

A SKETCH OF MAT. 24:1-42

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Matthew 24 reports teaching that the Lord delivered to his disciples just a few days before his crucifixion. Because it was delivered on the Mount of Olives, it is commonly known as the "Olivet Discourse." After we look at this text, I will share some thoughts on a few other texts that relate to the Lord's coming.

There is much disagreement among scholars over the interpretation of Matthew 24 and its parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21.¹ No approach is free of difficulties, but I here sketch the view that makes the most sense to me. Though I have added my own take

¹ Evangelical treatments of Mat. 24:1-42 can be divided into four basic approaches summarized as follows by David L. Turner in "The Structure and Sequence of Matthew 24:1-41: Interaction With Evangelical Treatments," *Grace Theological Journal* 10.1 (1989), 3-4:

The first view, which will be called the futurist view, stresses the age-ending return of Christ and finds little if anything in these verses which addresses the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or the current age. Another view, which will be called the preterist view, is to a great extent the opposite of the first view. It sees relatively little of the passage (only 24:36-41) in terms of the end times. Rather the current age is in view, with the emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem. Two other views amount to mediating positions between the first two. The first of these mediating positions, which will be called the traditional preterist-futurist view, sees a portion of the passage (usually 24:4-14) as a general description of the course of the present age, and another portion as a "double reference" prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction and the end of the age. A second mediating position, which will be called the revised preterist-futurist view, sees alternating reference in these verses to the course of the age, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of Christ.

Turner favors the traditional preterist-futurist view, which is the dominant view among evangelicals. The interpretation presented here is what he labels the revised preterist-futurist view.

on certain points, the view I present is essentially that of noted NT scholar D. A. Carson.² This view is shared, at least in its key elements, by Leon Morris and Craig Blomberg, so it is by no means eccentric.

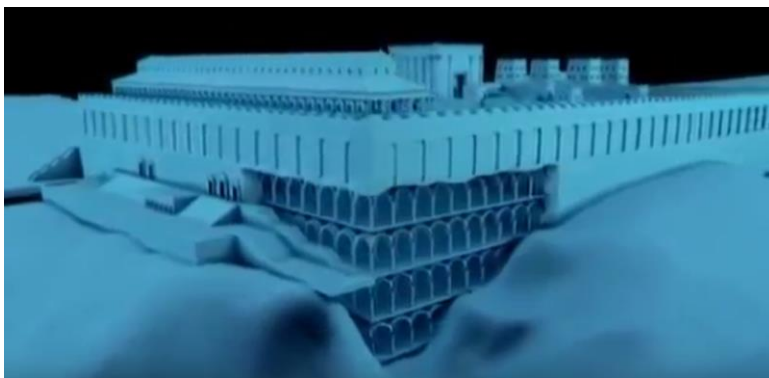
I. Mat. 24:1-42

A. Mat. 24:1-3

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 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." ³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

In Jesus' day, the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was an awesome structure. King Solomon built the first temple in the middle of the tenth century B.C. (began construction in 966 B.C. – 1 Ki. 6:1). That temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587/586 B.C. After Cyrus the Persian conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C., Zerubbabel and a group of Israelites returned to Jerusalem and completed the building of the Second Temple around 516 B.C.

In 20 B.C., Herod the Great, the king who later sought to kill the infant Jesus, announced a plan to renovate the temple. It began the next year with his assembling of the building materials, a task that alone took eight years. This was a massive project that transformed the temple area into what at the time was the largest manmade structure on earth. Herod greatly extended the platform on which the temple was built, increasing its area to around 36 acres, which translates to roughly 27 football fields.³ The platform was really the roof of a multistory structure of arches and vaults that extended out from the mountain peak at the center. Here is a cutaway diagram of the southeast corner based on knowledge available from what are called the "Rabbinic Tunnels."



² D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:488-508.

³ See [Area Units Conversion – acres to football fields](#) (accessed on 4/18/23).

