Spirit comes upon them to work more aggressively in reminding them all that Jesus had taught them, including this Olivet Discourse, where he makes it evident that there is a long period of time between his first and second appearances.

**Deuteronomy 28:13** “Yahweh will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, **14** and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”

<sup>5</sup> Here Jesus begins his answer to the disciples’ questions—1) when will the temple be destroyed, and 2) when will your parousia occur and what will be the signs that will portend it? It would have been nice if Jesus had explicitly said, “I am now answering the first question...”, and then afterwards said, “Now I am answering the second question.” Instead, Jesus is not so clear, and some of his long answer could apply to either question, so that we will have to ponder his words more carefully than we might think should be necessary in order to interpret his whole answer correctly. In fact, it seems to me that, except for Matthew 24:15-20, Mark 13:14-18, and Luke 21:20-21, about 90% of this whole discourse is about Jesus’ parousia and second coming. It is as though Jesus is saying, “Yes, the temple will be destroyed, but regardless of when you live, be people who are alert and properly expectant of my return to restore and establish the Kingdom of Israel.” It certainly makes sense that most of what Jesus says here in the Olivet Discourse is about his second coming, because obviously it is more important than the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple for the second time in Jewish history. Understanding God’s judgment and discipline of the Jews is part and parcel of understanding the Bible, but understanding Jesus and his role in human history is paramount. This is the point of the entire New Testament.

In regard to Jesus’ statements in this whole discourse, we can ask, “In this section, is Jesus encouraging people not to be misled *either* before the destruction of the temple *or* before his parousia and restoring the Kingdom of Israel, *or* both? I think that he is focusing here on “the end of the age” and his second coming. But, of course, it is important that people not be misled at any time, even before the destruction of the temple.

But we start our analysis of this section by realizing that there are three options for the “you” to whom Jesus is addressing himself – 1) Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and their peers only—specific, immediate “you”; 2) anyone who lives through the long time that Jesus implies in vs. 7 & 8, so that Peter, Andrew, James and John are representatives of them—a specific, immediate “you” (the disciples) that looks forward to a future “you” (all future Christians even after the temple is destroyed) in whose time most of this (between Jesus’ two appearances) will take place; and 3) all those who exist at the time when any of these things take place—general, future “you”. Because of the long time implied in vs. 7 & 8, #2 makes more sense than #1. This is because Jesus does not know the exact timing of his return (cf. Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32), but he will show that he knows that it will be after a long period of time (probably in the midst of his knowing that the destruction of the temple will occur fairly soon—in the light of the 490 years predicted by Daniel 9:24-27). And because there is the possibility that the disciples may be alive when at least the destruction of Jerusalem takes place, #2 makes more sense than #3. Also, because Jesus is directly addressing the disciples, #2 makes more sense than #3.

In Matthew, Jesus is certainly addressing the third question about the finalization of the present age along with his indicating that it does coincide with his “coming” (παρουσία) because he relates the “end” (τὸ τέλος, v. 7) or goal to other people who claim to be the Messiah, meaning that they declare that the Messiah has “come” (cf. v. 3) and the “end of the age” has arrived when God is finally fulfilling His promise and made the Jews the “great nation” of Genesis 12:1-2 and the Abrahamic Covenant.

Because Mark 13:7-8 indicates that his establishing the Kingdom of Israel is still a long way off, Jesus wants to encourage his disciples (and all future Christians) to persevere in their belief in spite of the difficulty of waiting for God to end the present realm and any suffering they may have to endure because of their association with him. The longer the time that people have to wait for the kingdom to arrive, the more they are going to be prone to believe false information and in false Messiahs to satisfy their longing for the end.

Thus false Messiahs will arise within the Jewish community in particular, and Jesus is warning the “you” (#2 above – anyone who lives through the long period of time) of this exhortation not to give in to the lies and deceptions of these men. They will claim to be the Messiah, but they are lying. Luke adds that they will say, “The time is near,” referring to the time of ending the present age where the Jews find themselves oppressed and moving on to the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. But Jesus is implying that it will be a long time before both his return and this restoration occur.

Therefore, the “you” of these statements must include those who will be followers of Jesus after the disciples, depending on just how long God plans to wait before He sends him to restore the Davidic kingdom on the land of Israel. Because this has not yet happened even in our time, the “you” includes Gentile believers around the world down through the centuries, but it mainly concerns the Jews of the Middle East as well as Jews throughout the rest of the world where they have been scattered (see note below).

“In my name” in this context means that they will claim to be fulfilling the role and function of the king of Israel who is predicted by the OT to rescue Israel from their enemies and to establish them as the most powerful nation in the world. As a result, the false Messiahs will simply say, “I am the Messiah.” But they also may try to gather an army to fight against their enemies. Or it could be like the preterist view of Bible teachers’ claiming that Jesus has already come and did so in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans. But this view becomes a kind of anti-Semitism because it leads people away from God’s promises to the Jews to make of them a great nation and to restore them to the land of Israel (the same way that Replacement

Theology does, claiming that God has transferred His promise for the nation of Israel, the Jews, to the Gentile and Jewish Church, so that the promised, temporary, earthly land of Israel is now heaven and eternal life).

And Jesus does say that many will become deceived by the claims of false Messiahs (cf. Revelation 13 and the Beast, who is the final false Messiah/God). This points to the vital nature of thorough Bible study by Christians to acquire as complete a picture as possible of the scenario between Jesus' first and second comings. Fortunately, we can put together a fairly complete picture from the OT prophets, this discourse, the NT letters, and Revelation of what the time period between Jesus' first and second comings, including the intensified judgment of the Jews at the very end (the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord—cf. Malachi 4:5), will look like.

Mark and Luke have Jesus say simply that the false Messiahs will declare, "I am he." Probably they are quoting Jesus exactly, while Matthew wants to make it clear that the "he" is the Christ, the Messiah. Matthew and Luke indicate that many will unfortunately follow these false Messiahs. Luke adds that the false Messiahs will claim that the "time" of restoring the Kingdom of Israel is near and that Jesus warns his listeners (and by extrapolation any Jew (and Gentile) living during the time leading up to the end of this age before Jesus' return) not to give in to these lies and false claims.

<sup>6</sup> The "end" (τὸ τέλος) here could be *either* the end of the temple *or* the end of the age that results in Jesus' return. But because of what Jesus goes on to describe in this and the next two sections, I think that he is talking about the latter—his return and the long time leading up to it.

Therefore, he is referring to the "end" of the age of the Gentiles when God through the Messiah will restore the Kingdom of Israel and fulfill His promise to form the nation of Israel into the most powerful one in history (cf. Isaiah 60; Acts 1). This will also be the end of Gentile hegemony over the world and the beginning of Jewish hegemony in the manner of Jesus' ruling over not only the Kingdom of Israel but also the entire world. Every Gentile nation will be required to submit to Jesus and his authority, even if they reject him as the Messiah. The existence of unbelief in the world will become clear at the end of this kingdom when Satan is released from his "thousand year" imprisonment and permitted to deceive the nations into attempting to attack and destroy Jesus and his kingdom one more time (cf. Revelation 20). This attempt will fail miserably, culminating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection and the final judgment and destruction of all unbelievers throughout history at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20.

Assuming that history is Israel-centric and Jewish-centric and that Jesus is talking to Jews whose scriptures predict their becoming the greatest nation in human history, he could be talking about wars involving only Israel's enemies, declaring that they are going to attack the Jews on the land of Israel, which of course will obviously frighten them. However, the next verse indicates that these wars are between multiple "ethnic groups" and therefore much more widespread than just Israel and probably even the Middle East (Europe, Africa, Asia, etc.?).

In addition, these attacks on the Jews and wars between other ethnic groups will not indicate that the finalization of the age is occurring and that the return of the Messiah is about to happen. In other words, there will be lots of global conflicts between nations and within nations which will occur before his return. It is not that "non-violence" is an immoral goal, but it is unrealistic in the light of God's plans and purposes that involve a satanic influence in all nations which results in conflicts between individuals and groups of individuals.

Jesus' point is that, between his death, resurrection, ascension and his establishing the Kingdom of Israel, it will be a long time, indeed long enough that some people will weary of having to wait so that they become susceptible to being deceived by false Messiahs who precede Jesus' parousia. The deception will also occur because the Jews (and others) will simply become afraid of being attacked and the possibility of violence towards them. Jesus encourages them to work through their fear with genuine belief in order to gain the eternal Kingdom of God. Indeed, violence throughout the times of the Gentiles will be a necessary part of God's story before Jesus establishes his kingdom on the land of Israel.

While Matthew and Mark speak of "wars and rumors of wars," Luke speaks of "wars and disturbances" or conflicts (ἀκαταστασίαι), referring to disorderly and violent protests against existing authorities that will include those within nations against their own governments. All these correspond to the first two seals of Revelation 6, indicating that wars and the absence of complete peace for the Jews and in the world will recur from the time of Jesus' first appearance until his second appearance.

In all three gospel accounts, Jesus encourages his Jewish listeners and their believing descendants among both Jews and Gentiles by extrapolation not to become frightened in the face of all the human conflicts that will take place during the time period between his two appearances. Indeed, these things "must" (δεῖ) occur as part of God's sovereign plan and an integral part of the story which He is telling. It is more important to fear God and being condemned and destroyed by Him than to fear the effects of human conflicts as great as even wars and civil wars (cf. [Luke 12:4](#) "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!").

By saying that these conflicts do not spell the absolute end of the age ("not yet the end" – Matthew, Mark; "the end does not follow immediately" (εὐθέως) – Luke), Jesus is saying that his return is a long way off, which means that it will be far beyond A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans (in contrast to the claim of preterists that Jesus' return was in A.D. 70).

<sup>7</sup> In this section Jesus continues to indicate that his establishing the Kingdom of Israel is a long way off. Indeed, these kinds of catastrophes of Mark 13:7,8 are simply the "beginning of birth pangs," which, in line with the analogy, would still mean that the "birth" of Jesus' parousia, his grand entrance to establish the Kingdom of Israel, will not occur for a long time. In both Matthew and Mark, Jesus uses the analogy of a mother in labor. Yes, his appearance and the finalization of the present age is on its way, but just as the beginning of birth pangs for a mother do not necessarily mean that the baby is about to arrive in the next few moments, neither will all these global disasters mean that Jesus is setting up his kingdom anytime really soon.

While Jesus is probably talking about wars, earthquakes, and famines around the entire globe (cf. the previous section), his

purview is more likely the boundaries of the Roman Empire and its neighbors in the Ancient Near East where plenty of these catastrophic events have occurred. Nevertheless, this world being one with its particular laws of physics and because of what we human beings are like, wars between nations, large conflicts within nations, and natural disasters have taken place around the world for the last two thousand years.

