

The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:1-25:46

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The term “Olivet Discourse” is a reference to the discourse Jesus gave to his disciples in the three synoptic Gospels which include Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. This thesis will focus on Matthew 24:1-25:46 from the viewpoint known as preterism. With this thesis, I intend to show that the fulfillment of Jesus words spoken here have been fulfilled. The term preterism means “past” or finished. This view of the Olivet discourse is that what Jesus was describing in these chapters, specifically here, Matt: 24:1-25:46 did not refer to some future event as promulgated by Premillennialists (both Historic and Dispensational), and Amillennialists, but in fact referred to events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. The Partial Preterist view is that Jesus switches in Matthew 24:36 – 25:46 to a time yet to be determined in the future. Both of these positions will be analyzed in this thesis.

My goal is always to be like those in the Berean Church as described in **Act 17:11:**

“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

Therefore, it is my intention to do the research and present it in this format. In so doing, I welcome challenges to the information that I am about to present. I have no agenda to defend. As always, my goal is to get to the truth and depart from views which are not in line with God’s Word. As with every exegesis, we should begin with the basic premise of Biblical interpretation. This is aptly stated in A.B Mickelsen’s book, “Interpreting the Bible (1981 Eerdmans p. 5)”:

“Simply stated, the task of interpreters of the Bible is to find out the meaning of a statement (command, question) for the author and for the first hearers or readers, and thereupon to transmit that meaning to the modern readers.”

It is with this view in mind that we begin the examination of the Olivet Discourse.

The Olivet discourse has been the subject of much controversy over the centuries since Jesus was alive on the earth. As R.C. Sproul explains on his website:

No teaching of Christ has generated as much controversy as the portion of the Olivet Discourse recorded in [Matthew 24:1–35](#). Many people believe that this section, at least in part, is about the final return of Jesus to usher in the new heavens and the new earth (see Rev. 20–21). Critics seize upon this belief to discredit our Savior’s words. If the Olivet Discourse is about His final return, they say, Jesus is a false prophet since the generation in which He lived died off and the world continues on ([Matt. 24:34](#)). Several people, in order to answer this objection, have said that “generation” refers not to Christ’s hearers but to a later group who will witness many of the signs in [Matthew 24:1–35](#). According to this interpretation, Jesus is referring to events that will come in the far distant future. This view is unsatisfying, as we will see in the days ahead.

This approach to the Olivet Discourse does not deny Christ’s future coming in glory “to judge the living and the dead,” as the creeds say. Those who advocate this view just argue that most of Matthew 24 is not directly applicable to this event. But many other passages affirm the second coming of Christ to usher in the new heavens and earth, and Christians must affirm that there is a day of judgment for the world ([1 Thess. 1:9–10](#)).

Thus, from what is mentioned here on Dr. Sproul's website, since this view does not mean *all things are past*, we get the term "Partial Preterest."

As a Premillennial Christian, I was taught that the first part of the Olivet discourse was a future event; and described a future great tribulation. **With this thesis, I now challenge that view.** With this in mind, I will try to present my findings to encourage others who believe as I did to look into this matter further. The information I am about to present was overwhelming to me upon first hearing it, and it has deeply challenged beliefs which I have held for years. It is with a humble heart and an open mind that I present this material.

As I already stated, **the Olivet discourse** is found in all three synoptic Gospels. The accounts are Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. These are parallel accounts of the same event. In the Olivet discourse we find several unique items:

- These passages of scripture detail a time of unprecedented trouble.
- Here we find the first use of the terms "great tribulation" and "great distresses."
- A *definite* period of time is stated: "This generation will not pass away"
- *Specific* questions are asked by the disciples, and Jesus answered them.
- A *specific* audience is given here, the audience that will "see all these things."
- *Specific* events are told that will take place in the future
- *Specific* instructions are given as to *what* the disciples should do and *when*.

Just prior to chapter 24 of Matthew's account, at the end of Chapter 23, we find Jesus speaking boldly to the scribes and Pharisees, excoriating their hypocritical religious practices. He prophesies against them in Matt 23:31-36 as follows:

"Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." (ESV, underline mine)

Notice that Jesus pronounces judgment on "this generation." There is no question that he was referring to the generation to whom he was speaking. This was confirmed again when He was standing before Pilate. On this occasion they would say in Matt 27:25 "His blood be on us and on our children!" Yes, our Lord Jesus was very sorrowful of this. He expressed this great sorrow that His own people would reject him and told them in Matt 23:38 "See, your house is left to you desolate."

It is after this, in Matthew chapter 24 that Jesus told them in verses 1 and 2 that this magnificent temple, one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world would be completely reduced to rubble. The disciples then came to him privately to ask him: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Notice that they were actually asking 2 questions. When will these things be? What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? Some Translations show it this way. Some have said that these are actually 3 questions. But if this is true, in the minds of the disciples, the last two are clearly linked. In the Greek, the last phrase is linked by the conjunction **καὶ** (*kai*) translated "and" which ties together the last phrase. But were the disciples correct in linking the last two together? This is one of the things that should come out in this investigation.

With regard to the word "generation," it is defined in Strong's Greek dictionary as:

γενεά geneá ghen-eh-ah' from (a presumed derivative of) 1085; a generation; by implication, an age (the period or the persons):--age, generation, nation, time.

The futurist view is that Jesus corrected them in their thinking, - that the term "this generation" refers to some future generation. But there is no such language in the text of Matthew 24:1-35. In fact, *in every case* in the Gospel accounts that the disciples heard the term "this generation" they had no doubt that he was referring to "their generation," not some future generation. Besides the references to "this generation" in the Olivet discourse passages, there are 14 such examples in the gospel accounts. They are listed below:

Mat 11:16 "But to what shall I compare **this generation**? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

Mat 12:41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Mat 12:42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Mat 23:36 Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon **this generation**.

Mar 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does **this generation** seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to **this generation**."

Luk 7:31 "To what then shall I compare the people of **this generation**, and what are they like?

Luk 11:29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "**This generation** is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

Luk 11:30 For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to **this generation**.

Luk 11:31 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of **this generation** and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Luk 11:32 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Luk 11:50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against **this generation**,

Luk 11:51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of **this generation**.

Luk 17:25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by **this generation**.

I would like to emphasize this point again. All of the above instances in which there is a reference to “this generation” it means exactly what it says – *their generation*.

Next, I would like to point out that the audience was *local* in nature. There is no evidence here that Jesus reference was to some other future group. He specifically said this information was addressed to “*you*” not “*they*.” Notice the applicable verses in chapter 24: 1-34:

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

Mat 24:4 And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads **you** astray.

Mat 24:6 And **you** will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that **you** are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

Mat 24:9 “Then they will deliver **you** up to tribulation and put **you** to death, and **you** will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

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

Mat 24:23 Then if anyone says to **you**, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.

Mat 24:25 See, I have told **you** beforehand.

Mat 24:26 So, if they say to **you**, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.

Mat 24:32 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, **you** know that summer is near.

Mat 24:33 So also, when **you** see all these things, **you** know that he is near, at the very gates.

Mat 24:34 Truly, I say to **you**, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

If Jesus had been addressing some other future group, he would have addressed the referenced people as “**they**” or “**them**” with appropriate language.

Additionally, Jesus told the disciples what to do. He told them in verse 16: “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” If this was addressed to some other future generation, *it would not be applicable and would make no sense*. Would some future generation need to come to Jerusalem so they could “flee to the mountains”? This clearly was given to a local audience for a contemporary fulfillment. In conclusion to this part of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus makes an exclamation that settles the matter of the first question asked by the Apostles in Matt 24:35: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

As Albert Barnes puts it in his commentary:

Heaven and earth shall pass away ... - You may sooner expect to see the heaven and earth pass away and return to nothing, than my words to fail.

With this sentence, Jesus completes the answering of the first question.