The platform included huge courtyards, with the temple complex being in the center. That complex included the temple proper and a number of surrounding buildings, as shown in this model. Much of the work was completed by the time of Herod's death in 4 B.C. (the commonly accepted date), but it remained a construction site until A.D. 63.⁴



In Mat. 24:2, Jesus pronounces doom on the temple. As he indicated in Mat. 23:37-38, the fate of the temple and of Israel nationally is determined by Israel's response to him. In Lk. 19:41-44, he weeps over Jerusalem and says that its coming destruction is because the Jewish leaders and most of the people refused to receive him for who he is; they did not recognize the time of their visitation by God in the flesh.

The disciples assume that the destruction of the temple occurs in conjunction with the end of the age, the time when God judges and remakes the world, an event they associate with some kind of dramatic "coming" of Jesus. Many scholars have commented on the disciples' assumption that the destruction of the temple was an end-time phenomenon.

For example, Craig Blomberg states, "Jesus will make clear that the destruction of the temple and the end of the age are two separate events, but probably the disciples did not yet recognize this (thus Mark 13:4), scarcely imagining that one could occur without the other. Hence for them the two questions are one and the same."⁵ I. Howard Marshall says, "Jesus' hearers may be presumed to have regarded the destruction of the temple as an eschatological event."⁶ David Garland declares, "They clearly connect the temple's destruction to the end time, for they still see it as the center of their narrow universe."⁷ George Ladd states, "There can be little doubt but that the disciples thought of the

⁴ Though Herod's construction replaced the existing temple, it is conventionally viewed as a new version of the prior Second Temple rather than as a Third Temple.

⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 353.

⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 761.

⁷ David E. Garland, *Mark*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 491.

destruction of the temple as one of the events accompanying the end of the age and the coming of the eschatological Kingdom of God."⁸

Matthew 23:39 ("For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'") probably is the trigger for the reference to his "coming."⁹ They are not thinking in terms of a post-resurrection return "because these disciples did not yet appreciate or anticipate his resurrection."¹⁰ Rather, they are thinking of some kind of dramatic "coming" that will change the fate of Israel, perhaps his coming as an earthly king in the power of the Spirit. Of course, by the time Matthew was written, their question would be understood in the way Jesus undoubtedly answered it, as a reference to his post-resurrection return in glory to consummate the kingdom.

Because they understand the end to involve the destruction of the temple, Jesus' reference to that event prompts them to ask when the end, the complex of eschatological events of which the temple's destruction is a part ("these things," plural), will occur. That question of when is then clarified in terms of the signs that will immediately precede the end. As Blomberg noted in the above quote, for the disciples "the two questions are one and the same." Their interest is not in the destruction of the temple per se but in the coming of the end as represented (in their minds) by the destruction of the temple.

The form of the question varies in the Gospels, with Matthew giving the fullest expression. Regarding the differences, Carson states:

Yet if we make the reasonable assumption that in the disciples' mind their question as to the temple's destruction and the signs that will presage it are linked to the end of the age and Jesus' return (cf. 16:27-28; 23:39; Luke 19:11-27), there is little problem. Matthew makes explicit what was implicit and what Jesus recognized as implicit in their question.¹¹

This is key to seeing how the accounts in the Gospels correspond to each other. As in Matthew, the focus of the disciples' question in Mark and Luke, albeit implicitly, is on the coming of the end that they see represented in Jesus' statement about the destruction of the temple. At the end of each section below I will briefly note the corresponding sections from Mark and Luke.

⁸ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 196. See also, Carson, 495; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 688; R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 337; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 569; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 868-869; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 390; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 455; and Ryan P. Juza, *The New Testament and the Future of the Cosmos* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020), 24.

⁹ Blomberg, 353.

¹⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 340.

¹¹ Carson, 497.