Luke first adds “plagues” to the famines. These are large scale disasters that include fatal epidemic diseases (pestilences) that will affect a wide section of the Middle East and probably the rest of the world—such as the bubonic plague of the late 1300s that killed a third of the European population. These famines, plagues, and diseases correspond to the fourth seal of Revelation 6. And Jesus probably is implying the same encouragement here as in the previous verses, not to become frightened by these physical catastrophes. They, too, are necessary as part of God’s story leading up to Jesus’ return and restoring the Kingdom of Israel. Christians should see all these kinds of events (wars, diseases, famines, etc.) as not only signs from God that history is on schedule for Jesus’ return, but also opportunities to strengthen their faith through having learned their meaning as God’s judgment on unbelievers and using them to trust God more deeply.

Here are my notes from Habakkuk 3:5 – Consider first [Genesis 15:13](#) God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. [14](#) But I will also judge (יִשְׁפֹּט אֶת-הָעַם, κρίνω ἐγὼ) the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.” Here we find the idea that God judges and punishes those who mistreat His people Israel. Adopting an anti-Semitic attitude will only get a person or nation condemnation and destruction from God.

Then there is the Hebrew פְּדָה which can mean pestilence as in [Exodus 5:3](#) Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence (פְּדָה) or with the sword.” But it obviously can mean word or message, too, which is how the Septuagint translates it in Habakkuk 3:5. Thus, God even threatens Israel with disease and death if they do not obey Him.

Also there is in regard to the Egyptians [Exodus 9:3](#) “behold, the hand of Yahweh will come with a very severe pestilence (פְּדָה) on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks.” God followed through on His promise, and a large amount of the Egyptian cattle died the next day.

Then there is in regard to the Jews from a list of things God will do to the Jews if they disobey the Mosaic Covenant, [Leviticus 26:25](#) ‘I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence (פְּדָה) among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands.’

The Hebrew פְּדָה can mean plague or pestilence too as possibly in [Deuteronomy 32:24](#) ‘They will be wasted by famine, and consumed by plague (פְּדָה) and bitter destruction; and the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, with the venom of crawling things of the dust.’ God is speaking about the nation of Israel because of their disloyalty towards Him, even as He was bringing them out of slavery from Egypt.

And this from the mouth of Jeremiah regarding foreign nations [Jeremiah 28:8](#) “The prophets who were before me and before you from ancient times prophesied against many lands and against great kingdoms, of war (מִלְחָמָה, εἰς πόλεμον) and of calamity (קָטָוּ, κατὰ) and of pestilence (פְּדָה).” In other words, God threatens Egypt, the Jews, and other Gentile nations with war, catastrophe, and diseases for their disobedience towards Him. There is also [Obadiah 15](#) “For the day of Yahweh draws near on all the nations (עַל-כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם, ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη). As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.” Cf. [Ezekiel 30](#) where God says that the day of the Lord will be “a time for the nations,” and He mentions Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, and others. Thus, God’s wrath and judgment will basically be worldwide. These same acts of judgment show up also in Seals 1-4 of Revelation 6 as well as in the Olivet Discourse, especially in Luke’s account. Therefore, wars, natural catastrophes, and diseases will be common occurrences as manifestations of God’s judgment on nations (probably all nations because none is like the nation of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom when every Jew will be a genuine believer), including the Jews, until Jesus’ return. All human beings and all nations are called by God to be repentant and moral as the Jews will be during the Millennial Kingdom. To the extent that people reject God, they subject themselves to God’s judgment as revealed through wars, natural catastrophes, and deadly diseases. With these instruments of judgment, God encourages all people to face into their sin, their mortality, and their powerlessness over their lives and this creation so as to repent and believe in Him for the sake of their eternal salvation. But obviously more people do not repent and believe, and God’s instruments of judgment keep showing up. In addition, like Habakkuk, believers experience the effects of God’s judgments in spite of their being His people. They may even die in the midst of them. This is why they must use these times to increase their knowledge and understanding of God and their faith and belief in Him so as to persevere and gain eternal life and mercy.

There is also [Ezekiel 38:18](#) “It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” declares the Adonai Yahweh, “that My fury will mount up in My anger. [19](#) In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.” And cf. [Revelation 16:17](#) Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” [18](#) And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth [land?], so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. [19](#) The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. [20](#) And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. [21](#) And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Then, Luke mentions the “great signs from heaven” (astronomic catastrophes in both the Middle East and worldwide probably),

which are not in Matthew's or Mark's text. Cf. Joel 2:28-32 (as well as Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24,25; Luke 21:25,26; Revelation 8) and the destruction on the land of Israel prior to God's restoring the Jews and bringing about the final Davidic kingdom. Thus, while Matthew and Luke indicate that the wars, conflicts, and natural disasters precede Jesus' return during a long period of time, Luke jumps to nearer the end when astronomic disasters will occur ("great signs from heaven") to clarify Jesus' meaning in this section. Both are correct, and probably Luke wanted to mention the extra events to help dramatize Jesus' point. The meaning is still the same. Jesus will not be returning for a long time, and there will be a lot of man-made and God-made events which will bring great suffering on the Jews and the rest of the world.

<sup>8</sup> In this lengthy section, Jesus is still describing the long period of time between his first and second appearances. Therefore, the "you" here refers to his disciples and includes Christians who live after them up to the time of his return. Jesus' main point is that his followers will face persecution from the world which remains hostile to God. Again, the "you" involves all disciples of Jesus starting with Peter, Andrew, James, and John until the end of the times of the Gentiles and their hegemony over the world. Not only will there be periodic global and Middle Eastern conflicts involving the Jews, along with plenty of natural disasters, but Christians, including and maybe especially Jewish Christians, will be periodically and severely hated (cf. Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17), rejected, and mistreated by non-believers. Because of their association with Jesus as the Messiah, they will even be killed (cf. Matthew 24:9). Mark and Luke mention Jewish Christians' (and by extrapolation Gentile Christians') being brought before government authorities for their faith (e.g., Paul in Corinth, Acts 18:12ff.). This is to say that not only will people in general express their hostility towards Christians, but governments as the leading authorities in nations will do likewise.

Luke includes the words "before all these things," meaning before all the catastrophes of Luke 21:10-11, which is probably even before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and certainly after it too until Jesus' parousia, because Luke has mentioned the astronomical events ("signs from heaven") that will occur immediately before his return.

Next, in Mark 13:10, Jesus is saying that his disciples in the entire period of time between his first coming and his setting up the Kingdom of Israel when he returns will be given the opportunity to proclaim the gospel beyond the boundaries of Israel proper into the rest of the Roman Empire and at least the Middle East ("to all the nations"). And part of the reason that they will be given this opportunity will be the persecution which they will experience from unbelieving Jews and Gentiles who will demand an explanation for their unacceptable behavior. Cf. Matthew 24:14, "in the whole world" (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ), which could mean the entire globe, but more likely even Jesus' perspective is the Roman Empire and its contiguous nations and people groups in the Ancient Near East. Nevertheless, the longer God waits to bring about Jesus' return, the more the rest of the world becomes a part of this whole process. And once the gospel goes out to the Gentiles as much as God has planned for it to do so, He will inaugurate the time of establishing the earthly Kingdom of Israel through the Messiah (cf. Romans 11).

"Nations" = Gentiles, which would come as a shock to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who more than likely have not yet grasped the fact that God will bring many Gentiles into the group of His people just as they have not yet grasped that Jesus is going to die, rise from the dead, and then ascend to return later. Cf. Acts 10 & 11 where it takes Peter's interaction with Cornelius and his family before the Jerusalem Christians and Christian leaders fully embrace God's plan to include Gentiles as full-blown followers of Jesus the Jewish Messiah. Then there is Acts 15 where they all finally figure out that the Gentiles are not obligated to the (Jewish!) Mosaic Covenant.

In Mark 13:11, while one would think that such circumstances would frighten Jesus' followers so much that their minds and mouths would lock up and go blank so that they could not speak, Jesus encourages them that God will give them both courage and the words that He wants them to speak by means of the inner work of the Holy Spirit.

This is not an excuse never to learn anything from the Bible about God and the gospel. It makes more sense that it is an encouragement to learn as much as possible and that it is this learning which God will use when the Spirit directs people to speak on behalf of Jesus. Jesus' point is that God will overrule their fear by the power of His Spirit who will be working within them, giving them courage to speak and the words that they will use. Cf. Luke 21:13-15 which is clearer than Matthew and Mark, that the purpose is to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles using the persecution of (mainly Jewish?) Christians as that which leads to it. So while Christians have used similar passages in Mark 13:10 and Matthew 24:14 as the basis for missionary movements starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is more coherent to understand Jesus to be saying here that the presentation of the gospel to the Gentiles will be more because of their persecuting Christians than because of the missionary movements. Nevertheless, these passages provide a good basis for Christians to use their resources whenever possible to do the loving thing and proclaim the gospel to the entire world however and whenever they can.

The similar passages in Matthew and Mark indicate that it is the Holy Spirit who gives people the wisdom and courage to proclaim the gospel. Luke has Jesus' saying that it is he who does so. What he means is that all he taught Peter, Andrew, James, and John, i.e., his immediate disciples (as mentioned by Mark), and what they and the rest of the apostles pass on to others as his authoritative spokesmen, will become useful through the invisible work of God's Spirit as He strengthens them and gives them clear minds to speak the truth to those who are mistreating them. In the Upper Room Discourse of John 13-17, Jesus makes it clear to these disciples who become apostles that the Holy Spirit will be their next *paracletos* (helper) who reminds them of the truth. The same can probably be said for future Christians, so that God will organize their thoughts and give them the ability to speak what they know about the gospel in order to inform those who question them about it.

In Mark 13:12, family members persecuting Christians within their families is probably not all that relevant to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, but it will be to later generations of Jewish and Gentile Christians. There is the question of why Jesus does not simply say, "All the people will persecute Christians..."? Probably because he does not know how long it really will be before he returns and establishes the Kingdom of Israel. Therefore, it could be sooner than later within the "long time," but what Jesus does know is that Christians will be persecuted by even the most unlikely of people, i.e., their own family members within Jewish families.

To be compared with this is the entire chapter of Micah 7 and especially [Micah 7:5](#) Do not trust in a neighbor; do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom guard your lips. 6 For son treats father contemptuously, daughter rises up against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household. 7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for Yahweh; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. 8 Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, Yahweh is a light for me.