But what about....

I would like to note some objections I, myself along with others have had. How could this entire passage refer to events in the past? Here is what I found.

First there is the objection of the false Christs in Matt 24:5:

Matt 24:5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

There were indeed many false Messiahs. This is expounded on by Barnes:

Many shall come in my name - Not in the name or by the authority of Jesus, or claiming to be His followers, and to be sent by him, but in the name of the Messiah, or claiming to be the Messiah.

I am Christ - I am the Messiah. See the notes at [Mat 1:1](#). The Messiah was expected at that time, [Mat 2:1-2](#). Many would lay, claims to being the Messiah, and, as He was universally expected, multitudes would easily be led to believe in them. There is abundant evidence that this was fully accomplished. Josephus informs us that there were many who pretended to divine inspiration; who deceived the people, leading out numbers of them into the desert. "The land," says He "was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see I the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God." Among these are mentioned particularly Dositheus, the Samaritan, who affirmed that He was Christ; Simon Magus, who said He appeared among the Jews as the Son of God; and Theudas, who persuaded many to go with him to the river Jordan, to see the waters divided.

Next there is the following passage:

Matt 24:6-10 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

The Roman empire was a large empire which covered many nations and was in an extended era of unprecedented peace during the time of Christ. This is referred to as the *pax Romana*. But during the reign of Nero he begins the Jewish war in the year 67AD which disrupts the entire empire. This disruption reaches a peak after the war is started when Nero commits suicide. There becomes so much turmoil, that it almost results in the collapse of the entire Roman empire. During that year, (June 68-June 69AD) there are 4 emperors who fought to take over Nero's throne, three of which are unseated, until the last one, Vespasian remains.

As regards to famines, notice the shocking words of Jewish Historian Flavius Josephus:

2. But as for the richer sort, it proved all one to them whether they staid in the city, or attempted to get out of it; for they were equally destroyed in both cases; for every such person was put to death under this pretense, that they were going to desert, but in reality that the robbers might get what they had. The madness of the seditious did also increase together with their famine, and both those miseries were every day inflamed more and

more; for there was no corn which any where appeared publicly, but the robbers came running into, and searched men's private houses; and then, if they found any, they tormented them, because they had denied they had any; and if they found none, they tormented them worse, because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it. The indication they made use of whether they had any or not was taken from the bodies of these miserable wretches; which, if they were in good case, they supposed they were in no want at all of food; but if they were wasted away, they walked off without searching any further; nor did they think it proper to kill such as these, because they saw they would very soon die of themselves for want of food. Many there were indeed who sold what they had for one measure; it was of wheat, if they were of the richer sort; but of barley, if they were poorer. When these had so done, they shut themselves up in the inmost rooms of their houses, and ate the corn they had gotten; some did it without grinding it, by reason of the extremity of the want they were in, and others baked bread of it, according as necessity and fear dictated to them: a table was no where laid for a distinct meal, but they snatched the bread out of the fire, half-baked, and ate it very hastily.

3. It was now a miserable case, and a sight that would justly bring tears into our eyes, how men stood as to their food, while the more powerful had more than enough, and the weaker were lamenting [for want of it.] But the famine was too hard for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as to modesty; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence was in this case despised; insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives: and while they ate after this manner, yet were they not concealed in so doing; but the seditious every where came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they had gotten from others; for when they saw any house shut up, this was to them a signal that the people within had gotten some food; whereupon they broke open the doors, and ran in, and took pieces of what they were eating almost up out of their very throats, and this by force: the old men, who held their food fast, were beaten; and if the women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor. But still they were more barbarously cruel to those that had prevented their coming in, and had actually swallowed down what they were going to seize upon, as if they had been unjustly defrauded of their right. They also invented terrible methods of torments to discover where any food was, and they were these to stop up the passages of the privy parts of the miserable wretches, and to drive sharp stakes up their fundaments; and a man was forced to bear what it is terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread, or that he might discover a handful of barley-meal that was concealed; and this was done when these tormentors were not themselves hungry; for the thing had been less barbarous had necessity forced them to it; but this was done to keep their madness in exercise, and as making preparation of provisions for themselves for the following days. These men went also to meet those that had crept out of the city by night, as far as the Roman guards, to gather some plants and herbs that grew wild; and when those people thought they had got clear of the enemy, they snatched from them what they had brought with them, even while they had frequently entreated them, and that by calling upon the tremendous name of God, to give them back some part of what they had brought; though these would not give them the least crumb, and they were to be well contented that they were only spoiled, and not slain at the same time.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-5.htm>

I deliberately included this long passage from Josephus' writings to make this point; **to say this was horrendous is an understatement!** This is one of the most severe accounts of famine any of us will ever read! Famine was indeed severe during the siege. It was severe enough to turn ordinary humans into animalistic creatures, lusting for even the tiniest morsel of food. Josephus even records incidents of cannibalism during that time.

What about earthquakes? There were many during this period. Roman historian Tacitus records earthquakes in Crete, Rome, Apamea, Phrygia, Campania, Laodicea, and Pompeii just before Jerusalem's destruction. Additionally there were these:

- Greek sophist Philostratus records in his writings on the life of Apollonius that earthquakes occurred in Crete during the reign of Claudius, and earthquakes also occurred during the time period in Chios, Miletus, Samos and Smyrna.
- Roman senator Publius Cornelius Tacitus mentions earthquakes in Laodicea and Rome during the reign of Nero in addition to Colosse and Hierapolis.
- Roman philosopher Seneca (3 BC–AD 65) records an earthquake at Campania. Suetonius (AD 75–160) records an earthquake in Rome during the reign of Galba (AD 68–69).
- Even Josephus records a significant earthquake. In Book 4 of "The Wars of the Jews" he states:

And now did the Idumeans make an acclamation to what Simon had said; but Jesus went away sorrowful, as seeing that the Idumeans were against all moderate counsels, and that the city was besieged on both sides. Nor indeed were the minds of the Idumeans at rest; for they were in a rage at the injury that had been offered them by their exclusion out of the city; and when they thought the zealots had been strong, but saw nothing of theirs to support them, they were in doubt about the matter, and many of them repented that they had come thither. But the shame that would attend them in case they returned without doing any thing at all, so far overcame that their repentance, that they lay all night before the wall, though in a very bad encampment; for there broke out a prodigious storm in the night, with the utmost violence, and very strong winds, with the largest showers of rain, with continued lightnings, terrible thunderings, and amazing concussions and bellowings of the earth, that was in an earthquake. These things were a manifest indication that some destruction was coming upon men, when the system of the world was put into this disorder; and any one would guess that these wonders foreshowed some grand calamities that were coming. (underline mine)

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-4.htm>

Now we go to the next question regarding false prophets:

Matt 24:11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

Note that these are not a reference to the false Messiahs spoken of earlier. Of these Josephus has much to say, but it is quoted in part here in Wars 6:5, verses 2-3:

A false prophet (19) was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such

promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such his deliverance.

3. Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

Lawlessness increased and believers defected, but the promise of God was to those who endured and obeyed.

Mat 24:12-13 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Regarding this Adam Clarke notes:

The love of many shall wax cold - By reason of these trials and persecutions from without, and those apostasies and false prophets from within, the love of many to Christ and his doctrine, and to one another, shall grow cold. Some openly deserting the faith, as [Mat 24:10](#); others corrupting it, as [Mat 24:11](#); and others growing indifferent about it, [Mat 24:12](#). Even at this early period there seems to have been a very considerable defection in several Christian Churches; see [Gal 3:1-4](#); [2Th 3:1](#), etc.; [2Ti 1:15](#).