B. Mat. 24:4-8

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

Jesus addresses their question about the coming of the end by warning them not to be led astray during the time until the end. Before the end comes, many will claim his title Christ, or more generally claim to be specially anointed deliverers of God, and will deceive people into placing their trust in them.

He also commands them not to be alarmed when the end does not come in association with some particular war, famine, or earthquake that raises expectations of the end. All these things will occur without the arrival of the end. They are but the *beginning* of "birth pains," the beginning of that period of distress of unspecified duration that precedes the consummation (the end) at the Lord's return.¹² Michael Wilkins writes:

[T]he metaphor in "birth pains" is used to highlight . . . that the onset of childbirth is not steady but is a repeated phenomenon, coming in waves over and over again. The baby does not come on the first pang, but once the pains begin, all know that the inexorable process has commenced. We do not know if the baby will come on the fifth, fifteenth, fiftieth, or five hundredth. Periods of wars and rumors of wars, tragic earthquakes, and famines wash over the landscape of history in repeated pains. Each reminds us that the end is coming, but no one knows when until the Son of Man appears. Throughout the labor we must be on guard.¹³

The disciples are thinking of the end arriving in conjunction with some kind of conflict that brings the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus tells them not to be alarmed when they hear of wars and rumors of wars *because* things like conflicts between nations and other upheavals like famines and earthquakes all will occur *without the end arriving*. As David Turner expresses the Lord's meaning, "But real and rumored warfare, earthquakes, and famine should not frighten the disciples because these things do not signify the end."¹⁴ Those things are only the *beginning* of the birth pains, not the arrival of the end.

This says to me that the alarm Jesus is forestalling is an alarm tied to the expectation that the end would arrive in conjunction with some particular conflict or

¹² Carson states (p. 498): "'Birth pains' (v. 8) in this context . . . stems from such OT passages as Isaiah 13:8; 26:17; Jeremiah 4:31; 6:24; Micah 4:9-10. By this time it was almost a special term for 'the birthpangs of the Messiah,' the period of distress preceding the Messianic Age (cf. SBK, 1:905; 4:977-78; TDNT, 9:667-74; cf. 2 Baruch 27:1-30; b *Shabbath* 118a; b *Sanhedrein* 98b)."

¹³ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 773-774.

¹⁴ Turner (2008), 573.

upheaval. Otherwise, it would make no sense to give as a reason they should *not be alarmed* that these kinds of conflicts and upheavals will occur without the end arriving. For example, if the alarm in question was simply over the distress that war brings, the fact wars will happen without the coming of the end would be irrelevant to relieving that alarm. In fact, it would exacerbate it because the faithful could not comfort themselves with the fact their reward would arrive in conjunction with the conflict.

Jesus says, "Do not be alarmed by wars, famines, or earthquakes *because* those things will happen without the coming of the end." But why would they be alarmed if they thought those things *would be* accompanied by the end? How would thinking that these things were ushering in the end generate alarm? Certainly, they would not be alarmed by the coming of the end – they are disciples and are to look forward to the redemption of that day (e.g., Lk. 21:27-28). Indeed, Christians pray for the Lord's coming (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20) and long for his appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

The expectation that certain upheavals would be accompanied by the end would create alarm if the end did not occur when those upheavals occurred because it would create fear that the end was not coming. Jesus is telling them not to be alarmed when contrary to their expectation the end does not come in conjunction with some conflict or upheaval – there will be many birth pains before the end arrives, so do not fret its failure to arrive after some particular birth pain, some specific conflict or hardship.

This section corresponds to Mk. 13:5-8 and Luke 21:8-11.

C. Mat. 24:9-14

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

During the period of time until the end ("then" in the sense of "at that time"),¹⁵ Christians will be persecuted and killed and will be hated throughout the world because of their allegiance to Christ. During that period, many will fall away and will betray and hate one another and many false prophets will arise and deceive many. There will be an increase in wickedness, and the love of many will grow cold. Only those who endure in the face of these trying circumstances will be saved, and despite these circumstances, the gospel will be preached throughout the whole world. Only at the end of this time of birth pains, *this period of undefined length*, will the end come.