The above passage from Micah is also like Habakkuk's prayer and song in his chapter 3.

Similarly, in Matthew 24:10, the whole situation of there even being a Jewish Messiah will lead many people to pursue immorality and sin with more vigor than if the Messiah were not an important element in reality. There are two options for Jesus means—1) It will lead to people acting in a hostile manner towards other people, probably because this will simply be a way that they demonstrate their unwillingness to acknowledge God at all, or 2) People who have claimed to believe in him will succumb to the temptation to abandon their belief and instead turn against each other as Christians in order to save their own lives. This second option seems more coherent in the context and goes along with the use of “betray” in Jesus' statement.

Matthew goes on in 24:11 to speak again of people being misled, but in this case by false prophets (cf. Matthew 24:4,5 regarding false Messiahs). Not only will false Messiahs arise among the Jews in the interim, but also people who claim to speak for God in regard to the Messiah (Bible teachers) but who are actually rebelling against God will arise too. They will come up with clever ideas and schemes with the express purpose of leading others away from God and the Messiah, even saying that the Messiah has already come, as the preterists do. As a result, people will take their focus off God's promises to the Jews and His making of them a great nation, which in turn can easily produce a kind of anti-Semitism, which is a rejection of God instead of obeying Him.

Matthew also comments in 24:12 that in the midst of confusing and disturbing events of human history, people acting in a violent, oppressive, and lawless manner will make it very difficult for others to choose to be loving. Jesus is saying that as immorality and sin increase and the end of “the times of the Gentiles” draws closer (cf. Luke 21:24; Romans 11), people's love for God will likewise wane. Indeed, their love will turn cold and non-existent. They will probably be afraid of admitting they are Christians and will love this world, immorality, and themselves with their sinful and selfish pursuits more than they love God and are willing to wait for eternal life. But, as Soren Kierkegaard argues in his book, *The Sickness Unto Death*, they will be in despair. While Jesus is referring mainly to the situation for the Jews, the same will be the case for Gentiles. Therefore, by extrapolation, it will be the responsibility of Christians throughout history to continue to demonstrate genuine, biblical love to one another, to their societies, and to the world, while others around them lose motivation to express any kind of love for God and for their fellow human beings.

In Mark 13:13 (cf. Matthew 24:13), there are two options for “end” – 1) the end of each individual Christian's life with Peter, Andrew, James, and John as representatives of all Christians throughout the long time between Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension and his parousia of setting up the kingdom, or 2) the end of the age of the Gentiles. #2 makes more sense in the light of Jesus' whole point in the Olivet Discourse and his lack of knowledge about exactly how long the age of the Gentiles is going to be while using Peter, Andrew, James, and John as representatives of all Christians during this time in his comments to them. Thus #2 actually includes #1 for it will be imperative that each Christian persevere in genuine belief until either the end of his life or the end of the age of the Gentiles, whichever occurs first.

Luke indicates in 21:18 that “not a hair of your head will perish.” This seems contradictory to 21:16 to the effect that Christians will be put to death by their persecutors. Therefore, it must be an idiomatic expression referring to the *eternal* existence of authentic believers. Even if they are put to death, Christians will go on in the resurrection of Revelation 20 to exist in the eternal Kingdom of God. This is also coherent with the next verse, 21:19.

In Luke 21:19, Jesus must mean by “your souls” (τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν) “your existences” (your lives – NAS95), i.e., your existing as human beings in the eternal Kingdom of God, so that we could use the word Lives with a capital L. It is by the perseverance of the belief of authentic Christians that they obtain entrance into God's eternal kingdom and life.

<sup>9</sup> Here in Matthew 24:15-20, Mark 13:14-18, and Luke 21:20-23 Jesus is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews from the land of Israel that occurred from A.D. 70-135, even though, because of his comment to the effect that he does not know exactly when his return will occur, he also does not know exactly when Jerusalem's destruction will occur and what Gentile army will perform it. There is always the possibility that another Gentile nation will conquer the Romans and be the destroying force of Jerusalem, or even another Gentile nation much later. The point is that, according to Daniel 9:24-27 and for rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, God will bring about vengeance on the Jews by using some Gentile army as His tool of vengeance, but not even Jesus knows exactly when and which army—although I suspect he is thinking that it will be a Roman army in the not too distant future, i.e., as soon as his apostles have the opportunity to proclaim his gospel to the Jews and a major part of the Roman Empire, even all the way to Rome, and then they die.

We know after the fact that the Romans did destroy Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, and between A.D. 132 and 135, they killed 580,000 Jews, destroyed 50 fortified towns and 985 villages, and exiled the rest of the Jews from the land, so that they did not return in any great number until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Zionist Movement.

In Luke 21:20, he substitutes “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near” for Mark's “When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it must not be (let the reader understand)” and Matthew's “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).”

There are two options for what armies Jesus means and when they surround Jerusalem – 1) when Jerusalem is surrounded by the armies of the Beast of Revelation just before Jesus returns in the distant future, or 2) when the Roman army surrounds Jerusalem just before the destruction of the temple in the not too distant future, i.e., A.D. 70.

Luke helps with deciding which option is correct, because he will go on to say that after this event “the Jews will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (21:24). I think that this shows that all three authors are referring to #2 and to A.D. 70 and A.D. 132-135 as I described above. Therefore, Luke is telling us what the “let the reader understand” and “the abomination of desolation” mean in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.

In Daniel 9:27, the angel Gabriel speaks of the “abominations of the desolatings” (שְׁקִיּוֹת הַשְׁמָדִים), which the Septuagint translates with βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων (“defiling thing of the destructions”), the latter being basically the same phrase as in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. By the way, this same phrase shows up very similarly in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, but I think that these refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 168 B.C. and the Man of Lawlessness still future to us respectively (see below). But the “defiling thing” that both Jesus in the Olivet Discourse and Gabriel in Daniel 9:27 mean is the crucifixion of him as the Messiah by the Jews, and the “desolatings” or “destruction/destructions” are the activities of the Roman army in destroying the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that then leads to the destruction of the land and death and expulsion of the Jews in A.D. 132-135.

In other words, the great “defiling” sin which displeases God of crucifying the Messiah will result in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman army which will “be standing where it should not be,” i.e., on the land of Israel and in God’s city, Jerusalem, and even in His temple, “the holy place.” This will be in contrast to what God has promised the Jews in Deuteronomy 28 of their exercising hegemony over the Gentiles and living in complete safety and security on His and their land, including in His city Jerusalem with His dwelling place, the temple. Thus, “abomination of desolation” (the defiling act that results in destruction) means that the cause (the defiling act = the Jews’ crucifying their Messiah) will result in the effect (the destruction), i.e., the arrival of the Roman army on the land of Israel and their destroying Jerusalem and the temple.

Mark realizes how cryptic Jesus is being in regard to his illegal death and the appearance of the Roman army on the land of Israel and laying siege to Jerusalem, and so he adds “let the reader understand,” which Matthew adopts also as a good way of pointing the reader to the right interpretation.

Matthew also refers the reader to the correct OT book, Daniel, for interpreting the phrase “abomination of desolation.” And as I said Daniel 9:27 is the correct passage in Daniel because 11:31 refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, who set up a statue of Zeus in the Jerusalem temple in December, 168 B.C., and 12:11 refers to the Man of Lawlessness just before Jesus’ returns.

**Daniel 9:27** “And the covenant with the many will remain strong for one week, but in the middle of the week the sacrifice and grain offering will cease; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction. And that which has been determined pour out on the one being ruined.”

Again, I think that the angel Gabriel is referring to God’s promise not to destroy Jerusalem during the entire time period of 490 years of which he spoke in Daniel 9:24 (“seventy weeks”), but after the Jews execute their Messiah, Jesus, God will bring about the complete destruction of the city and its temple, which occurs in A.D. 70, along with the death and expulsion of the Jews in A.D. 132-135.

**Daniel 11:31** “Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Here is a quote from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary regarding Daniel 11:31, which is not the passage to which Matthew is referring, “This verse gives further details about the momentous events of December 168 B.C. The desecration was, as already described, the rifling of the sanctuary and temple treasury and the removal of all the sacred vessels. The abolition of the daily sacrifices to the Lord was now made binding by the erection in the temple of Yahweh of ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ (*siqqus mesomem*). Apparently this was a statue of Jupiter or Zeus Olympius, if we may judge from the statement of 2 Macc 6:2 that the temple itself was to be renamed the Temple of Zeus Olympius. Pagans invariably installed an image in the inner sanctuary of any temple dedicated to the worship of that deity. Even if the actual statue was not installed in the Jerusalem temple as early as 16 December (25 Chislew) 168 B.C., we may be sure that an idolatrous altar was formally consecrated there at that time. Thus the same type of desecration overtook the second temple as befell the first temple in the evil days of Ahaz (735–715) and Manasseh (695–642), when they too had set up an idolatrous altar (by Ahaz—2 Kings 16:10-16) and images of heathen gods (by Manasseh—2 Kings 21:3-5).”

I think that the EBC is correct.

**Daniel 12:11** “From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the **abomination** of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Daniel 12:11 refers either literally to the very end of this age and the Man of Lawlessness with his imposing restrictions on the Jews or symbolically to the Great Tribulation as a long period of time of God’s patience towards the Jews. I am inclined to think that the second option is correct. God will be patient (again!) with the Jews

<sup>10</sup> In all three gospel accounts, Jesus warns the Jews that once the Roman army has entered the land of Israel, which they will do suddenly and quickly, and they have laid siege to Jerusalem, every Jew who can should flee from it and find safety in the mountains, which are probably the Judean and Jordanian mountains east of Jerusalem and even on the other side of the Dead Sea. No one should think of gathering all their possessions to take with them, because it will be too late. They must flee immediately. Luke includes “and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city” (21:21), indicating that Jesus is speaking of all Jews in and around Jerusalem when its demise comes from this Gentile army. Luke 21:22 includes “because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled,” indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem and what follows in the lives of the Jews, by which Jesus probably means will be the case right up to the time of his return, has been predicted in the Old Testament and is because of God’s anger being poured out on them for all their rebellion against Him, including and especially because of their rejecting and executing their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, “all things which are written” are mainly in the prophets, Isaiah through Malachi, but also in passages such as

Deuteronomy 28, regarding God's judgment of the Jews prior to His fulfilling His promise to make of them a great nation (cf. Genesis 12:1-3).