But he that shall endure - The persecutions that shall come - unto the end; to the destruction of the Jewish polity, without growing cold or apostatizing - shall be saved, shall be delivered in all imminent dangers, and have his soul at last brought to an eternal glory. It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there were many there when Cestius Gallus invested the city; and, had he persevered in the siege, he would soon have rendered himself master of it; but, when he unexpectedly and unaccountably raised the siege, the Christians took that opportunity to escape. See Eusebius, Hist. Eccles lib. iii. c. 5, and Mr. Reading's note there; and see the note here on [Mat 24:20](#) (note).

Yes! The reason they endured is that they obeyed. When they had their chance, they fled the city to the mountains as Jesus warned them.

The next objection is for Matthew 24:14 which states: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." How can we say that the Gospel was "preached in the whole world"? This surely seems impossible! However, upon an examination of the Greek we find this. The word "world" here is the Greek word οἰκουμένη "oikoumene." Note Strong's Greek dictionary:

οἰκουμένη οἰκουμένῃ oy-kou-men'-ay feminine participle present passive of 3611 (as noun, by implication, of 1093); land, i.e. the (terrene part of the) globe; specially, the Roman empire;--earth, world. (underline mine).

Note here that this one of the ways this word is used is *specifically* the Roman empire. The apostles did in fact preach the gospel to the entire Roman empire prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the only place in Matthew that this word is used. It is elsewhere used in Luke 2:1:

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world (οἰκουμένῃ) should be registered."

This confirms the same meaning as Matthew 24:14. Certainly there could be no one claiming that all of the inhabited earth needed to come to be registered by Caesar Augustus.

In agreement with this idea was the apostle Paul. He noted in Romans 1:8: “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.”

The Greek word for world here is:

κόσμος *kósmos* kos'-mos probably from the base of 2865; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally))--adorning, world.

As Ken Gentry points out in his exegesis of Matthew 24:

“This word appears even in texts that mention the creation of the world. . . If Paul can state that the faith of these Christians is being spoken of throughout “the whole world” (holo to kosmos) around 55AD, does not this fulfill Jesus statement in Matthew 24:14?”

Albert Barnes notes in his commentary regarding this:

The evidence that this was done is to be chiefly derived from the New Testament, and there it is clear. Thus Paul declares that it was preached to every creature under heaven Col 1:6, Col 1:23; that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world Rom 1:8; that he preached in Arabia Gal 1:17, and at Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum Rom 15:19. We know also that He traveled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete; that he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul, Rom 15:24-28. At the same time, the other apostles were not idle; and there is full proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions. (Underline mine)

The implication here is clear. The Roman Empire was the “whole world” unto which Jesus was referring. **And this was accomplished prior to AD70.**

The next objection deals with the mandate for Christians to flee:

Matt. 24:15-18 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak."

This was a mandate for the believers to flee from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas to the mountains upon this sign. Further clarification as to the meaning of the sign is provided in Luke's account:

Luk 21:20-22: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.

This is noted by Albert Barnes in his comments on this verse:

From signs, Christ proceeds to the immediate cause of the destruction of Jerusalem; which was, "the abomination of desolation", or the desolating abomination; or that

abominable thing, which threatened and brought desolation upon the city, temple, and nation: by which is meant, not any statue placed in the temple by the Romans, or their order; not the golden eagle which Herod set upon the temple gate, for that was before Christ said these words; nor the image of Tiberius Caesar, which Pilate is said to bring into the temple; for this, if true, must be about this time; whereas Christ cannot be thought to refer to anything so near at hand; much less the statue of Adrian, set in the most holy place, which was an hundred and thirty years and upwards, after the destruction of the city and temple; nor the statue of Titus, who destroyed both, which does not appear: ever to be set up, or attempted; nor of Caligula, which, though ordered, was prevented being placed there: but the Roman army is designed; see [Luk 21:20](#) which was the [בִּנְיָ שְׁקִיזִים מִשְׁמָם](#), "the wing", or "army of abominations making desolate", [Dan 9:27](#). Armies are called wings, [Isa 8:8](#) and the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them; so the "filthiness" which Hezekiah ordered to be carried out of the holy place, [2Ch 29:5](#) is by the Targum called, [רִיחֻקָּא](#), "an abomination"; and this, by the Jewish writers (w), is said to be an idol, which Ahaz had placed upon the altar; and such was the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus caused to be set upon the altar:

"Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;" (1 Maccabees 1:54)

And so the Talmudic writers, by the abomination that makes desolate, in [Dan 12:11](#) to which Christ here refers, understand an image, which they say (x) one Apostomus, a Grecian general, who burnt their law, set up in the temple. Now our Lord observes, that when they should see the Roman armies encompassing Jerusalem, with their ensigns flying, and these abominations on them, they might conclude its desolation was near at hand; and he does not so much mean his apostles, who would be most of them dead, or in other countries, when this would come to pass; but any of his disciples and followers, or any persons whatever, by whom should be seen this desolating abomination.

spoken of by Daniel the prophet: not in [Dan 11:31](#) which is spoken of the abomination in the times of Antiochus; but either in [Dan 12:11](#) or rather in [Dan 9:27](#) since this desolating abomination is that, which should follow the cutting off of the Messiah, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice. It is to be observed, that Daniel is here called a prophet, contrary to what the Jewish writers say (y), who deny him to be one; though one of (z) no inconsiderable note among them affirms, that he attained to the end, [הַגְּבוּל הַנְּבוֹאִי](#), "of the prophetic border", or the ultimate degree of prophecy: when therefore this that Daniel, under a spirit of prophecy, spoke of should be seen,

standing in the holy place; near the walls, and round about the holy city Jerusalem, so called from the sanctuary and worship of God in it; and which, in process of time, stood in the midst of it, and in the holy temple, and destroyed both; then (Underline mine)

whoso readeth, let him understand: that is, whoever then reads the prophecy of Daniel; will easily understand the meaning of it, and will see and know for certain, that now it is accomplished; and will consider how to escape the desolating judgment, unless he is given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which was the case of the greater part of the nation.

There were 2 sieges of Jerusalem. The first was under Vespasian. Under this siege, no one was allowed out of the city. But during this siege, the emperor Nero dies. As previously stated, the entire Roman Empire is in trouble and is on the verge of collapse. Vespasian withdraws his forces, most likely so he could go back to Rome and protect his interests as well as that of the entire empire. In fact history records that this was so unsettling to the empire that during that very year four different emperors were in power, with Vespasian eventually winning out. After settling this and putting the Roman Empire back on solid footing, he sent Titus to finish the job he started in Jerusalem. It was during this withdrawal period that the Christians had the opportunity to “flee to the mountains.” Eusebius records that they did flee in his account:

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come there from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men. (Eccl. Hist. 3:5:3)

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm>

Next, there is the reference to the great tribulation. Matt 24:21-22 states:

Matt 24:21,22 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Notice by comparison, what Luke has to say regarding this:

Luke 21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Notice that Luke states that they should fall “by the edge of the sword” – This means that they would be slain in war, as the sword was then the principal instrument used in war.