¹⁵ *Tote* ("then") can mean "at that time" or "thereafter." Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1012.

The distress of the interadvent period, the church age, the period between Christ's ascension to heaven and his return to consummate the kingdom, will fluctuate, in keeping with the analogy of labor pains. Regarding persecution, Blomberg says, "All this does not mean that life for Christians in this world must remain unrelentingly evil but that in general, due to the opposition of a fallen world to the priorities of God and even despite the powerful inauguration of his kingdom, people will continue to reject the exclusive message of that kingdom."¹⁶

Determining whether the gospel has been "proclaimed throughout the whole world" depends on how literally the statement was intended. Some three decades later, Paul wrote in Col. 1:23 that the gospel "has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven." He was speaking hyperbolically to stress the amazing scope of the gospel's reach as confirmation that it is the authentic message. Unlike the localized heresy being promoted by some in Colossae, the gospel his readers had received had gone "everywhere," to far flung geographic locations and across religious, cultural, social, and ethnic boundaries. Jesus also may have been speaking nonliterally.

This section corresponds to Mk. 13:9-13 and Lk. 21:12-19. Luke 21:12 adds the detail that before *all* the specific birth pains identified in Lk. 21:8-11 would occur the disciples would be persecuted, betrayed, and hated. In other words, though all the birth pains would occur within their generation (but need not end within that time – see comments on Mat. 24:34), they would not all occur before the disciples experienced persecution, betrayal, and hatred. Indeed, Acts testifies to how quickly the church was set upon by persecution and hostility.

D. Mat. 24:15-21

¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

Having told them that wars and all kinds of upheaval and distress will occur without the arrival of the end, Jesus now applies that to their expectation that the destruction of the temple will be accompanied by the end. Given what he has told them ("Therefore" [*oun*], v. 15), when they see "the abomination that causes desolation," which Lk. 21:20 indicates is Jerusalem coming under attack, they must not misunderstand and think it is time for their redemption.

¹⁶ Blomberg, 360.

Rather than straightening up and raising their heads as they are to do at the time of their redemption at the Second Coming (Lk. 21:27-28), in this instance they must *flee*, and they are to do so immediately, as indicated by the fact they are not to stop off at their house or go back to get their cloak. This is because "the abomination that causes desolation" signals not the end, as their questions indicate they believed, but a very severe episode of distress within this age of distress, a particularly sharp pain within "the birth pains of the Messiah." It is a warning to them not to be fooled into thinking the attack on Jerusalem was the time of the Lord's promised consummating return.

Fleeing the Roman assault on Jerusalem would be especially difficult on pregnant women and those with newborns, and it would be more difficult if it occurred in winter or on a Sabbath. Winter would make travel more difficult because it would be colder and rainier. The Sabbath would make travel more difficult because Jews would be keeping the Sabbath, which would make it difficult to buy provisions or to get help and would expose the fleeing Christians to hostility for traveling further than the prescribed Sabbath distance.

In describing the distress of Jerusalem's fall as unequaled from the beginning of the world until now and not to be equaled again, Jesus probably was using a hyperbolic formula that emphasized the severity of the suffering, something like our "that was *the worst* _____ ever" (see Ex. 10:14, 11:6; Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 5:9; Joel 2:2; compare 2 Ki. 18:5 and 2 Ki. 23:25). Keith Mathison states:

[Jesus] warns that the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies will presage a time of tribulation "such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be." Some infer that such language can only speak of a unique end-time event. It is instructive to note, however, that such language is found in the Old Testament as well and appears to be a common hyperbole. Moses uses similar language to describe the effects of the final plague on Egypt (Ex. 11:6). Ezekiel uses such language to describe the destruction that was to befall Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (Ezek. 5:9; cf. Joel 2:2). Jesus appears to be using the same kind of language to describe the destruction that will fall upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70.¹⁷

It is just possible, however, that Jesus was speaking literally. Carson says, "There have been greater numbers of deaths – six million in the Nazi death camps, mostly Jews, and an estimated twenty million under Stalin – but never so high a percentage of a great city's population so thoroughly and painfully exterminated and enslaved as during the Fall of Jerusalem."¹⁸ One must add to that the anguish of divine rejection evident in the destruction of the city and temple that were central to Judaism.