<sup>11</sup> In Mark 13:17 (and Matthew 24:19 and Luke 21:23) Jesus is not condemning pregnant and nursing mothers. He is simply stating that the Gentile army's destruction of the land of Israel is going to be so extensive and complete that it will be a very difficult time for everybody, especially for those who are "burdened" to a degree by pregnancy and nursing children that already makes it hard to travel quickly, which is exactly what the Jews will need to do in order to escape this army. And Jesus is probably using pregnant and nursing women to refer to the entire group of Jews who are somewhat handicapped when it comes to moving about the land. Thus, the "Woe" here is, "It is going to be additionally difficult on people who are less capable of traveling quickly."

In Mark 18:18, Jesus is saying that the same as above will be true if the Jews have to flee from the approaching army when the weather is cold and rainy. It will add that much more difficulty to a situation that is already hard enough. Therefore, he encourages them to pray to God that this will not be the case. But because Jesus does not know exactly when all these events he is mentioning will take place, he cannot be sure if God will answer their prayer in the affirmative. Matthew adds "or on a Sabbath" in 24:20. One would think that having to flee on a Sabbath day when many Jews would refuse to do so would be preferable because it would mean less people on the roads leading to safety. But, of course, even religiously scrupulous Jews would feel compelled to flee from a hostile army—similar to the Jews' mustering their army and fighting in 1973 when they were attacked on Yom Kippur, a very holy day for them. Perhaps Jesus wants to honor the Jews' obligation to the Mosaic Covenant so that for those who are truly interested in obeying God properly, they will not want to have to violate the Sabbath commandment. However, the Israelites left Egypt by the order of God Himself during the first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We notice that Luke omits any mention of prayer.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew's wording in 24:21 is, "For then there will be a great tribulation..." In other words, after the Romans destroy the temple, a time of great stress and strain will come upon the Jews. And for how long? In light of Jesus' not knowing when his second coming will occur (cf. Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32), it makes the most sense to interpret "those days" in Mark 13:19 as the entire time period between his first and second appearances. In other words, the "great tribulation" takes place not just during a literal "seven years" immediately preceding Jesus' return (as some people interpret Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 7:14), but involves the entire time period from Jesus' first appearance and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until his second appearance.

Therefore, because the Jews will consistently rebel against God, especially by executing of their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, there will be many times in between Jesus' first and second comings when the Jews will experience tremendous suffering as a result of God's justice and discipline towards them, such suffering that cannot be compared with anything they previously experienced during their entire history. This means that even the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and exiles will be considered a cakewalk in comparison to what the Jews will suffer when the Roman army destroys Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Jews are expelled from the land in A.D. 132-135, and even afterwards while scattered throughout the world until Jesus returns. Good examples are the pogroms in eastern Europe and Russia, the Holocaust in Germany, and the general dominance by the Gentile culture over the Jews throughout the world, requiring them to live in enclaves if they are not willing to adopt the values and ideologies of the surrounding cultures—especially in Islamic countries.

Luke further explains in 21:23b that the great tribulation will be towards the Jewish people ("wrath to this people," i.e., the apostles' kinsmen, the Jews) and specific to the land of Israel ("upon the land," i.e., the land God promised to the Jews), meaning that it will take place up to (and especially very near! (cf. Revelation 8-18 and the effects of the trumpets and bowls of wrath)) the return of Jesus.

Only Luke in 21:24 states explicitly that the invading Gentile army (the Romans of General Titus of A.D. 70) will not only destroy Jerusalem and the temple, but they will also massacre the Jews on their own land (during mostly the Bar Kokhba Revolt of A.D. 132-135 by the Roman General Sextus Severus). Jesus adds in the rest of v. 24 that Jerusalem and therefore the land of Israel will be dominated by Gentiles until God is ready to fulfill His promise to the Jews of Genesis 12:1-3 and Deuteronomy 28 to cause them finally to exercise hegemony over all the other nations around the world, i.e., when Jesus returns and restores the Kingdom of Israel as the greatest country in all human history. Until then, the Jews will find themselves utterly dependent on the Gentiles for their survival as the state of Israel is even today dependent on the United States to defend itself against its surrounding and internal enemies.

Consequently, the "times of the Gentiles" are that period of human history where the Gentiles are more powerful than the Jews. But these "times" will come to end and be "fulfilled," resulting in Jesus' re-establishing the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel and ruling over the rest of the world.

<sup>13</sup> In Mark 13:20 and Matthew 24:22, "those days" are the same as in Mark 13:19, the last 2,000 years when the persecution of Jews has been so intense as to almost wipe them out completely—as some, like Adolf Hitler, intended. However, God has promised that Abraham's physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob will eventually become a "great nation" (Genesis 12:1-3). Therefore, He has also promised to preserve them through any attempts by the Gentiles to annihilate them, including those which He brings upon them through His wrath during this entire time period between Jesus' first and second comings. The "elect" in this case are the Jews in general as the chosen people of God and the 144,000 specifically of the book of Revelation, the Jews who survive the final efforts of the Beast, the last great Satanic and anti-Semitic government in the Middle East, to destroy them all. But, again, God has promised the Jews, His "elect," to turn them into the greatest nation in history. Therefore, the 144,000 of Revelation 7:4 & 14:1,3 become the first generation of authentic believing Jews on the land of Israel under the rule of their Messiah Jesus after he returns.

In addition, despite how long the "days" of the "great tribulation" have been, they still are and will be "short" so that the Jews



will survive as a distinct and ethnic group—before anyone has the opportunity to wipe them out completely. God is thus putting boundaries on even His own response to the Jews’ rebellion by not annihilating them, just as He puts boundaries on His justice towards sinners when He chooses to regenerate them and grant them His eternal mercy. And this is the case even though the eternal destruction of non-believers will be something He performs at the final judgment. In this latter case, there will be no eternal boundaries to His justice. In other words, unbelievers will experience God’s eternal punishment and be destroyed forever.

<sup>14</sup> In Mark 13:21-22 and Matthew 24:23-24 Jesus is again speaking of the entire time between his first and second comings. Certain Jews will falsely claim to be the Messiah and there will be certain Jews (and Gentiles?), false prophets, who will falsely claim that the Messiah has arrived.

We know from Revelation 13 that the culmination of these false messiahs and false prophets will be the two beasts respectively. The first beast, a Messiah-like figure, will be a Gentile (“from the sea”), who will rule over the Jews on the land of Israel as well as at least the rest of the Middle East, along with great influence in the rest of the world. The second beast, a false prophet, will be a Jew (“from the land”), who will encourage the Jews to follow and submit to the first beast and his authority. The sea in Revelation is symbolic of the nations of Gentiles. The land is symbolic of the land of Israel and therefore of the Jews.

In Mark 13:22 and Matthew 24:24, because God uses miracles to affirm the truth of His prophets and Jesus as the Messiah, the logical conclusion from what Jesus is describing about the “signs and wonders” of the false messiahs and false prophets is that their miracles will also be false (while the Expositor’s Bible Commentary interprets the miracles of these false messiahs and prophets as genuine). The false teachers’ miracles are deceptive slights of hand that appear real and possibly deceive even those who are bona fide Jewish believers, but eventually true believers will be able to detect the lack of authenticity in these people and their miracles in order to avoid being led astray from their faith in God and Jesus as the Messiah. These authentic believers will be similar to the 144,000 of Revelation 7:4-8 and 14:1-3, who it is assumed are not deceived by the “signs” of the second beast of Revelation 13:11ff.

<sup>15</sup> In Mark 13:23 and Matthew 24:25, Jesus urges Peter, Andrew, James, and John (and all other disciples of his), to heed his warning, thus urging any future disciples during the long period of time between his first and second comings to guard carefully their own faith and hope in God for His eternal mercy and life.

In Matthew 24:26 Jesus continues the idea about false prophets and again urges his disciples not to be deceived by their reports of the appearance of the Jewish Messiah. Matthew goes on in v. 27 to say that Jesus informs and assures his disciples that it, his *parousia* and grand entrance, will be as obvious as lightning flashing in the sky when he appears to restore the Kingdom of Israel and destroy his enemies. After the disciples initially ask the questions about Jesus’ *parousia*, this is the first time he uses this word. So now he has for sure moved on from the destruction of Jerusalem and the time of the “great tribulation” after it to his second coming and the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, which will be the end of the “times” (age) of the Gentiles.

Here “Son of Man” is Jesus’ favorite term for the Messiah and comes from David’s Psalm 8 after God has made the Davidic Covenant with him. It means the Son of God, i.e., God’s representative king of Israel, who comes from the human race, i.e., who is flesh and blood just like his brethren whom he rescues from God’s eternal wrath and condemnation (cf. Hebrews 2).

Then, in v. 28, after Jesus has been describing the effects of the Jews’ rejecting him as their Messiah which has brought God’s judgment on them that has extended in time from the destruction of Jerusalem to his second coming and restoring the Kingdom of Israel, he goes on to indicate that the devastation brought upon the Jews will be so great that it will just about destroy them as a people, making them like a corpse (or at least a dying body) lying on the ground with vultures circling over it and looking to pick at the body and consume it as soon as it is assuredly dead (cf. Luke 17:37). The vultures will be Gentile nations who want nothing more than to see the Jews exterminated so that they can inhabit their land. And it will look as though this very possibly is going to happen—until the actual return of Jesus the Messiah who will destroy these vulturous and predatory Gentiles who will have invaded the land of Israel under the leadership of the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2 (cf. Revelation 16-19 and the Beast with his government and armies).

Luke’s presentation in 17:22-25 of Jesus’ comments regarding his return most likely occurred at a different time from the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, but the statements and ideas are obviously quite similar.

In line with what Jesus says in the Olivet Discourse, in v. 22 he is stating first to his immediate disciples and then others who follow them in history in believing in Jesus the Messiah (the “you” of this verse) that his return to restore the Kingdom of Israel is a long way off in history. His immediate disciples will suffer enough persecution from unbelievers and perhaps hardship under the oppression of the Roman Empire, even resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, that they will definitely be wanting (*ἐπιθυμέω* = lust in some verses in the NT) Jesus to return during their own lives. However, this will not be the case, because Jesus at least knows that the time between his first and second comings will be a lengthy one. Certainly the same will be true of any persecuted believers later in history. They will all appropriately and *strongly* desire Jesus to return, but it will not happen during their lifetimes—except of course the very last believers who are alive at Jesus’ return and are raptured according to 1 Corinthians 15:51ff. and 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff.