Josephus strikingly, in describing it, uses very similar language as did Jesus:

Accordingly, it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews (3) are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them were not foreigners neither. This makes it impossible for me to contain my lamentations. But if any one be inflexible in his censures of me, let him attribute the facts themselves to the historical part, and the lamentations to the writer himself only.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-pref.htm>

Josephus later notes that there were 1.1 million Jews killed! Bodies were piled upon bodies. This was a horrific scene as noted later in His writings:

3. Now the number (32) of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which, at the very first, occasioned so great a straitness among them,

that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a famine, as destroyed them more suddenly. And that this city could contain so many people in it, is manifest by that number of them which was taken under Cestius, who being desirous of informing Nero of the power of the city, who otherwise was disposed to condemn that nation, entreated the high priests, if the thing were possible, to take the number of their whole multitude. Underline mine.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-6.htm>

But this is not all. Josephus also noted that many were crucified, being nailed to crosses, **500 per day or more! What could be more horrific than that!** Note Josephus' words:

SO now Titus's banks were advanced a great way, notwithstanding his soldiers had been very much distressed from the wall. He then sent a party of horsemen, and ordered they should lay ambushes for those that went out into the valleys to gather food. Some of these were indeed fighting men, who were not contented with what they got by rapine; but the greater part of them were poor people, who were deterred from deserting by the concern they were under for their own relations; for they could not hope to escape away, together with their wives and children, without the knowledge of the seditious; nor could they think of leaving these relations to be slain by the robbers on their account; nay, the severity of the famine made them bold in thus going out; so nothing remained but that, when they were concealed from the robbers, they should be taken by the enemy; and when they were going to be taken, they were forced to defend themselves for fear of being punished; as after they had fought, they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy; so they were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city. This miserable procedure made Titus greatly to pity them, while they caught every day five hundred Jews; nay, some days they caught more: yet it did not appear to be safe for him to let those that were taken by force go their way, and to set a guard over so many he saw would be to make such as great deal them useless to him. The main reason why he did not forbid that cruelty was this, that he hoped the Jews might perhaps yield at that sight, out of fear lest they might themselves afterwards be liable to the same cruel treatment. So the soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest, when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies. (Wars of the Jews book 5, chapter 11, verse 1)

This fulfills the parable of the vineyard in Matt: 21:37-41:

Matt 21:37-40 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

As the Chief Priests and the Pharisees answered in a self fulfilling prophecy:

Mat 21:41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

Later Josephus relates (*Jewish Wars*, b. 1 chapter 12, section 1) that Titus began with the resolution to reduce the city by famine. He therefore built a wall around it to keep anything in the way of provisions from being carried in, and any of the people from going out. But since the Jews engaged them in battle, the Romans broke into the city and crushed them. This is how it was fulfilled as Jesus predicted:

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

Note Barnes comment on this:

there should no flesh be saved; not one Jew in the city of Jerusalem would have been saved; they must everyone have perished by famine, or pestilence, or sword, or by the intestine wars and murders among themselves: nor indeed, if the siege had continued, would it have fared better with the inhabitants of the other parts of the country, among whom also many of the same calamities prevailed and spread themselves; so that, in all likelihood, if these days had been continued a little longer, there had not been a Jew left in all the land.

But for the elect's sake; those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to believe in him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; both those that were in the city, or, at least, who were to spring from some that were there, as their immediate offspring, or in future ages, and therefore they, and their posterity, must not be cut off; and also those chosen ones, and real believers, who were at Pella, and in the mountains, and other places, for the sake of these, and that they might be delivered from these pressing calamities,

those days shall be shortened: for otherwise, if God had not preserved a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be saved, they had been as Sodom and as Gomorrha, not one would have escaped.

So, as so often happened in the pages of the history of God's people, what they intended for destruction, God used for the good of His elect.

Turning to Matt. 24:27,28 we read:

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

For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. (ASV)

Note: KJV and ASV translate this verse as "eagles" instead of "vultures". **Note the significance of "eagles" in Adam Clarke's comments. The eagle was the symbol on the ensigns of the Roman Soldiers!**

Regarding this, Adam Clarke comments:

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west - It is worthy of remark that our Lord, in the most particular manner, points out the very march of the Roman army: they entered into Judea on the East, and carried on their conquest Westward, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, were intended in the comparison of the lightning issuing from the east, and shining to the west.

For wheresoever the carcass is - Πτώμα, the dead carcass. The Jewish nation, which was morally and judicially dead.

There will the eagles - The Roman armies, called so partly from their strength and fierceness, and partly from **the figure of these animals which was always wrought on their ensigns, or even in brass, placed on the tops of their ensign-staves.** It is remarkable that the Roman fury pursued these wretched men wheresoever they were found. They were a dead carcass doomed to be devoured; and the Roman eagles were the commissioned devourers. See the pitiful account in Josephus, War, b. vii. c. 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, and 11.(bold underline mine)

Now we turn to another objection, one raised by futurists concerning the use of apocalyptic language used in Matt 24: 29-31:

Matt 24:29-31 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Notice the words above: “the sign of the Son of Man,” will appear. This is an important point. What was this sign? How could this possibly be fulfilled already? If this passage were to be referred to in a strictly literal sense, it would be difficult to interpret. However, please keep in mind that very shortly after this Jesus states emphatically:

Matt 24:34 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

This horrific event was to occur in this generation. We have already noted that this is what is meant every other time this phrase is used in the Gospels. On 14 occasions we looked at previously, this was the case, and it is no different here.

Also, note that the first word used in verse 29 is “immediately”. The Greek word used here is εὐθέως eutheōs - means, properly, “straightway, immediately,” Such events would occur right away. In the fulfillment of the predictions they would be “the next in order,” and would occur “before long.”

As regards the dramatic language used in verse 29-31 notice what Albert Barnes says in his commentary:

Shall the sun be darkened ...The images used here are not to be taken literally. They are often employed by the sacred writers to denote “any great calamities.” As the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, would be an inexpressible calamity, so any great catastrophe - any overturning of kingdoms or cities, or dethroning of kings and princes is represented by the darkening of the sun and moon, and by some terrible convulsion in the elements. Thus the destruction of Babylon is foretold in similar terms [Isa 13:10](#), and of Tyre [Isa 24:23](#). The slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea is predicted in the same language, [Isa 34:4](#). See also [Isa 50:3](#); [Isa 60:19-20](#); [Eze 32:7](#); [Joe 3:15](#). To the description in Matthew, Luke has added [Luk 21:25-26](#), “And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; people’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” All these are figures of great and terrible calamities. The roaring of the waves of the sea denotes great tumult and affliction among the people. “Perplexity” means doubt, anxiety; not knowing what to do to escape. “Men’s hearts should fail them for fear,” or by reason of fear. Their fears would be so great as to take away their courage and strength. (Underline mine)

As Barnes notes, they are not to be taken literally. Why? - Because there are many times in the Bible where such language is used in judgment. Let’s look at Isaiah 13:10

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

Isaiah 13:1 tells us – this is the judgment on Babylon! **Did the stars not give their light? Did the sun become darkened? Did the moon not shed its light? No!** This is a type of description known as “apocalyptic language” and is used in many other places.

Note the other times below that such language is used by the prophets:

Isaiah 24:23 Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.

Isaiah 34:4 All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.

Isaiah 50:3 I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering."

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

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

Joel 3:15 The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

Certainly the vivid imagery and descriptions given in Josephus' writings regarding the horrific details of this event attest to the words used by Albert Barnes above.

Ken Gentry noted in “The Olivet Discourse” that **this sign** also is referred to in Acts 2:19 where it says:

Act 2:19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

Certainly there was no shortage of any of these in the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus records this dramatically:

So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon; although these flames took their rise from the Jews themselves, and were occasioned by them; for upon Titus's retiring, the seditious lay still for a little while, and then attacked the Romans again, when those that guarded the holy house fought with those that quenched the fire that was burning the inner [court of the] temple; but these Romans put the Jews to flight, and proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered any thing to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it. (Underline mine)

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-6.htm>

Adam Clarke confirms what Gentry noted here with this in his comment on Acts 2:19-21:

I will show wonders - It is likely that both the prophet and the apostle refer to the calamities that fell upon the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fearful signs and portents that preceded those calamities. See the notes on [Mat 24:5-7](#) (note), where these are distinctly related.

Blood, fire, and vapour of smoke - Skirmishes and assassinations over the land, and wasting the country with fire and sword.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood - These are figurative representations of eclipses, intended most probably to point out the fall of the civil and ecclesiastical state in Judea: see the notes on [Mat 24:29](#). That the Sun is darkened when a total eclipse takes place, and that the Moon appears of a bloody hue in such circumstances, every person knows.

