

Has the Gospel been Preached to All the World?

It has been said by many preachers that the one main thing delaying the return of the Lord is that this Gospel must first be preached to all nations.

They then make an emotional appeal to send your money so that this last event can be fulfilled thus ushering in the return of Jesus. The main Scripture that is used to justify this position is found in **Matthew 24:14**.

A closer look at the context of this verse, the Greek words used, and the political environment of the audience to whom Jesus was speaking will help us get a clear understanding of its true meaning.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14)

Mat 24:14 And^{G2532} this^{G5124} gospel^{G2098} of the^{G3588} kingdom^{G932} shall be preached^{G2784} in^{G1722} all^{G3650} the^{G3588} world^{G3625} for^{G1519} a witness^{G3142} unto all^{G3956} nations^{G1484} and^{G2532} then^{G5119} shall the^{G3588} end^{G5056} come^{G2240}.

The word “world” is translated from the Greek word “**oikoumene**”.

G3625
οἰκουμένη
oikoumenē
oy-kou-men'-ay
Feminine participle present passive of **G3611** (as noun, by implication of **G1093**); **land**, that is, the (terrene part of the) **globe**; specifically the Roman **empire**: - earth, world.

We just taught a lesson on YouTube titled “A New “World” View” a few weeks ago which discussed the meaning of “oikoumene”. “Oikoumene” means ***“the inhabited earth or the inhabitants of the earth”***.

In contemporary Greek writings, it referred to the earth inhabited by the Greeks. During the New Testament times, “oikoumene” very often referred to the Roman Empire and all of its subjects who lived within it.

The Roman Empire was clearly the predominant power during the New Testament times. During the earthly ministry of Jesus, the population of the city of Rome was 1,000,000 people.

The population of the entire Roman Empire at this time was approaching 100,000,000 people across 50 different modern-day nations. The majority of the Roman Empire was made up of Gentile nations.

We can see by observing the context of several verses where **“oikoumene”** is used, that it is clearly referring to the Roman Empire. Let’s look at **Luke 2:1**.

Luk 2:1 And^{G1161} it came to pass^{G1096} in^{G1722} those^{G1565} days,^{G2250} that there went out^{G1831} a decree^{G1378} from^{G3844} Caesar^{G2541} Augustus,^{G828} that all^{G3956} the^{G3588} world^{G3625} should be taxed.^{G583}

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Here we read about a decree that went out from Caesar Augustus that all the **“world” (oikoumene)** should be taxed. The Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus was taxing the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. **(oikoumene)** Another example of this same context is found in **Acts 11:28**.

Act 11:28 And^{G1161} there stood up^{G450} one^{G1520} of^{G1537} them^{G846} named^{G3686} Agabus,^{G13} and signified^{G4591} by^{G1223} the^{G3588} Spirit^{G4151} that there should^{G3195} be^{G1510} great^{G3173} dearth^{G3042} throughout^{G1909} all^{G3650} the^{G3588} world:^{G3625} which^{G3748} (G2532) came to pass^{G1096} in the days of^{G1909} Claudius^{G2804} Caesar.^{G2541}

In this verse, Agabus warned them of a coming dearth or famine throughout all the world. **(oikoumene)** History tells us of a couple different famines that occurred in the Roman Empire. One was in AD 41-42 and the other was in AD 45 and was centered in Judea. In **Acts 11:29-30**, we read about relief being sent to the brethren in Judea because of this famine.

In **Acts 24:5**, we read about accusations against Paul.

Act 24:5 For^{G1063} we have found^{G2147} this^{G5126} man^{G435} a pestilent^{G3061} fellow,^{G2532} and a mover^{G2795} of sedition^{G4714} among all^{G3956} the^{G3588} Jews^{G2453} throughout^{G2596} the^{G3588} world,^{G3625} and^{G5037} a ringleader^{G4414} of the^{G3588} sect^{G139} of the^{G3588} Nazarenes:^{G3480}

They accused him of being a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the **“world” (oikoumene)** Paul was going throughout the Roman Empire with the Gospel message.