According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, in his book *The Jewish War*, 1.1 million people died in the siege of Jerusalem and another 97,000 were taken

¹⁷ Keith A. Mathison, *From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014), 375.

¹⁸ Carson, 501.

prisoner by the Romans. The starving people in the besieged city were reduced to eating grass, cow dung, and even leather from their belts and shoes, and one mother murdered and ate her own baby. The rebels, the hardcore resistance within the city, inflicted horrible tortures on those they suspected had food to get them to reveal its location.¹⁹ Charles Quarles states:

Those who were captured by the Romans fared no better. Any captured by the Romans during the siege were tortured before the city walls to terrify the city's defenders and then crucified. Josephus commented, "The soldiers out of rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures; and so great was their number, that space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies" (*J.W.* 5.11.1 §451). Even after a vivid description of the horrors the Jews endured, Josephus added apologetically: "To narrate their barbarities is impossible; but, to put it briefly, no other city ever endured such miseries" (*J.W.* 5.10.5 §442).²⁰

The statement that the great tribulation is never to be equaled implies that the tribulation referred to is *not* a tribulation at the very end of history. Any tribulation at the end of history obviously cannot be equaled because there is no further history in which other tribulation can occur; there is only the consummated kingdom. In Carson's words: "That Jesus in v. 21 promises that such 'great distress' is never to be equaled again implies that it cannot refer to the Tribulation at the end of the age; for if what happens next is . . . the new heaven and the new earth, it seems inane to say that such 'great distress' will not take place again."²¹

This section corresponds to Mk. 13:14-19 and Lk. 21:20-24.

E. Mat. 24:22-28

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.* ²³ *Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it.* ²⁴ *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.* ²⁵ *See, I have told you beforehand.* ²⁶ *So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.* ²⁷ *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* ²⁸ *Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*

As you can see, I think it is better to begin a new paragraph at v. 22. Though "those days" in v. 22 often is read as referring to the attack on Jerusalem in vv. 15-21, I agree with Carson's assessment:

¹⁹ Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 619-620.

²⁰ Quarles, 620.

²¹ Carson, 501.

Many problems in interpreting the Olivet Discourse relate to the assumption that 'those days' [in v. 22] refers to the period described in vv. 15-21 and also to v. 29. But there are excellent reasons for concluding that vv. 22-28 refer to the general period of distress introduced by vv. 4-14 and that therefore 'those days' refers to the entire period of which vv. 15-21 are only one part – the 'great distress' (v. 21).²²

Leon Morris similarly states: "This verse [v. 22] is usually taken with the preceding, and this may be the way to understand it. But it makes a good deal of sense to take it as resuming the line of reasoning from verse 14 and applying primarily to the end time (though, of course, it has an application to the fall of Jerusalem also)."²³

Jesus says that this *age of distress* – these days of wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, hatred, apostasy, false christs, and false prophets – will become so bad that if it were allowed to continue, if God in his providence did not cut it short for the sake of the elect, no human being would survive. The world would degenerate to the point of human extinction.