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved - The predicted ruin is now impending; and only such as receive the Gospel of the Son of God shall be saved. And that none but the Christians did escape, when God poured out these judgments, is well known; and that All the Christians did escape, not one of them perishing in these devastations, stands attested by the most respectable authority. See the note on [Mat 24:13](#). (Underline mine)

Notice what Adam Clarke noted in his commentary regarding verse 30:

The plain meaning of this is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of Divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will, in consequence of this manifestation of God, be led to acknowledge Christ and his religion. By **γῆς**, (ge, as noted below) of the land, in the text, is evidently meant here, as in several other places, the land of Judea and its tribes, either its then inhabitants, or the Jewish people wherever found. (underline mine)

Notice that Clarke notes that in verse 30 when Jesus said: "and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn" He is referring to "all the tribes of the land will mourn", which is a perfectly legitimate translation of the Greek word used here noted in Strong's Greek Dictionary:

γῆ gē ghay contracted from a primary word; soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application):--country, earth(-ly), ground, land, world.

And finally, with regard to verse 30, Our Lord confirms that this is given directly to that local audience in Matt. 26: 63-64:

But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on **you** will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Once again he told them "**you** will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." This was not a judgment on some future generation. Jesus was speaking directly to the Scribes and Pharisees! This apocalyptic language of judgment began immediately when He was disowned by His own people and sent to the cross. And upon this occasion there was darkness in the land, and the temple veil was torn in two. Later on the greater judgment of these people occurred at the complete destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem itself.

What about the sound of the trumpet in verse 31? Robertson's Word Pictures notes regarding this phrase:

With a great sound of a trumpet (*meta salpiggos phōnēs megalēs*). Some MSS. omit (*phōnēs*) “sound.” The trumpet was the signal employed to call the hosts of Israel to march as to war and is common in prophetic imagery ([Isa 27:13](#)). Cf. the seventh angel ([Rev 11:15](#)). Clearly “the coming of the son of man is not to be identified with the judgment of Jerusalem but rather forms its preternatural background” (Bruce).

Adam Clarke notes of this phrase:

With a great sound of a trumpet - Or, a loud-sounding trumpet - the earnest affectionate call of the Gospel of peace, life, and salvation.

And Barnes notes:

With a great sound of a trumpet - Our Saviour, speaking to Jews, used language to which they were accustomed, and described the assembling of the people at the last day in language which they were accustomed to use in calling assemblies together. It is not certain, however, that he meant that this would be literally so, but it may be designed only to denote the certainty that the “world would be assembled together.”

From John Gill’s Exposition:

With a great sound of a trumpet, meaning the Gospel; see [Isa 27:13](#) so called in allusion either to the silver trumpets which Moses was ordered to make of one piece, and use them for the calling of the assembly, the journeying of the camps, blowing an alarm for war, and on their solemn and festival days, [Num 10:1](#). The Gospel being rich and precious, all of a piece, useful for gathering souls to Christ, and to his churches; to direct saints in their journey to Canaan’s land; to encourage them to fight the Lord’s battles; and is a joyful sound, being a sound of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation, by Christ: or else so called, in allusion to the trumpet blown in the year of “jubilee”; which proclaimed rest to the land, liberty to prisoners, a release of debts, and restoration of inheritances; as the Gospel publishes rest in Christ, liberty to the captives of sin, Satan, and the law, a payment of debts by Christ, and a release from them upon that, and a right and title to the heavenly inheritance.

Note that the common belief of these commentators is that this trumpet call is most likely not literal, but makes reference to the call of the Gospel throughout the land.

Thus, from all of the evidence we see, the words of Jesus spoken of here in Matt 24:29-31 is also a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and coincides with what he said in verse 34 “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” Thus, we can have confidence that everything our Lord told us prior to this would take place in the generation in which the disciples lived, and that included the complete destruction of the temple, reducing it to mere rubble, and the destruction of Jerusalem. With this, the Jewish age ended.

But what about verses 36-51?

So far, we have only engaged in a discussion of the first 35 verses of Matthew 24. From this point on, we do not have the words bracketing “this generation.” Thus, there have been debates among those who believe that the remainder of the Olivet Discourse refers to a future time or not. Whereas in verses 1-35, Jesus gives predictable signs, which we showed have actually happened, there appears to be less certainty about the timing of the things which he states from this point forward. Among Preterists, there are **2 main camps**. There are those who believe that from this

point on, our Lord is speaking of a time yet in the distant future, and those who believe the discourse continues with the same thought. Whereas we can be certain of the fulfillment of the first 35 verses of Matthew 24, the remaining part of the discourse has at least 2 interpretations. I will attempt to describe the most prevalent of these views below from the perspective of the full preterist and the partial preterist.

The full Preterist view of Matthew 24:36-25:46

But before considering these, let's consider the possibility that our Lord continues with the same line of thought. Could it be He follows with more information regarding that period of time? The text says:

Matt 24:36-41 But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

According to Adam Clarke, this language shows the imminence of the situation. He points out that this would be an unexpected attack. However, if they had heeded the words of Jesus, they would have already fled to the mountains when Roman General Titus returned to finish the job. Notice Adam Clarke's words:

But of that day and hour - Ωρα, here, is translated season by many eminent critics, and is used in this sense by both sacred and profane authors. As the day was not known, in which Jerusalem should be invested by the Romans, therefore our Lord advised his disciples to pray that it might not be on a Sabbath; and as the season was not known, therefore they were to pray that it might not be in the winter; [Mat 24:20](#). See on [Mar 13:32](#) (note).

As the days of Noah - they were eating and drinking - That is, they spent their time in rapine, luxury, and riot. The design of these verses seems to be, that the desolation should be as general as it should be unexpected.

And knew not - They considered not - did not lay Noah's warning to heart, till it was too late to profit by it: so shall it be - and so it was in this coming of the Son of man.

Then shall two men - two women - one shall be taken, and the other left - The meaning seems to be, that so general should these calamities be, that no two persons, wheresoever found, or about whatsoever employed, should be both able to effect their escape; and that captivity and the sword should have a complete triumph over this unhappy people.

Two women shall be grinding - Women alone are still employed in grinding the corn in the east; and it is only when despatch is required, or the uppermost millstone is heavy, that a second woman is added. See Wakefield, and Harmer, Obs. vol. i. 253. That they were formerly thus employed, see [Exo 11:5](#), and the note there. See also [Isa 47:2](#).

Watch - Be looking for his coming. Be expecting it as near; as a great event; as coming in an unexpected manner. Watch the signs of his coming, and be ready.

And finally, we have the ending passage from Matthew 24:

Matt 24:45-51 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom

his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Of this passage, Barnes notes the following:

This passage is, in fact, "a parable," though it is not expressly so called. The design is to show that his disciples should act as if they were each moment expecting his return. This he illustrates by the conduct of a servant who did not expect his master soon to return, who acted with great impropriety, and who was accordingly punished.