Then in Luke 17:23 Jesus speaks of the entire time between his first and second comings. Certain Jews will falsely claim to be the Messiah and there will be certain Jews who will falsely claim from evil intent that the Messiah has arrived. It is also possible that Gentiles during the long time between Jesus’ two appearance will mistakenly claim that Jesus has returned, whether from evil intent or from simple misunderstanding of the Bible. While Mark’s parallel verse 13:21 says simply, “Do not believe him,” and Matthew’s verse 24:23 is the same, this expression of the same idea in Luke 17 changes the wording to “Don’t leave, and do not follow them.” Jesus must mean, do not leave where you are on the land of Israel to check out a rumor to the effect that he has returned when it is not absolutely obvious (cf. 17:24), but simply continue living your lives of authentic belief in the midst of the struggles that you are enduring because of your faith.

Luke 17:24 is like Matthew 24:27, stating how obvious Jesus’ return will be. Luke adds the words “in his day,” referring to how

Jesus will be the central figure of God's not only restoring the Kingdom of Israel, but it will also be the beginning, the first stage, of the Kingdom of God. In other words, God's kingdom has two phases, the Kingdom of Israel on this earth (the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20), and then the eternal realm of the new earth as described in Revelation 21 & 22.

Luke 17:25 is additional to the parallel passage in Matthew 24:25-28. As Jesus drew closer to his crucifixion, he informed his disciples several times that the end of his first appearance on earth was not going to be enjoyable. Also, as in Mark 13:30 and Matthew 24:34, the noun γενεά could mean either generation (i.e., a period of 30-70 years depending on the historical time period under discussion) or race/ethnic group. Certainly either meaning works in this context because it is both the Jews as an ethnic group and this generation of Jews in Jesus' day who reject and execute him. I might lean towards "generation" as the meaning here because the context is mostly temporal, where Jesus is talking about his Jewish disciples looking forward to his return in the future and yet not seeing it. However, the fact that it is Jesus' own people, the Jews as an ethnic group, who reject him is always a remarkable element of his first appearance on earth that obviously involves "this generation" of Jews.

The bottom line in this section is that Jesus' return will not be a subtle event, as if we could go out into the wilderness or into an inner room and see someone whom hardly anyone else knows exist. Instead, his return will be the most obvious event in all history—like lightning flashing in the sky.

<sup>16</sup> The key to understanding the time of these next events in Mark 13:24,25 is the phrase "in those days after that tribulation," meaning at the end of the long, patient judgment and discipline of God towards the Jews that takes place between the first appearance and the second appearance of Jesus the Messiah and that is intended to motivate them to change their minds and embrace Jesus as the Messiah. In Matthew 24:21, Jesus referred to this long period of time as the "great tribulation." As stated in Mark 13:19, this will have been a time of judgment and suffering for the Jews greater than any which they had experienced from God before, including for example the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. respectively. The phrase "in those days" here in Mark 13:24 could make it seem that Jesus is talking about the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. 13:17), but we must remember that he does not know the exact timing of any of these events and has already said that the end of the age of the Gentiles will not be for a long time (cf. 13:7,8). Therefore, he is saying, "In the days at the end of the great tribulation..."

Matthew and Mark use the same wording for 13:24,25 (cf. Matthew 24:29), while Luke changes the wording. Probably Mark and Matthew are very closely quoting Jesus verbatim, while Luke is providing an explanation of what he means, "21:25 Then there will be signs with the sun, moon, and stars, and distress of the Gentiles [nations, including the Jews? Yes, because all the judgments are mainly targeting them] on the earth in perplexity at the roaring sound of the sea and the waves, 21:26 while men faint from fear and the expectation of things which are coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken" [my translation].

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus uses words that come from several OT verses—"the sun will be darkened" from Isaiah 13:10, Ezekiel 32:7, Joel 2:10,31 & 3:15, Amos 8:9, and Micah 3:6, "the moon will not give its light" from Isaiah 13:10 and Ezekiel 32:7, and "the stars will fall" from Daniel 8:10. Thus, even though it may appear as though he is quoting these various OT passages, he is more likely only alluding to them and using Old Testament language to say that supernatural, catastrophic events involving these celestial bodies will occur, affecting all the nations of the earth, both Gentiles and Jews. Consequently, these will probably be global events and not just confined to the Middle East, and they will be so disturbing to unbelieving Gentiles and Jews that they will faint from fear and the possibility that more catastrophic events are on the horizon for them. Their fear will be because they are afraid of losing their lives, which is all that they are counting on having as opposed to Christians who are looking forward to eternal life. And, according to Paul in Romans 1, they will be afraid of encountering God's wrath and destruction, even if they do not admit that this is part of their fear. So this will be the final act by God to bring about a time of tribulation for the Jews as well as the Gentiles.

Another option is that Jesus is saying in an ANE manner that God will take the forces which Gentiles worship and manipulate to make their lives stable and secure and prevent them from using them this way, thus making life incredibly frightening for the Gentiles. However, the first option is more coherent with both Matthew's/Mark's wording and also Luke's. Therefore, something will happen to the cosmic elements of the universe and even the ocean on the earth that will frighten people out of their minds, all as a means to introduce the time of the final judgment on the Jews and even other people on the earth by God through the Messiah. And these probably refer to the events of the sixth seal, the first six trumpets, and the six bowls of wrath of the book of Revelation, leading up to the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

Cf. [Revelation 6:12](#) I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath [The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5] has come, and who is able to stand?"

Cf. [Rev. 8:6](#) And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.<sup>16</sup> 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth [land]; and a third of the earth [land] was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. [Rev. 8:8](#) The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, 9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. [Rev. 8:10](#) The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. 11 The

name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. **Rev. 8:12** The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. [So that Jesus could be referring to the trumpets as the beginning of the end just before he returns.]

Cf. **Rev. 16:17** Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” **18** And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth [land], so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Matthew’s wording – Εὐθὺς δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων, ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται

Mark’s wording – Ἄλλ’ ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις, μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην, ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς **25** καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες ἔσονται ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πίπτοντες, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς σαλευθήσονται  
Cf. **Isaiah 13:9** Behold, the day of Yahweh is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. **10** For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light (καὶ σκοτισθήσεται τοῦ ἡλίου ἀνατέλλοντος, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς). [In a prophecy against Babylon; notice 13:17]

Cf. **Ezekiel 32:7** “And when I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon will not give its light (καὶ σελήνη οὐ μὴ φάνη τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς). **8** All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you and will set darkness on your land,” declares the Adonai Yahweh. [In a prophecy against Egypt]

**Joel 2:10** Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness. [In a prophecy concerning the invasion of Israel—probably by the Man of Lawlessness and his army (cf. Revelation 9:13-19 and the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet)]

Cf. **Joel 2:31** The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of Yahweh comes. [In a prophecy concerning God’s pouring out His Spirit on the Jews in Israel]

Cf. **Joel 3:15** The sun and moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness. [In a prophecy concerning the destruction of the armies who invade Israel just before Jesus returns (cf. Revelation 19:11-21)]

<sup>17</sup> In Mark 13:26, Matthew 24:30, and Luke 21:27, Jesus alludes to Daniel 7:13,14 where the prophet sees a vision of a man approaching God on a throne, and God gives this man a kingdom that will last forever. The phrase “Son of Man” in Daniel’s text means a human being, and Jesus exploits its use there to mean the Messiah and king of Israel, so that he is saying that he is the human being in Daniel’s vision who comes on the clouds of heaven, is presented before God and is given an everlasting government which all the nations serve. In this way, Jesus is saying that he will be Israel’s king who will receive from God the eternal Kingdom of God when he returns as he rides on the clouds of the earth’s sky in the same manner that the vision shows the Son of Man approaching God on His throne. As a result, there will be great power and glory associated with his return that will be even more powerful and glorious than that which he displayed at his first coming. This new power and glory will be so much greater than before, because Jesus will come into the final position and role that God has planned for him. At his first coming, he willingly subjected himself in a powerless way to his enemies who killed him. At his second coming, he will subject himself to no one but God the Father, and he will crush his enemies so that no one will exercise power over him or demonstrate any kind of greatness over him. Jesus will be the most glorious person who has ever existed in the creation, and it will be obvious to everyone who is still alive when he returns.

Daniel 7:13,14 – **13** “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming (וַיֵּרָא עִם-עַנְנֵי שָׁמַיִם כְּבָר אֶנְשׁ אֲתָה הוֹרֵא), and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him (ἐθεώρου ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἤρχετο, καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρήν, καὶ οἱ παρεσθηκότες παρήσαν αὐτῷ). **14** **And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language could serve him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed” [emphasis mine].

Matthew’s wording – καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς

Mark’s wording – καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης

Luke’s wording – καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλῃ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς

Matthew begins with Jesus’ statement that “the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.” This sign will be Jesus himself as he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel. Matthew also adds that Jesus comments on how “all the tribes of the earth will mourn,” meaning that this will not be a joyous occasion for Gentile (or Jewish for that matter) unbelievers, because it spells judgment and destruction for them, i.e., the end of their ability to rebel against God on earth with impunity. Now, they will experience something similar to what the nation of Israel has experienced for their disobedience to God.

Zechariah 12:10 speaks of the Jews’ mourning over Jesus’ return, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” But this is a repentant mourning of the 144,000 of Revelation as opposed to the that of unbelievers because they are losing their opportunity to rebel against God without suffering any immediate, grave consequences.

Cf. Genesis 12:3c – and in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed (וְיִבְרְכֶנּוּ כָּל־שְׁבֵטֵי־הָאָרֶץ) (καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς). Similar wording to Matthew 24:30 – **and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn** (τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς).

In v. 28 Luke adds an exhortation to Jesus' disciples (and to those who follow them in history as disciples up to the time of his return) which is not in either Matthew or Mark. "Your redemption" refers to the Jews' finally receiving the fulfillment of God's promises to them going all the way back to Genesis 12:1-3 and God's making of them a great nation, indeed, the greatest nation in all human history when their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, rules over them and exercises his rule over all the Gentile nations also. Jesus encourages his disciples to consider that when the astronomical, natural, and cataclysmic events begin to occur, the Jewish believers (and all other believers, too) can be confident that Jesus is close to appearing in the sky to restore the Kingdom of Israel. This should lighten their hearts if they are feeling depressed or down because of their oppressive circumstances.

Cf. **Isaiah 43:1** But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!

<sup>18</sup> In Mark 13:27 and Matthew 24:31, there are two options for what Jesus means, 1) that God will gather the Jews from around the world and bring them to the land of Israel as the Messiah Jesus restores the Kingdom of Israel; or 2) God will gather all the Gentile and Jewish believers from all history so that they meet Jesus in the air as he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 that also mention the trumpet).

