

The Stunningly Unique Word of God

The doctrine of Perspicuity: “All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all: yet those things which are **necessary** to be known, believed, and observed **for salvation**, are **so clearly propounded**, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, **in a due use of the ordinary means**, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”

Westminster Confession of Faith I.7

Key verses on humility & unity: Philippians 2:1-3, Ephesians 4:2-5, John 17:20-21, 23

Review: Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” **Mark 13:1**

“Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “**Not one stone will be left on another;** every one will be thrown down.” **Mark 13:2**

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, **when will these things happen?** And what will be **the sign** that they are **about** to be fulfilled?” **Mark 13:3-4**



Jesus describes “these things”

(Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)

I tell **you** the truth, **this generation** will certainly not pass away until **all these things have** happened. **Matthew 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32**

Last Week: *We determined Jesus means exactly what he says in v.34!*

- “I tell **you** the truth” → **always** qualifies a clarifying, concluding statement
- “**you**” = the disciples, who asked Jesus the questions
- every use of “this generation” by Jesus or in NT **always** means his contemporaries, the generation then living
- “these things” matches the disciples’ questions; Jesus adds “all” + Greek structure = complete set
- in Greek, the double negative, placed first in word order, emphasizes the **absolute certainty** of fulfillment within 40 years

Assignment was: Read Mt 24:4-33. Use H&K tools to see if “all these things” were actually fulfilled in AD 30-70.

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“Signs of the Times”

Jesus **answered**, “Watch out that no one **deceives you**. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. **You will hear** of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that **you are not alarmed**. Such things must happen, but **the end** [of what?] **is still to come**. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.” **Matthew 24:4-6**

- Who is Jesus answering? Who is the “**you**”?
- False Messiahs – Acts 8:9-10, 5:37, 13:6; Secular sources incl. Josephus
- Wars – Secular sources – note: **Not** a sign of the end [end of what?]
- Famines, Earthquakes – Acts 11:28, Mt 27:51, 28:2, Acts 16:26; Secular sources

Persecution & Apostasy

“Then **you** will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and **you** will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time **many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” **Matthew 24:9-13**

- Who is the “**you**”?
- Were the apostles ever persecuted? Were they martyred?
- Were believers persecuted?
- Does the NT record apostasy?

Sign of the End: Gospel Witness

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached **in the whole [Roman] world** as a testimony to all nations, **and then the end** [of what?] **will come.**” **Matthew 24:14**

- Yeah, but... *that* didn’t happen!
- Ah, but... *what does the Bible say?*

οἰκουμένη = inhabited earth or Roman world (see Luke 2:1, “a census of the entire Roman world”)

- Was this fulfilled? Paul seems to think so!!

All over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing... This is the gospel that **you** heard and has been **proclaimed to every creature under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

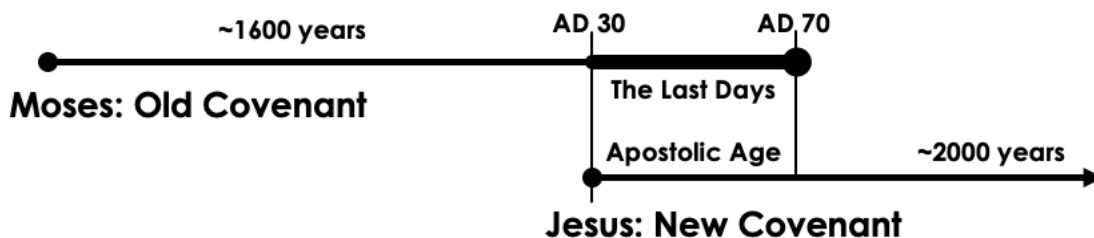
Colossians 1:6,23

... **your** faith is being reported **all over the world.**

Romans 1:8, see also 16:26

- The **end** of what?

By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging **will soon disappear** [i.e., end]. **Hebrews 8:13**



Sign: Abomination

“So when **you** see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes **desolation**,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand –” **Matthew 24:15**

- Who is the “**you**”?
- Matthew, writing to Hebrews → adds editorial note
- But Luke, writing to Gentiles (see Luke 1:1-4) → clarifies:

“When **you** see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its **desolation** is near. ... For these are **the days of vengeance** in fulfillment of all that has been written.” **Luke 21:20, 22**

Plan of Escape

“... then let those who are **in Judea** flee to the mountains. Let no one **on the roof** of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to **get his cloak**. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that **your** flight will not take place **in winter or on the Sabbath.**” **Matthew 24:16-20**

- Who is the “**your**”?
- Note the specific location and historical descriptions!
- Fulfillment: In AD 66, Roman general Cestus Gallus **suddenly** lifted his brief siege of Jerusalem and withdrew. All Christians **immediately** left the city and fled to Pella (beyond the Jordan).