In this parable, we see that those who were faithful and watching for the Lord's return would be obedient, but as for those unfaithful servants a far worse judgment awaits them. Verse 51 tells of that horrendous judgment: "and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What does He mean by those words? Is it really as horrendous as the words indicate? Notice what Adam Clarke says in this comment of this verse:

Cut him asunder - This refers to an ancient mode of punishment used in several countries. Isaiah is reported to have been sawed Asunder. That it was an ancient mode of punishment is evident from what Herodotus says: that Sabacus, king of Ethiopia, had a vision, in which he was commanded [μεσους διαταμειν](#), to cut in two, all the Egyptian priests, lib. ii. And in lib. vii. where Xerxes ordered one of the sons of Pythius [μεσον διαταμειν](#), to be cut in two, and one half placed on each side of the way, that his army might pass through between them. See Raphelius also, in his notes from Herodotus and Polybius. This kind of punishment was used among the Persians: see [Dan 2:5](#), [Dan 3:29](#). Story of Susanna, v. 55, 59. See also [2Sa 12:31](#), and [1Ch 20:3](#). It may also have reference to that mode of punishment in which the different members were chopped off *seriatim*, first the feet, then the hands, next the legs, then the arms, and lastly the head. This mode of punishment is still in use among the Chinese. But we find an exact parallel among the Turks, in the following passage from W. Lithgow's Travels, p. 153. London 4th. edit. "If a Turk should happen to kill another Turk, his punishment is thus: After he is adjudged to death, he is brought forth to the market place; and a block being brought hither of four foot high, the malifactor is stript naked, and then laid thereon with his belly downward; they draw in his middle together so small with running cords that they strike his body a-two with one blow: his hinder parts they cast to be eaten by hungry dogs kept for the same purpose; and the forequarters and head they throw into a grievous fire, made there for the same end. And this is the punishment for manslaughter." (underline mine)

What a horrendous form of capital punishment this is. **It is literally killing a person a little at a time!!** It is done by cutting off first hands, then feet, then limbs, and finally the head of the victim. Adam Clarke continues:

This is the very same punishment, and for the same offense, as that mentioned by our Lord, the killing of a fellow servant - one of the same nation, and of the same religion.

The reader has no doubt observed, in the preceding chapter, a series of the most striking and solemn predictions, fulfilled in the most literal, awful, and dreadful manner. Christ has foretold the ruin of the Jewish people, and the destruction of their polity; and in such a circumstantial manner as none else could do, but He, under whose eye are all events, and in whose hands are the government and direction of all things. Indeed he rather declared what he would do, than predicted what should come to pass. And the fulfillment has been as circumstantial as the prediction. Does it not appear that the predicted point was so literally referred to by the occurring fact, by which it was to have

its accomplishment, as to leave no room to doubt the truth of the prediction, or the certainty of the event by which it was fulfilled? Thus the wisdom of God, as also his justice and providence, have had a plenary manifestation.

Adam Clarke is confident that this dreadful, hideous event was a judgment assigned to the Jewish people to whom he spoke at the end of Matthew chapter 23. The writings of Josephus in the Wars of the Jews make this manifestation apparent. The awfulness of the situation at the end was indescribably bad. As Clarke concludes his thought here, we become convicted of the absolute sovereignty of God. With it comes the necessity of being obedient and faithful unto death. Notice how powerfully he makes his point:

But this wisdom appears, farther, in preserving such a record of the prediction, and such evidence of its accomplishment, as cannot possibly be doubted. The New Testament, given by the inspiration of God, and handed down uncorrupted from father to son, by both friends and enemies, perfect in its credibility and truth, inexpugnable in its evidences, and astonishingly circumstantial in details of future occurrences, which the wisdom of God alone could foreknow – that New Testament is the record of these predictions. The history of the Romans, written by so many hands; the history of the Jews, written by one of themselves; triumphal arches, coins, medals, and public monuments of different kinds, are the evidence by which the fulfillment of the record is demonstrated. Add to this the preservation of the Jewish people; a people scattered through all nations, yet subsisting as a distinct body, without temple, sacrifices, or political government; and who, while they attempt to suppress the truth, yet reluctantly stand forth as an unimpeachable collateral evidence, that the solemn record, already alluded to, is strictly and literally true! Who that has ever consulted the Roman historians of the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, the history of Josephus, and the 24th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and who knows any thing of the present state of the Jews over the face of the earth, or even of those who sojourn in England, can doubt for a moment the truth of this Gospel, or the infinite and all-comprehensive knowledge of Him who is its author! Here then is one portion of Divine Revelation that is incontrovertibly and absolutely proved to be the truth of God. Reader! If he, who, while he predicted the ruin of this disobedient and refractory people, wept over their city and its inhabitants, has so, minutely fulfilled the threatenings of his justice on the unbelieving and disobedient, will he not as circumstantially fulfill the promises of his grace to all them that believe? The existence of his revelation, the continuance of a Christian Church upon earth, the certainty that there is one individual saved from his sins by the grace of the Gospel, and walking worthy of his vocation are continued proofs and evidences that he is still the same; that he will fulfill every jot and tittle of that word on which he has caused thee to trust; and save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father by him. The word of the Lord endureth for ever; and they who trust in him shall never be confounded.(underline mine)

We must keep in mind that Adam Clarke wrote this commentary almost 200 years ago. At that time, the re-establishment of the nation of Israel was still over 100 years in the future. He was correct - they stood in judgment, the judgment that was fulfilled in AD 70.

The Parable of the Virgins – Matthew 25:1-13

Under the full Preterist view of these verses, a good point is advanced. Is there any indication whatsoever that our Lord has changed the subject and is now referring to a time period hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years in the future? If it was to entail a different era, wouldn't it make sense for there to be some kind of indication of this in His

transitional phrase at the start of the parable? But, in fact, the opposite is true. We see in these verses to follow absolutely no indication of such a thing. In fact the transitional word which starts out the verse is “Then”, indicating a continuation along the same lines. Reading verses 1-13, notice the words as chapter 25 begins:

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Regarding these last two parables, much has been made of the delays in them. Yes, there are delays mentioned in these two parables, but does it make any sense that such delays would be for periods of hundreds and thousands of years? Gary Demar makes a good point in this respect:

The parables of Matthew 24–25 are clear on the duration of the delays—the two masters who go on a journey return to the same people they left. There is no need to allegorize these parables to force them to depict a distant coming of Christ. In addition, the delay of the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins is not very long, unless the virgins are related to Rip Van Winkle. The virgins get drowsy at dusk, and the bridegroom returns at midnight (Matt. 25:6). How can this “delay” be turned into a span of time nearly two thousand years in length? (Demar “Last Days Madness” 1999 p.201)

So the question here is, what is the point our Lord was making to the disciples? It is clear from this passage that He was teaching his disciples the importance of always being in a watchful mode – they should always be ready, because they will not know when these things will occur.

The Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25:14-30

Now we consider the parable of the talents. This parable denotes the importance of being responsible stewards. It is an excellent example for all of us in this respect. We have been given much by God. It is our responsibility to be good stewards, and if we are, we will be rewarded. But the question here is: “What was the meaning of this passage for the disciples who were given this message directly? Do we find any transitional words which would tell us that our Lord wants them to consider a time in the distant future?

Let’s begin by considering Matt 25:14-30:

"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into

the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (ESV)

Although this passage contains some great applications for us today, we must consider the audience and the timing of this passage for what Jesus was trying to impress upon his disciples at that crucial time in history.

James Stuart Russell writes,

The connective particle 'for' in ver. 14 distinctly marks the continuation of the discourse. The theme is the same, the time is the same, the catastrophe is the same. Up to this point, therefore, we find no break, no change, no introduction of a different topic; all is continuous, homogeneous, one. Never for a moment has the discourse swerved from the great, all absorbing theme, - the approaching doom of the guilty city and nation, with the solemn events attendant thereon, all to take place within the period of that generation, and which the disciples, or some of them, would live to witness.

(Russell, James Stuart (2013-12-13). *Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming* (Kindle Locations 1536-1540). . Kindle Edition.)

Russell's point is well taken. There is absolutely nothing which indicates a change of theme or timing. However, in this parable we find the message of the stewardship of the treasure which all of God's servants have been given. The nation of Israel stood before God as one who hated the message of the Kingdom. Now, it was the responsibility of those disciples to be diligent in their stewardship of the gift of the Kingdom they have been given. As for the wicked servant who disregarded the Kingdom of Heaven as nothing and put to death the Son of God, he will come under a very severe judgment.

The Son of Man will Judge the nations - Matthew 25:31-46

The full preterist viewpoint is that from the beginning of the Olivet discourse until now our Lord has given his disciples one connected and continuous prophecy, which was all to take place, according to our Lord's prediction, before the existing generation should pass away (Matt 24:34).