It was hard enough for Paul to traverse the vast Roman Empire. He certainly didn’t have the wherewithal to travel to North America or beyond.

In **Acts 17:6**, we read about the disciples who were turning their **“world” (oikoumene)** upside down with the Gospel message.

Act 17:6 And^{G1161} when they found^{G2147} them^{G846} not,^{G3361} they drew^{G4951} Jason^{G2394} and^{G2532} certain^{G5100} brethren^{G80} unto^{G1909} the^{G3588} rulers of the city,^{G4173} crying,^{G994} These^{G3778} that have turned the world upside down^{G387 G3588 G3625} are come^{G3918} hither^{G1759} also;^{G2532}

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Clearly, we can see from the context that the meaning of the word **“world” (oikoumene)** is referring to the Roman Empire. There was hardly a province of the Roman Empire in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ had not been preached.

During that 40-year period from the Ascension of Jesus until AD 70, the disciples went throughout the Roman Empire teaching and preaching this great Gospel message.

The disciples were obeying the commandment that Jesus gave them to **“Go ye therefore and teach all nations....” (Matthew 28:19-20)** Remember, the Roman Empire was made up of many different nations and races.

He told them to go starting in Jerusalem, to all Judea, to Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. **(Acts 1:8)** The Bible tells us that Paul himself carried the Gospel message to Arabia, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Illyricum, Rome, Spain and many other places. **(Romans 15:19, 24, 28, Galatians 1:17, Philippians 1:13, Acts 13:4-5, 15:41, 16:6,9)** The Gospel was offered everywhere, but not received everywhere.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Bible tells us that the Gospel had been carried into all parts of the known world. **Romans 10:18** tells us that their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the **“world” (oikoumene)** Paul boldly proclaims that the Gospel was preached to every creature under heaven. **(Colossians 1:23)**

Colossians 1:23 *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, **and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven**; whereof I Paul am made a minister.*

This obviously refers to their known world, the predominate political power of their day, the Roman Empire.

The Scriptures themselves tell us what Jesus stated in **Matthew 24:14**, ” ... *this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all **the “world” (oikoumene)** for a witness unto all nations (Roman Empire), and then shall the end come*”, had already come to pass before Jerusalem fell in AD 70.

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The **“end”** that was fastly approaching then was the end of God’s Covenant relationship with the Nation of Israel. It was the Old Covenant that was getting ready to end. (**Hebrews 8:13**)

Hebrews 8:13 *In that he saith, **A new covenant**, he hath made **the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.***

Jesus said it himself in **Matthew 24:34** that **the generation He was addressing** would not pass away until this was fulfilled. Paul and the rest of the Apostles fulfilled this prophecy of Jesus. They truly did go into all of their known **“world” (oikoumene)** with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Using **Matthew 24:14** as a vehicle to extract money out of your wallet to send the “Gospel” throughout the world so that Jesus will be able to come back again is a deception and a money-making scheme. **Matthew 24:14**, in its proper context, was already fulfilled.

No doubt, we still have a commission today to go everywhere preaching and teaching this same Gospel message that Jesus and the Apostles taught, but not to produce the second coming of Jesus.

Jesus and His Kingdom is here right now with us. We can be born into it or dwell outside of it. The Gospel that Jesus gave to the Apostles is still being preached today and will continue to be throughout eternity. There is no end to the New Covenant; it is Everlasting. (**Ephesians 3:21**) We are NOT facing an end now.

Ephesians 3:21 *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, **world without end**. Amen.*

There is still an urgency to reach **our world, our oikoumene**, our entire planet with this Gospel message because life is short, and eternity is forever.

In our modern times, we have the wherewithal to accomplish this mission. Every new generation that is born on this earth needs to hear the Truth; they need to hear how to get “forever” in their lives.

Many are going, but are they taking the True Gospel message that brings salvation? Jesus told us that we must be born again. (**John 3:3,5,7**) This only comes through obedience to the Gospel message. (**Acts 2:37-39**) How will they hear unless we tell them?

Romans 10:14 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and **how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard**? and **how shall they hear without a preacher**?*

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