Another helpful passage is Malachi 4:1, "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says Yahweh of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." Is God speaking of 1) the destruction of all unbelieving Jews around the world when He brings about the final, earthly judgment on them just before the return of the Messiah; or 2) the destruction of all unbelieving Jews on the land of Israel just before the return of the Messiah?

Cf. **Exodus 19:16** So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

**Deuteronomy 7:6** "For you are a holy people to Yahweh your God; Yahweh your God has chosen (יָרָא) (προεἰλατο) you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth **7** Yahweh did not set His love on you nor **choose** you (בָּחַר בָּךְ) (προεἰλατο κύριος ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξελέξατο ὑμᾶς) because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, **8** but because Yahweh loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, Yahweh brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

**Deuteronomy 30:1** "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where Yahweh your God has banished you, **2** and you return to Yahweh your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, **3** then Yahweh your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. **4** If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back."

**Psalms 105:6** O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones (יִבְרָאֵל) (ἐκλεκτοὶ αὐτοῦ).

**Isaiah 11:11** Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. **12** and He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

There is also **Isaiah 27:12** "In that day Yahweh will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. **13** It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship Yahweh in the holy mountain at Jerusalem." This in the context of God's restoring Israel and giving them the greatness He has promised them in Genesis 12. And it also may refer to Gentiles who will join the Jews and worship God "in Jerusalem" so to speak, either literally or metaphorically by doing so from genuine hearts of belief and faith.

**Isaiah 43:5** "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west. **6** I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, **7** everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Cf. Jer. 30:7-11.

**Jeremiah 31:7** For thus says Yahweh, "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, 'O Yahweh, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.' **8** Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, and I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company, they will return here. **9** With weeping they will come, and by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, on a straight path in which they will not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn."

**Joel 2:1** Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of Yahweh is coming; surely it is near,

**Zechariah 9:13** For I will bend Judah as My bow, I will fill the bow with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; and I will make you like a warrior's sword. **14** Then Yahweh will appear over them, and His arrow will go

forth like lightning; and Adonai Yahweh will blow the trumpet, and will march in the storm winds of the south.

**Zechariah 10:8** “I will whistle for them to gather them together, for I have redeemed them; and they will be as numerous as they were before. **9** When I scatter them among the peoples, they will remember Me in far countries, and they with their children will live and come back. **10** I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon until no room can be found for them.”

I lean towards #1 for interpreting Malachi 4:1 and #2 above for interpreting the verses in Mark and Matthew, so that the other Jews who are left on the earth will be those whom God will inwardly change and gather to the land once Israel’s enemies are destroyed by the Messiah, i.e., the 144,000 of Revelation. They will be Jews throughout the world who remain interested in God and being loyal to Him, but who are not fully changed inwardly until Jesus returns. In this way, they become the ones who return to the land of Israel and constitute the seedbed of Jews who go on to live in the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 as genuine believers.

Nevertheless, the chosen who are gathered by the angels of God will come “from one end of the sky to the other” (Matthew) and “from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven” (Mark). It seems that this large extent refers to all the followers of God in history because of their authentic belief in Him by means of His having changed their hearts. Therefore, some will be resurrected from the dead, and some will be raptured and lifted off the earth—both Jews and Gentiles.

**Matthew 24:22** “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect (ἐκλεκτοῦς) those days will be cut short.” (But these “elect” may be simply Jews in general as God’s chosen people.)

Cf. **John 6:39** “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. **40** “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

**Romans 8:33** Who will bring a charge against God’s elect (κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν Θεοῦ)? God is the one who justifies.

**1 Corinthians 15:50** Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**Ephesians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, **4** just as He chose (ἐξελέξατο) us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined (προορίσας) us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **6** to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. **15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

<sup>19</sup> There are two options for “all these things” (Matthew 24:33; or “these things” in Mark 13:29 and Luke 21:31) – 1) everything Jesus has mentioned up to this point regarding the great tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the warning against false messiahs and teachers, and the astronomic signs just before his return, and his return, or 2) in spite of the word “all,” only the astronomic signs and his return of Mark 13:24-27, etc. While Jesus certainly would want all followers in Christian history not to despair over the long time it will take for him to return, the analogy as referring to the nearness of his return lends itself to interpreting “these things” as 2), just the astronomic events immediately preceding his parousia.

Thus, in Mark 13:28 and Matthew 24:32, Jesus provides a very simple analogy. Every year in the spring leaves begin to appear on fig trees. And every year after the leaves appear summer follows spring shortly thereafter. Thus, the emphasis here is on the nearness of summer to spring when leaves appear on fig trees and other deciduous trees (cf. Luke 21:29, “Behold the fig tree and all trees, as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near (ἤδη ἐγγύς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν).”). Thus, the analogy is emphasizing the short time between two events, the appearance in the spring of leaves on the trees and then summer which follows soon after.

In Mark 13:29 and Matthew 24:33, Jesus uses the leaves on the fig tree with summer following right afterwards to say that when his disciples, theoretically those to whom he is actually speaking on the Mt. of Olives but more obviously whoever they are in the distant future as per previous verses in the Olivet Discourse, observe the sun and moon being darkened along with the stars falling and the heavenly powers being shaken, they can know that he will return very soon. In other words, here “these things” refer to only the last signs of God’s judgment on the Jews, the astronomical events of Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24-25, and Luke 21:25-26. And Jesus is emphasizing the importance of truly knowing their biblical theology well enough that they immediately grasp the significance of these astronomic events and not be led astray by other people’s reaction of fear and terror to them.

Cf. Luke 21:25-26 – “dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, **26** men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Rather than dismay, perplexity, and fainting from fear, Jesus’ disciples and followers should rejoice at what they see and experience. Jesus’ encouragement to them has been, “straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). All Christians must persevere in their faith and also be ready to recognize the signs of the times when these last astronomic events begin to occur. Therefore, we observe all that is going on around us as fulfillments of the first five seals of Revelation and

look forward with great anticipation to the sixth seal and the astronomic events that will indicate that Jesus' return is very, very close.

As above regarding Mark 13:24-25, cf. [Revelation 6:12](#) I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; [13](#) and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. [14](#) The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. [15](#) Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; [16](#) and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; [17](#) for the great day of their wrath [The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5] has come, and who is able to stand?"

The word in both Matthew 24:33 and Mark 13:29 is θύραις, literally doors or gates, i.e., the word is plural. In this case, Jesus is more likely referencing the gates of a city, and maybe especially Jerusalem, and not the doors of a house. It will be as though he is standing at the gates of a city, that close, and will enter into the city soon afterwards just as anyone would expect a person, maybe even a king (this being his parousia), to do who has traveled to the city and has arrived at its gates. Therefore, the point is that, just as someone does not remain long at the gates of an ANE city because he most likely has business to conduct within its walls or he wants to get to his home as soon as possible (or to take on the responsibility of being the king), Jesus will return very soon after the above signs begin to occur. While the great tribulation for the Jews will be a lengthy period of time from Jesus' first coming to his second coming, the time between the signs of Mark 13:24-25, Matthew 24:29, and Luke 21:25-26 to his second coming and parousia will be quite short in comparison. It is to this short time to which Jesus is referring with this analogy. Luke 21:31 changes the wording to say that "the Kingdom of God is near (ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ)." So while Mark and Matthew probably quote Jesus verbatim, Luke, in typical fashion (cf. Luke 21:23b-24), provides the interpretative aspect that Jesus' return will result in his establishing the Kingdom of God, by which Jesus would mean in this context the restoring of the Kingdom of Israel in accordance with the disciples' question at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse (cf. Matthew 24:3, "Tell us, when will these things happen [the destruction of the temple], and what will be the sign of your coming (τῆς σῆς παρουσίας = of your blessed appearance when you will restore the Kingdom of Israel" and Acts 1:6, "Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel (εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ)?"). Thus, Luke explains what Matthew and Mark record as Jesus' words, "he is near, right at the door (gates)," i.e., that Jesus is very close to making his blessed appearance in order to restore the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel, the first stage of the eternal Kingdom of God. This will be Jesus' parousia (παρουσία – Matthew 24:3). In this way, Luke indicates that technically the Kingdom of God does not arrive until Jesus returns. In other words, while Jesus is talking about the eternal Kingdom of God, it begins with the restored Kingdom of Israel and culminates in the kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth of Revelation 21. Here though he is talking about only the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel, i.e., the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20. By taking the entire Olivet Discourse as the context, Luke adds good data for interpreting the predictions of the OT prophets for a glorious future for Israel as literally going to happen eventually when God fulfills His promise to Abraham to cause his descendants to become a "great nation" (cf. Genesis 12:1-3).

<sup>20</sup> As in the previous section, "all these things" that will "take place" could refer to 1) everything Jesus has mentioned up to this point regarding the great tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the warning against false messiahs and teachers, and the astronomic signs just before his return, and his return, or 2) like the previous section, only the astronomic signs and his return of Mark 13:24-27, etc. Again the context of the analogy of nearness and then in the next section the mention of "that day" as referring to Jesus' return lend themselves to 2) making more sense. Jesus is saying that this "generation" will not disappear "until" the final cataclysmic signs of God's judgment on the Jews take place.

In Mark 13:30, Matthew 24:34, and Luke 21:32, there are two possibilities for how to translate ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη – 1) "this generation," as though Jesus is speaking of either a) the generation of Jews who are listening to him speak about all these things, or b) the generation of Jews who will be alive when the signs of Mark 13:24-27 take place in the distant future, or 2) "this race" or "ethnic group," i.e., the Jews.

There are also two options for understanding what Jesus means overall in these verses – I. he is making a temporal point (a point regarding time) that once the signs of Mark 13:24-27, begin, it will be less than a generation of years, approximately 30-40 years in the ANE because of their life expectancy, before he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel, or II. he is making a point about the absolute certainty of God's fulfilling His promises to the Jews to make of them a great nation according to Genesis 12:1-3. If I. is the correct interpretation, then Mark 13:30 should be tied to the previous two verses, so that Mark 13:31, which seems to be making the point of the absolute certainty of the events occurring, especially his return to restore the Kingdom of Israel, would stand alone and not be tied to Mark 13:30. If II. is the correct interpretation, then Mark 13:30 should be tied to v. 31, which seems most likely to be making the point that God will surely fulfill His promises to the Jewish people and make them a great nation, i.e., II above.

In the light of the disciples' ongoing concern about the fulfillment of God's promise to transform the Jews into a great nation, II., God's surely fulfilling His promise in the future to make the Jews the greatest nation in human history, makes more sense along with the correct interpretation of ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη being 2) above, i.e., "this race" or "this ethnic group." Therefore, Jesus is saying that God will ensure that the Jews play their divine and biblical role right up to the end of the history of the present realm. No one will be able to destroy or do away with the Jews so as to prevent God from using them as He foretold in Genesis 12:1-3.