Great Tribulation

“For then there will be **great distress [tribulation]**, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be **shortened**.” **Matthew 24:21-22**

- **θλίψις** and **θλίβω** → always apply to believers (example: John 16:33)
- Fall 64 to Spring 68: the Great Tribulation
- Shortened to 3.5 years by Nero’s suicide
- Was it the absolute worst in history? → Tool #4
- Spring 68 to Fall 70: the Days of Vengeance, also cut in half

False Messiahs

“At that time if anyone says to **you**, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For **false Christs and false prophets** will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. See, I have told **you** ahead of time.

“So even if anyone tells **you**, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be **the coming of the Son of Man**. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.” **Matt. 24:23-28**

- Who is the “**you**”?
- Probably the Great Apostasy in the mid AD 60s
- The *παρουσία* = **manifestation** of the Son of Man will be publicly visible and involve war (eagles on Roman standards?)

Signs in the Heavens

“**Immediately after** the distress of those days

‘the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’”

Matthew 24:29

- Yeah, but... *that* didn’t happen! • Ah, but... *what does the Bible say?*
- Tool #2 → Isaiah 13:10, 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10; etc
- Tool #4 → Biblical language of **decreation** → **political** upheaval

Examples: Fall of **Babylon** (Isaiah 13:9-10), **Edom** (Isaiah 34:4), **Samaria** (Amos 8:9), **Egypt** (Ezekiel 32:7-8)

Coming of the Son of Man

“And then will appear **the sign of the Son of Man** in heaven, and all the tribes of the land will mourn. **They will see** the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”

Matthew 24:30 (*per Greek and KJV*)

- Yeah, but... *that* didn’t happen!
- Ah, but... *how many OT quotations or allusions did you spot?*
- The “tribes of the land” will see the sign, and they will mourn (Zechariah 12:10)
- **Sign means**: Son of Man is [reigning] in heaven (Daniel 7:13-14)
- **Sign seen**: Son of Man “coming on the clouds” in judgment (Isaiah 19:1)

... Jesus replied [to the high priest], “But I say to **all of you**: In the future **you** will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” **Matthew 26:64**

“All men will hate **you** because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When **you** are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell **you** the truth, **you** will not finish going through the cities of Israel **before the Son of Man comes**.” **Matthew 10:22-23**

“I tell **you** the truth, **some** of **you** who are standing here will not taste death **before they see the Son of Man coming** in his Kingdom.” Matthew 16:28

- Who is the “**you**”?
- Tool #5: Time clues? → both limited to disciples’ lifetimes
- What kind of “coming” is Jesus talking about?

“Angels” Gather Elect

“And he will send his **angels** with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” Matthew 24:31

- Yeah, but... *that* didn’t happen! • Ah, but... *what does the Bible say?*
- ἄγγέλους simply means **messengers**; context determines heavenly vs earthly. See Matthew 11:10, Luke 7:24, 9:52

“We are therefore Christ’s **ambassadors**... Thanks be to God, who always leads us **in triumphal procession** in Christ and spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.”

2 Corinthians 5:20, 3:14

Parable of Fig Tree

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, **you know** that summer is **near**. Even so, when **you see all these things, you know** that **it is near**, right at the [sic] door.” Matthew 24:32-33

- Parable is about **confidence** in timing: “you **know**”
- Who is the “**you**”?
- What are the “all these things”? → same as in v.34
- Note: correct translation is “**doors**” → what doors?

2532 [e]	5119 [e]	5316 [e]	3588 [e]	4592 [e]	3588 [e]	5207 [e]	3588 [e]	444 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	3772 [e]	
Kai	tote	phanēsetai	to	sēmeion	to	Huiou	to	anthrōpou	en	tō	ouranō	
30	Καὶ	τότε	φανήσεται	τὸ	σημεῖον	τοῦ	Υἱοῦ	τοῦ	ἀνθρώπου	ἐν	τῷ	οὐρανῷ
	And	then	will appear	the	sign	of the	Son	-	of Man	in	-	heaven
	Conj	Adv	V-FIP-3S	Art-NNS	N-NNS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Prep	Art-DMS	N-DMS

Highly Recommended

- 50 pages of Josephus extracted in chronological order in Appendix B of **FREE** book (be sure to read the **footnotes** along with it) https://www.garynorth.com/freebooks/docs/pdf/paradise_restored.pdf
- **R.C. Sproul “The Destruction of Jerusalem”**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUKtA0HLPrI>
- The Last Days According to Jesus with R.C. Sproul (Ligonier Ministries) – **playlist of 12 videos**: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL30acyfm60fWm9jA8LNRnYizJj5VEduus>