If we look at our English Version of the verses which follow, it appears that Jesus is now starting a new subject, not connected with the previous context. In fact we find by a survey that most all commentators believe that this passage cannot be understood as referring to Jerusalem or Israel in general, but to the all of mankind in the final judgment.

But is this true? But, James Stuart Russell makes a very valid point that is overlooked by almost all commentators:

This parable, though in our English version standing apart and unconnected with the context, is really connected by a very sufficient link with what goes before . This is a parent in the Greek, where we find the particle, the force of which is to indicate transition and connection, -- transition to a new illustration, and connection with the foregoing Context.

Russell, James Stuart (2013-12-13). Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming (Kindle Locations 1564-1567). . Kindle Edition.

This Greek word, **δὲ** which means “And or But” is crucial to the understanding of this text.

Upon examination of the Greek text as delivered by Nestle and Aland’s Novum Testamentum Graece, we note the following in the Greek:

“Οταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,” when translated into English it reads “And (or But) when comes the Son of Man...”

(Novum Testamentum Graece 1995, Aland, Black, p73)

I am completely puzzled why so many translators do not include this word (which is translated And or But) in the translation. It is included in the following translations:

ASV (also NASB) American Standard Bible, New American Standard Bible:

Mat 25:31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:

Also the **LTTV** “Literal Translation of the Holy Bible”

Mat 25:31 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Also the Modern King James Version **MKJV**:

Mat 25:31 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory.

Young’s Literal Translation reads:

Mat 25:31 `And whenever the Son of Man may come in his glory, and all the holy messengers with him, then he shall sit upon a throne of his glory;

This word is **missing** in the KJV, NKJV, NIV, ESV to name a few of the most popular.

Nonetheless, Russell is correct. The connecting word **δὲ** is there in the Greek, and it does play an important role in that it ties this to the other parables, all of which refer to “This generation” (Matt 24:31).

Now we shall examine this passage, Matthew 25:31-46. I will be quoting from the American Standard Version since it includes this particle **δὲ** which is present in the Greek. Beginning with verses 31-33:

“But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he

shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

These verses sound very much like something Jesus already stated in Matt. 16: 27,28 ASV:

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

As James Stuart Russell points out in His Book, “The Parousia” We should notice several things about these passages at this point:

- (a) That in both passages the subject referred to is the same, viz. the coming of the Son of man- the Parousia.
- (b) In both passages He is described as coming in glory.
- (c) In both He is attended by the holy angels.
- (d) In both He comes as a King. ' Coming in his kingdom; ' He shall sit upon his throne; Then shall the King,' etc.
- (e) 'In both He comes to judgment.
- (f) In both the judgment is represented as in some sense universal. 'He shall reward every man 'Before him shall be gathered all the nations.'
- (g) In Matt. xvi. 28 it is expressly stated that this coming in glory, etc., was to take place in the lifetime of some then present. This fixes the occurrence of the Parousia within the limit of a human life, thus being in perfect accord with the period defined by our Lord in His prophetic discourse. 'This generation shall not pass,' etc. We are fully warranted, therefore, in regarding the coming of the Son of man in Matt. xxv. as identical with that referred to in Matt. xvi., which some of the disciples were to live to witness. Thus, notwithstanding the words ' all the nations ' in Matt. xxv. 32, we are brought to the conclusion that it is not the 'final consummation of all things ' which is there spoken of, but the judgment of Israel at the close of the [Jewish] ,aeon or age.

Russell, James Stuart (2013-12-13). Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming (Kindle Locations 1575-1580). . Kindle Edition.

With these seven statements, Russell has made a very strong case for the idea that this coming judgment was not off in the distant future, but within the generation to whom He spoke. There seems to be just one hitch in this theory. But what about the phrase “and before him shall be gathered all the nations,” doesn’t this indicate that there is a much broader reference than just those local nations at this time?

The word translated in our Bibles as “nations” stems from the Greek word in this verse which is ἔθνη, or the nominative form of the noun ἔθνος pronounced in English as *ethnos*. This word refers to ethnic groups, which allows for it to be translated as follows according to Strong’s Greek dictionary:

1484. ἔθνος *éthnos* eth'-nos probably from 1486; a race (as of the same habit), i.e. a tribe; specially, a foreign (non-Jewish) one (usually, by implication, pagan):--Gentile, heathen, nation, people.

With this we see that Jesus most likely was referring to the ethnic groups around Judea. Russell makes this point as he continues:

There is no impropriety in designating the tribes as nations. The promise of God to Abraham was that he should be the father of many nations (Gen. xvii. 5; Rom. iv. 17, 18). In our Lord's time it was usual to speak of the inhabitants of Palestine as consisting of several nations. Josephus speaks of 'the nation of the Samaritans,' 'the nation of the Batanaeans,' 'the nation of the Galileans,'-- using the very word (*etnoj*) which we find in the passage before us. Judea, was a distinct nation, often with a king of its own; so also was Samaria; and so with Idumea, Galilee, Paraea, Batanea, Trachonitis, Ituraea, Abilene,-- all of which had at different times princes with the title of Ethnarch, a name which signifies the ruler of a nation. It is doing no violence, then, to the language to understand as referring, to 'all the nations' of Palestine, or 'all the tribes of the land.' (3) This view receives strong confirmation from the fact that the same phrase in the apostolic commission (Matt. xxviii. 19), 'Go and teach all the nations,' does not seem to have been understood by the disciples as referring to the whole population of the globe, or to any nations beyond Palestine. It is commonly supposed that the apostles knew that they had received a charge to evangelise the world.

Russell, James Stuart (2013-12-13). *Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming* (Kindle Locations 1575-1580). . Kindle Edition.

In Russell's statement above, some may challenge it. Surely, they understood "Go and teach the nations" as a reference to going outside of the area of Palestine. But if this is true, then why did the first century church challenge Peter for going in to uncircumcised men such as he did with Cornelius? Also, why did Jesus tell them that they would not finish covering the towns of Israel before he comes again?

Notice this passage:

Mat 10:23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you **will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

With these words, spoken by Jesus himself, can there be any doubt from this that he was speaking of his coming judgment upon the Jewish nation including the destruction of Jerusalem within "this generation" in AD70?

Continuing on with this parable we read beginning again in Matthew 25:34-40:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or a thirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.

Now let's put this in the time frame of the subject of which Jesus is speaking here. He is speaking of the time that He was alive on the earth. Those who existed before Jesus was born could not be judged according to His words here for the

very fact that He was not yet present. Therefore those alive before he was born could not have forsaken him in such a manner! Yes, He was speaking to the sheep on His right who were alive during His lifetime and did the deeds spoken of here. Continuing on in Matthew 25:41-46:

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

Now we clearly see the judgment of those who were called the “goats” on His left. From the accounts of the Acts of the Apostles all the way through the Epistles of John, we see that the persecution of the Church was not only undertaken by the religious leaders of the Jewish nation, it was started and led by them! This parable shows how the rejected King of the Jews was now judging the nation and was about to bring an end to the Jewish Age. Notice the words of Russell as he makes this very valid point:

Their treatment of His disciples, especially of His apostles, might most fitly and justly be made the criterion of character in 'discerning between the righteous and the wicked.' Such a test would be most appropriate in an age when Christianity was a persecuted faith, and this is evidently supposed by the very terms of the King's address: -- 'I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, was naked, sick, and in prison.' The persons designated as 'these my brethren,' and who are taken as the representatives of Christ Himself, are evidently the apostles of our Lord, in whom He hungered, and thirsted, was naked, sick, and in prison. All this is in perfect harmony with the words of Christ to His disciples, when He sent them forth to preach-- 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward' (Matt. x. 40-42). We are thus brought to the conclusion, the only one which in all respects suits the tenor of the entire discourse, that we have here, not the final judgment of the whole human race, but that of the guilty nation or nations of Palestine, who rejected their King, despitefully treated and slew His messengers (Matt. xxii. 1-14), and whose day of doom was now near at hand.