Consider [Jeremiah 31:35](#) Thus says Yahweh, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; Yahweh of hosts is His name: [36](#) "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares Yahweh, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever." [37](#) Thus says

Yahweh, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares Yahweh.

As a result, Jesus will definitely return and restore the kingdom to Israel so that the Jews will not disappear as an ethnic group in spite of the great tribulation which they will experience and the many times that it will look as though they are about to get wiped out, e.g., during the holocaust of World War II and then when the Beast of Revelation and his government and armies make their appearance in the Middle East and in Israel. The point is that “until,” i.e., right up to the time of, Jesus return, the Jews will survive all their difficulties in history brought about by the judgments of God. And this could be all that Jesus means, that the English translation of ἕως as “until” does not mean that after Jesus’ return, the Jews do disappear. Instead, it means “right up to the time” without any reference to what happens to the Jews next, for example, that they enter into the millennial kingdom and finally become the “great nation” God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

Nevertheless, Jesus could also be implying that eventually the race of Jews, the nation of Israel, will “pass away” in that they will no longer be featured in human history. This will happen at the end of the millennium when God destroys the present realm and creates a new heaven and earth, and it will be on this new earth that all believers will live for all eternity with Jesus and without any ethnic distinctions that are characterized by the Jews’ obligation to the Mosaic Covenant and the Gentiles’ lack of obligation to this covenant (cf. Revelation 21).

Thus, Mark 13:30 should be linked to the next verse, Mark 13:31, Matthew 24:35, and Luke 21:33, because both are talking about the certainty of Jesus’ return and the establishment of his kingdom over the Jews.

The passing away of heaven and earth here is probably the same as that of Matthew 5:18, which I think refers to the end of the present cosmos before the creation of the eternal heavens and earth of Revelation 21. There are ten uses of the phrase “the heaven and the earth” in the NT, and both words are always singular. This is the third one. Five of them pertain to the “passing away” of the heaven and the earth, and five pertain to God as the maker (ποιητοῦ) of heaven and earth.

Cf. [Matthew 1:17](#) So all the generations (Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαί) from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

It does seem that most other uses of γενεά in the NT mean “generation,” i.e., a period of time of anywhere from 30-70 years, but this does not have to lead us to conclude that Jesus must mean the same by this word here in the Olivet Discourse. Indeed, this could be the one and only time in the NT when the word means “race”—if it is coherent with the rest of the passage, which it is.

<sup>21</sup> In Mark 13:32 and Matthew 24:36 (Luke does not include this section except for similar comments in Luke 17:26-37 in the far right column), Jesus is saying that there is no created being, whether we are talking about earthly human beings including the Son of God, Jesus himself, or we are talking about heavenly beings such as conventional angels, who knows when the end of the age will occur with its signs and the appearance of Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel. He has said that the end is a long way off and that it definitely will occur, but even he does not know exactly when it will happen. The implication is that, despite the details Jesus has presented in answer to the disciples’ question, everyone simply needs to be alert and wait for his return to come about.

If in Mark 13:30, instead of referring to the Jewish *race*, Jesus had meant that his return would occur before the present *generation* of Jews, who are listening to him speak, dies off, then the statement in Mark 13:32 would contradict this—at least to the extent that a “generation” is approximately 30-40 years. Therefore, since Jesus did not mean *generation* but *race*, he is not saying that his return will not occur in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple—which is when the preterists believe that his return takes place. Indeed, everything in the Olivet Discourse taken together in their context speaks to a time much farther in the future for his parousia, his grand appearance to restore the Kingdom of Israel.

The Expositor’s Bible Commentary makes these interesting comments, “Few would challenge the authenticity of this verse. The early church is unlikely to have created a logion that has resulted in such consternation and embarrassment as this one has. ‘That day’ clearly refers to the Parousia. It is the great day, the eschatological day that will bring to an end ‘those days’ (vv.17, 19, 24). Of ‘those days,’ i.e., the days that precede the time of the End, certain signs have been given; but of ‘that day’ neither the angels of heaven nor Jesus himself knows the time. Only the Father knows that time... Jesus’ ignorance of the day or hour of his parousia must be understood in terms of the NT teaching concerning the Incarnation. A real Incarnation involved such lack of knowledge. Jesus purposely laid aside temporarily the exercise of his omniscience as part of what was involved in his becoming man.”

However, if Jesus is ontologically only created being like all other created human beings and a character (indeed, the main character) in God’s story, which is the only rational way to understand his beingness and ontology, then it stands to reason that, according to Jesus, the transcendent Creator God has not provided him with the information of the exact time of his return, even though Jesus is the icon/image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15) and God’s proxy within the creation as is meant by the title Son of God going back to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 with Psalm 2, 8, and 89 to assist in grasping its meaning. Jesus the God, but he is God in the story, who is living out his role as a character in the story just as much as we are living out our roles as characters in God’s story.

There are three possibilities for the extent of Jesus’ perspective in the following verses of Matthew 24:37-41 that have a parallel in Luke 17:26-37 – 1) global, or 2) the Middle East and Roman Empire which was the extent of world that the Jews knew, or 3) very local and only the land of Israel. Certainly #1 fits the rest of the biblical message, especially Revelation 6:12-17 and the sixth seal along with Revelation 16:17-21 as quoted below. But the question by the disciples in Luke 17:37 as to where God’s judgment will be poured out and Jesus’ answer of the body and gathering vultures that is basically the same as his statement in Matthew 24:28 of a corpse and gathering vultures makes me wonder if he is referring to only the land of Israel in this passage for the sake of focusing the attention of his disciples, who are listening and living on this land, to their homeland and the monumental effects of the nation of Israel’s rejection of him as their Messiah, king, and priest (cf. 17:25).

However, the way to understand him may be that he is focusing on the land of Israel but indicating that the effects will be extensive, even to the rest of the world such as it will be after a long period of time and he returns.

**Revelation 6:12** I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; **13** and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. **14** The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. **15** Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; **16** and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; **17** for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

**Revelation 16:17** Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." **18** And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Consequently, starting in Matthew 24:37 and Luke 17:26, Jesus continues in the same manner as before by offering analogies. This time it is to illustrate the attitude of unbelievers during the time of his "coming," his *παρουσία*, which means his blessed appearance for the purpose of restoring the Kingdom of Israel. He is saying that unbelievers who are alive at the time of his return will be like unbelievers in Noah's day.

Then, in Matthew 24:38 and Luke 17:27, Jesus describes the time of Noah before God brought the flood on the earth.

Unbelievers were under the distinct impression that life as they knew it would continue uninterrupted. Therefore, they lived life as any normal person would who basically did not have a care in the world right up to the day when Noah and his family boarded the ark and before the rains began. Therefore, even the divine sign that Noah was offering them of building the ark and entering it was irrelevant as far as the unbelievers were concerned. They simply continued on their merry way, living life as if no cataclysm or judgment from God was coming upon them.

In Matthew 24:39 and the last part of Luke 17:27, this all sounds like the breaking of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal in Revelation 6:12-17, which also corresponds to the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl of wrath of Revelation 16:17-20 (The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord), when God finishes His judgment of the Jews mainly on the land of Israel.

Luke adds another analogy in 17:28,29. Similar to the time of Noah was God's destroying Sodom and Gomorrah when Lot was living in Sodom. The unbelieving people in these cities were living their lives as if nothing cataclysmic was going to happen to them. As far as they were concerned, their lives were as normal and going to be as normal as they had been up to that time. This response of the unbelievers can be attributed to their hardness of heart. They were unwilling to read the signs correctly and flee from the wrath of God. As the rest of Sodom lived life normally, when Lot and his family left the city, the unbelievers of the city thought nothing of it, i.e., that he knew something that they did not and was escaping God's judgment that was coming on the city. Therefore, they were completely caught by surprise and died in the fire and brimstone that descended on them. Therefore, none of them escaped death. They all died in the divine holocaust except Lot's family because they fled the city.

At the end of Matthew 24:39 and in Luke 17:30, Jesus goes on to say that the unbelievers who are living on the land of Israel when he returns will experience the same kind of natural and cataclysmic destruction as the people of both Noah's time and Lot's time. The revealing of the Son of Man, the Davidic king as he is described in Psalm 2, will spell physical disaster for the unbelievers. As suggested above, even though it would be easy to understand Matthew 24 with the help of Revelation 6 and 16 as referring to global judgment and destruction, I think Jesus is more likely confining his meaning in this passage to divine judgment and destruction of unbelievers on the land of Israel, while not absolutely excluding the possibility that the destruction will extend to a degree beyond the Middle East and the Roman Empire.

It is also easy to see how the preterists conclude that the return of Jesus was at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because of the similarity of language here to Matthew 24:15ff. But I think that Luke 21:20-24 with their comments about Jerusalem being surrounded by armies in response to the disciples' question regarding the destruction of the temple, clears up the confusion by showing that Matthew 24:15-21 is about A.D. 70. As a result, Jesus is now using similar language to refer to the events of his return, because, as he says in Matthew 24:39 and Luke 17:30, the Jews will go through the same kind of suffering.

Going on to Luke 17:31, Jesus uses the same language when he referred to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in Matthew 24:15-20 and Mark 13:14-18. Here in Luke 17:31 he means basically the same thing, that the judgment of God will come so suddenly and quickly on the land of Israel that authentic believers should flee any obvious coming disaster without thinking that it is more important to save anything but themselves with their faith intact. Of course, genuine and authentic believers among the Jews will be lifted from the earth to join Jesus as he descends, while strictly unbelieving Jews will incur God's wrath and judgment and be killed. Nevertheless, there will also be the "144,000" Jews of Revelation 7 & 14 who will be inwardly disposed towards God and whom He will protect from His judgment and death. These will go on to become genuine believers as the future generation of Jews living on the land of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom of Revelation 20.

In Luke 17:32, Jesus speaks of Lot's wife as a comparison to unbelievers who will incur God's judgment and destruction just before he returns. She looked back, i.e., hesitated in her heart from leaving the comfort and security of the city of Sodom (if you can call living in the midst of such people who are outwardly hostile to God comforting and secure), thus violating God's specific commandment not to do so, so that God killed her on the spot. Jesus is therefore encouraging the believers during God's judgment of the land of Israel before His return to remain steadfast in their hearts—to trust God with authentic faith in their



hearts in order to escape the destruction coming on the Jews. And, indeed, they will be spared as Jesus goes on to explain. The next statement of Luke 17:33 is not found in the parallel passage of Matthew 24:36-41, but the point is the same. Just as Lot's wife in her heart did not take seriously God's warning and wanted to preserve her life in Sodom rather than obey God and trust Him for a new life after the city had been destroyed by His judgment, the unbeliever who places all his hope in holding onto life in this world (even life on the land of Israel – cf. John 6) will be judged and destroyed by God during the cataclysmic events which He will bring on the land of Israel before Jesus' return. In contrast, the believer who is willing to let go of the things of this world and his existence in it as that which is most important to him will keep himself alive into eternal life.