Russell, James Stuart (2013-12-13). Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming (Kindle Locations 1623-1630). . Kindle Edition.

With these words, the Lord Jesus concluded what is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse. There is no reason to believe that the disciples did not understand every word of his parables. What reason would Jesus have to confuse them by jumping from a discussion of “this generation” to events of some future generation without some indication that He was changing the time reference? From what we have seen here, it is clear. It is not a judgment upon the world in general, but a judgment of “guilty” upon the entire religious system of the Jewish Age.

There are many who would say that this prophecy, and these parables may have been fulfilled at the end of the Jewish Age in AD70, but there is a second fulfillment yet to come. To those who would say this, we should ask: Where does it say anything in scripture to indicate this? To proclaim such a thing would be outside of the scope of exegesis, and would put this view clearly in the realm of eisegesis!

The Partial Preterist view

The partial preterist view is that the scenario changes completely after verse 35. Previously Jesus was speaking of events which he could predict. As such he gave them the signs leading up to its fulfillment. He purposely bracketed those predictions with the words in verse 34. But after this in verses 36 Jesus is making reference to the time of His second coming. In verse 36 He states that He does not know the time of His second coming. Thus, He answers the second part of the question “what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

It is interesting that this viewpoint also looks at Matthew 24:36, but interprets it opposite to the full preterist position. The Greek phrase here is “Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας,” which translates “But concerning that day” is thought here to be a change indicator. Signs, such as wars, earthquakes, and other forms of turmoil appear in the first 34 verses, but disappear after this in verses 36 and beyond. The wait in the first 34 verses is a short period of time limited to “this generation,” whereas in verse 48, the slave says “My master is delayed.” This is also borne out in Matthew 25:5 where we find “Since the groom was delayed” and in verse 19 where it states: “After a long time.” In Matthew 24:16-18 we find an opportunity to flee, but in verse 36 and forward, no such opportunity exists.

But in these verses it seems that people are just going about their normal everyday activities when the Son of Man comes to the earth.

Note Jesus’ words in Matt 24:36-39:

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Now Jesus gives four parables in succession which indicate the need to be watchful, for as He has already said, no one knows the day or the hour. The first one in verses 42-44 is the parable of the home dweller and the thief.

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake

and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

As he has given his followers the two great commandments, there is no need to be sleeping. This parable speaks to all his disciples from that day forward, that since we do not know when He is coming we need to always be watchful, busy in the work that He has given us.

The next parable in verses 45-51 is the parable of the faithful and the wicked servants:

But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For the partial preterist, the point here is simple. What will Jesus' disciples be doing when the Lord comes again? Will our Lord be joyful at what He finds us doing, or will he find that we have failed his commission for us? Failure means rejection, faithfulness leads to rewards.

The Parable of the 10 Virgins – Matthew 25:1-13

The Parable of the Talents – Matthew 15:14-30

These parables had immediate application to the Jewish Nation. They spent their entire history in anticipation of the Messiah, but when he did come, as was the case of the Virgins, they were not prepared. In fact they outright rejected him. The religious leaders of Israel were like the wicked slave who were unfaithful to their commission and deserved to be cast out.

However, in the context of the eschatological time frame the Partial Preterist view is that Jesus was speaking of, this parable teaches that the Lord's bodily return to earth will be in a distant future time which is unknowable. The passage in Matthew 25:5 indicates a time delay, during which the 10 virgins all slept. Matthew 25:19 tells us that it was only after a long time that the master returned to settle accounts. So according to this view, in both passages there was a significant delay.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats – Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 25:31,32 reads as follows:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (ESV)

According to this view, this judgment is not the one imposed upon Jerusalem in AD 70, but will be the actual "Second coming" of Christ. Notice that this passage does not say anything about a time separation in judgment of the sheep and goats. In fact elsewhere in

scripture we are told that this will all be done on judgment day. Please note Jesus words in John 5:28, 29:

“Do not marvel at this, for an **hour** (ὥρα) is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.” (ESV)

The key word in this text is the Greek word ὥρα which is pronounced hora. This word means hour, moment, occasion. So the judgment is not one which is separated by 1000 years, but is one which occurs at the same occasion. And that occasion is the Second Coming of Christ to the earth as also highlighted in 2Cor. 5:9-11, and Rev 20:11-15, and many others.

(For further discussion, see “He shall have Dominion” Gentry, 2009, p293-296)

The Partial Preterist position is that Jesus is still coming once again in a bodily and physical manner. In support of this they point to Acts 1:9-11.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

However, a close look at the language of this passage shows that it speaks of the manner of His coming and not the form He will take.

Conclusion

So here we have the Olivet Discourse in its entirety and the two main supporting views of it from the standpoint of those who are called Full Preterists and Partial Preterists. While I held to the view of the Partial Preterist for quite some time, I am now convinced that there is clear and convincing evidence as presented in this thesis that the entire Olivet Discourse is given to point directly to the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple and the entire system of sacrificial worship as known by the Nation of Israel. J Stuart Russell made an excellent point in that there is **no indication whatsoever** in any of these verses from our Lord that He has changed the time frame to a distant future time. With this and other evidence, I am now of the belief that **this was** what many like to refer to as the “second coming” of Christ. He did **exactly what He said He would do, and He did it when He said He would do it!**

But actually, to say that this is the “second coming” of Christ however is a misnomer, as Christ has come many times to the earth in various forms and for various reasons. For example, His return after his death, when Mary saw him at the grave when the stone was rolled away would have to be listed as a “coming” of Christ.

Nowhere in the words of Christ or the Apostles, do we see the term “second coming.” This in itself is a separate study. For a further explanation of this, I would refer you to the book: “Unraveling the End” by my colleague John Noe.

In addition to the facts above, we must consider the fact that throughout the entire New Testament we find evidence that Jesus' Apostles believed that the end of the age as spoken of in Matthew 24:3 was at hand. Please note the following passages. First of all I would like you to notice Hebrews 10:37.

When we look at the Greek in Hebrews 10:37, something **very obvious** jumps out at you.

It is the power of the **time stamp** that the writer of Hebrews puts on these words!

“ἐτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει (Zondervan Parallel Greek English)

“For yet little very very the coming(one) will come and will not delay”

What I want you to notice is that the Greek word “hoson” which is translated “very” is put in here **twice!**

The NIV translation of this phrase is “For in just a **very little while**, He who is coming will come and will not delay”

The Lexingham English Bible translates it “For yet “a **very, very little while**, and the one who is coming will come and will not delay.”

Now I want to ask you, if you were living in the time of this writing, and you heard that our Lord was coming very very soon, **is there any possibility that you would think He was coming thousands of years later?**

The writer of Hebrews started out His book with these words:

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but **in these last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” Hebrews 1:2

This means there are only 2 possibilities. **Either he DID come soon, as Jesus Himself said** in Matt 24:34 or the writer of Hebrews was **completely wrong!**

Look at these written Testimonies from the New Testament writers:

Paul wrote: “The God of peace will **soon crush Satan** under your feet.” Rom 16:20

Paul wrote: “This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown **very short.**” 1 Cor 7:29

James wrote: “behold, the Judge is **standing at the door.**” James 5:9

Peter wrote: “The end of all things **is at hand;**” 1 Peter 4:7

Peter also wrote: “For **it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God;** and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” 1 Peter 4:17

John wrote: “Children, **it is the last hour**, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.”
1 John 2:18 (this was probably written only 2-3 years before AD70)

Literal interpretation demands that these verses be taken in the plain ordinary sense!

As Josephus records, **that coming was the in AD70** in the horrific destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which marked the end of the Jewish Age.

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