Then, in Luke 17:34-36, as in Matthew 40:36-41, the life of the unbeliever will be “taken” (ὁ εἶς παραλημφθήσεται) in the judgment of God on the land of Israel while the believer will be left on the earth to be raised *immortal* and morally perfect in the first resurrection of Revelation 20 very soon after these catastrophic events and then inhabit the millennial Kingdom of Israel with Jesus' ruling over it. Also, of course, the “144,000” Jews of Revelation 7 & 14 will be left to inhabit the millennial kingdom as *mortal* believers.

Finally, in Luke 17:37, as a result of what Jesus has said about the destruction coming on the land of Israel, his disciples specifically ask him where God's judgment will take place. It seems a bit strange that they need to ask this if Jesus really has been encouraging them to focus on the land of Israel, but at this point in the disciples' journey of learning what Jesus is teaching them during his first appearance on earth, no question by them should really surprise us. Plus, Jesus has just mentioned Noah and Lot, both who lived outside the land of Israel per se. Consequently, it makes sense that Jesus' disciples are wondering if what he is talking about will happen somewhere else in the world.

His answer is the same as Matthew 24:28 except Luke uses the word “body” (τὸ σῶμα) instead of “corpse” (τὸ πτώμα). However, I think that Jesus point is the same, that the fallen, dead (or at least dying) body where vultures are circling to move in and devour it once it is assuredly dead is where the cataclysmic events will take place. And what is the “body” that is dying and will become like a corpse? Jesus has been describing the effects of the Jews' rejecting him as their Messiah which has brought God's judgment on them that has extended from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple to his second coming and restoring the Kingdom of Israel. Jesus now indicates that the devastation brought upon the Jews just before he returns will be so great that it will just about destroy them as a people, making them like a corpse lying on the ground with vultures looking to pick at the dead body and consume it. The vultures will be Gentile nations who want nothing more than to see the Jews exterminated so that they can inhabit their land. And it will appear to the whole “world” as though this may actually happen—until Jesus returns and destroys these vulturous and predatory Gentiles who will have invaded the land of Israel under the leadership of the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2, subjugated the Jews, and then in the process of destroying them completely (cf. Revelation 19).

<sup>22</sup> In Mark 13:33, Matthew 24:42, and Luke 21:34, Jesus issues a warning to his disciples for them to remain vigilant, watchful, and alert between now and his return. Because of the long period of time between his first and second appearances, it would be easy for his disciples to lose their focus on the goal of being ready with true and authentic belief in order to obtain the benefit of eternal mercy and life from God through Jesus' advocacy when he returns. Therefore, Jesus is urging them (and any of his bona fide disciples after them) to commit themselves to looking for Jesus' return and being on their guard with persevering belief and obedience at all times. He does not want the length of time to dissuade them from remaining solid in their belief and desire for eternal life so that they would incur God's judgment and destruction instead, thus proving that they never had authentic belief in the first place.

Starting with v. 34, this paragraph in Luke is different from Matthew and Mark and therefore may not be verbatim. He has Jesus mention specific ways that his disciples could take their focus off the goal of persevering in belief and obtaining God's eternal mercy and life when he returns. It would be by indulging their desire simply to feel good through the heavy use of alcohol or by allowing the things of this world to take precedence over eternal life so that they spend all their time thinking and fretting over how they can both have things they want in this world and control their existences in order to maximize their satisfaction and fulfillment in the present realm. If they allow themselves to go in this direction with their commitments, thoughts, and behavior, then Jesus' return will be like a trap suddenly shutting on them, and they will incur God's judgment, condemnation, and destruction instead of eternal life.

In Luke 21:35, there are three possibilities for interpreting ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς (“on the face of all the earth”), either 1) on the face of the entire earth, i.e., a global judgment and destruction, or 2) in the Middle East and to the extent of the current Roman Empire, or 3) on the land of Israel, i.e., a local judgment and destruction specific to the Jews. Verse 36 speaks of either being judged and dying or persevering in belief and surviving the catastrophe God will bring about before Jesus' return. Therefore, I think that either #2 or #3 makes more sense. The global judgment will leave some unbelievers on the earth to live in the Gentile countries who will submit (albeit grudgingly) to Jesus' authority in Jerusalem, while the judgment of God on Israel removes all unbelieving Jews (and Gentiles, i.e., the invading armies of the Man of Lawlessness) from the land.

In Luke 21:36, assuming that Jesus is talking about Jews who will either die in God's judgment on their land or who live through it in order to be in the presence of the Messiah when he returns, Jesus is exhorting his disciples to pray that God will grant them the strength to endure all the hardship and devastation coming on the land of Israel, specifically because of the army of the Man of Lawlessness (cf. Ezekiel 38,39; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 9 & 16).

In Matthew 24:43, Jesus presents another analogous situation to his second coming. The owner of a house would love to know exactly when a thief is going to burglar his home, because then he would be awake and ready for him to prevent it from happening. He certainly would not fall asleep at the appointed time and permit the thief to succeed in his plans.

Then in Matthew 24:44, Jesus explains the analogy of v. 43. Like the house owner who would obviously not leave his house or fall asleep at the exact moment when a thief breaks in, if he knows when this moment is, Jesus' disciples need to be as alert and

ready for Jesus' return as the house owner who would be waiting for the thief if he knew when he was coming. In other words, Jesus' disciples need to be as ready and alert all the time as if they actually know exactly when he is returning. And this will be all the more important for Jews on the land of Israel who will want to endure the hardships of the end times with authentic faith in order to gain eternal life and even a place in the restored Kingdom of Israel.

<sup>23</sup> In Mark's analogy of 13:34-37, the owner of a house leaves but will return by the next morning (cf. v. 36). And he gives to his slaves the responsibilities of taking care of the house until he returns, so that even the doorkeeper must be ready to receive him at any moment. Thus, each slave must always be carrying out his responsibility so that he is awake and not asleep when the owner returns (cf. v. 36). In v. 35, Jesus makes it clear that the point is that the "slaves," i.e., his disciples, do not know when he, the master, is returning. It may be in the evening (relatively soon), at midnight (not so soon), when the rooster crows (quite a while), or in the morning (a long, long time). In v. 36, Jesus says that the owner (he, Jesus) expects to find each slave (disciple) awake and performing his assigned duty when he returns (alert and continuing to pursue moral obedience to God). In v. 37, Jesus ends the above analogy by encouraging his disciples to remain alert in a similar fashion to the slaves, so that being "awake" means "not sleeping" with respect to each disciple's belief and willingness to continue performing the works of God of pursuing loving God and people and choosing to act morally as much as God's grace allows in the disciple's life. To fall asleep would be to give up one's faith and obedience to God, thus implying that the supposed disciple would incur God's judgment and destruction. And in this context of the "ethnic group" of the Jews of 13:30, this judgment and destruction takes place towards the Jews on the land of Israel with repercussions in regard to their eternal destiny, i.e., eternal destruction, too.

The analogy by Jesus in Matthew 24:45-51 is parallel to the one in Mark 13:34-37. While the main point is the same, i.e., that his disciples must persevere in their belief and love of one another, there is the additional element of abusing one's fellow believers which demonstrates a lack of authentic belief and concern for God's eternal mercy and life.

Jesus introduces the analogy by speaking of a slave whose master has left the house and given him the responsibility of caring for the rest of the slaves by making sure they are properly and consistently fed.

In real life, Jesus commands all his disciples and followers to care for and love one another in such a way that their physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs are acknowledged and met by one another as much as possible.

In v. 46, Jesus says that certainly the slave who carries out this responsibility will feel happy when the houseowner returns and learns that he has done so.

Thus, when Jesus returns, however long is the time between his first and second coming, the true disciple who has carefully and consistently sought to love his fellow believers will enjoy the response of blessing from God and Jesus to all his inward and outward efforts.

In v. 47, Jesus indicates that the result of the slave's proper and consistent obedience to the houseowner's instructions will be that the latter will give him even more responsibility, placing him in charge of not only the other slaves, but also all his property and assets.

Likewise, Jesus' response to the bona fide disciple will be to assign him the responsibility of caring for all his fellow believers in the eternal Kingdom of God and caring for all the other elements of the kingdom beyond the people in it (as opposed to interpreting "all his possessions" as all the people in the kingdom; but "other elements of the kingdom" as going beyond people seems more coherent with the "master" having first put the slave in charge of his "household," i.e., people, in v. 45). However, the responsible slave who is either resurrected or raptured at Jesus' return will be put in charge of helping to rule over the nation of Israel and the rest of the world during the millennial kingdom, even acting as a priest to people to instruct them in the truth about Jesus as the Messiah. So this would be the disciple's main task and responsibility during the millennial kingdom (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 20:4).

In v. 48, Jesus says that if the slave takes advantage of the fact that the houseowner will be gone a long time...

If a disciple of Jesus chooses to look at the long time between Jesus' first and second comings as an opportunity to disobey him...

V. 49 continues the above thoughts – and the slave mistreats those over whom the houseowner put him in charge and hangs out with the wrong crowd, engaging in immorality and drunkenness...

So that the poorly thinking disciple mistreats his fellow believers and does not love them properly in every way that is possible, even engaging in immoral behavior without seeking to stop himself and be repentant...

And Jesus continues in v. 50 regarding how the master (he) will respond to the irresponsible slave – the houseowner will return when the slave does not expect him (because he has not considered the fact that because he does not know exactly when he is returning, he should remain vigilant at all times)...

Jesus will return when the supposed believer does not expect him, because he is not keeping himself focused on Jesus' second coming and remaining persevering in his belief and obedience for the sake of obtaining God's eternal mercy and life...

And Jesus ends the teaching of this parable in v. 51 – the houseowner will destroy the irresponsible slave—end of parable.

Then with the words "in that place...teeth" Jesus switches to speaking of himself and what he does to the alleged disciple who proves that he is not authentic in his faith and obedience to God. He will cause him to join all the other people who only acted as though they were his followers but were not authentic. And they all will experience great grief and anguish over being rejected by God. In other words, they will incur God's wrath and destruction in a measured and appropriate manner at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15.