Christians must continue to be on guard against false christs in this time of intensified birth pains. Not only will the distress be heightened, thus increasing the tendency to follow a false deliverer, but the false christ(s) and false prophet(s) will be performing miracles (see 2 Thess. 2:9-11; Rev. 13:13-14, 16:14, 19:20). When the Lord returns, it will be clear to all; it will be as obvious as lightning that lights up the entire sky. It will be as impossible for mankind to miss the coming of Christ as for vultures to miss seeing carrion.²⁴

It is difficult to see how the days being cut short for the sake of the elect can refer to the days of Jerusalem's fall. The days of distress associated with that fall were ended (cut short) by the city's destruction and slaughter of its inhabitants. How is bringing about that conquest sooner rather than later an act of mercy for the elect? For cutting short the days of distress to be an act of mercy for the elect it must be the elect who are suffering the hardship of those days and the act of cutting them short must somehow spare the elect from the effects of those days.

The elect are Christians (e.g., Mat. 24:31; Rom. 8:33, 11:7), and Christians were not suffering the hardship of the days of Jerusalem's fall. They had been instructed to flee the city, and Eusebius reports that they did so:

Meanwhile, before the war began, members of the Jerusalem church were ordered by an oracle given by revelation to those worthy of it to leave the

²² Carson, 502.

²³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 605. See also, Jonathan Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2018), 130-132.

²⁴ Perhaps v. 28 means that the false christs proliferating in the end are like vultures gathering over a carcass (the condemned world).

city and settle in a city of Perea called Pella. Here they migrated from Jerusalem, as if, once holy men had deserted the royal capital of the Jews and the whole land of Judea, the judgment of God might finally fall on them for their crimes against Christ and his apostles, utterly blotting out all that wicked generation.²⁵

But even if Christians were suffering the hardship of the days of Jerusalem's fall, accelerating the time of the fall is not sparing them from the effects of the days preceding the fall; it is having those days culminate in their deaths or enslavement, an outcome they were willing to suffer horribly to avoid. In addition, the term "all flesh" ("no human being," ESV) in v. 22 normally refers to all mankind and thus is broader than "no one in Jerusalem." And the unqualified term "elect" most naturally refers to all Christians and thus suggests that those for whose sake the days were cut short were not confined to Jerusalem. Jonathan Menn says of the phrase in 24:22 "those days will be cut short":

That added comment indicates that "those days" . . . include the entire period of time until the second coming (contrary to the more limited reference in Matt 24:19; Mark 13:17, 19; Luke 21:23). It indicates something worldwide in scope is occurring, not just a local phenomenon, because the basis on which the lives of God's people are saved is different in the two situations: in AD 70 people in Judea are urged to "flee to the mountains" in order to save their lives (Matt 24:16; Mark 13:14); before Christ comes again people are saved not by fleeing but by God's "cutting short" the days. In other words, tribulation will characterize the entire period before Christ's return, and it will even worsen shortly before his second advent, but God will not allow the age to run its course, humanity to destroy itself, or his people to be eliminated from the earth.²⁶

Note also that the deception of false christs and false prophets in vv. 23-26 occurs during "those days" of v. 22 ("then" in v. 23 meaning "at that time").²⁷ This links "those days" of v. 22 back to the days of distress in vv. 4-14 rather than to the specific distress of vv. 15-21 because that same concern about being deceived by false christs is expressed in vv. 4-14.

So it is by no means clear that v. 22 relates to "those days" of distress described in vv. 15-21; the referent is ambiguous at best. The interpretive problems that are solved by

²⁵ Eusebius, *History of the Church* 3.5.3.

²⁶ Menn, 131.

²⁷ *Tote* ("then") can mean "at that time" or "thereafter" (see fn. 14). The former makes better sense in v. 23, as the NIV makes explicit. It would be strange indeed for Jesus to condition the need for skepticism about false claims of an esoteric second coming on whether those claims were made after a certain event. Even if he foresaw that such claims would not be made until after "those days," the need for skepticism regarding them has nothing to do with when they are made. The need for skepticism is inherent in the claims; they contradict the fact the Lord's return will be open and obvious. Taking "then" in the sense of "thereafter" therefore is doubtful because it has the effect of highlighting the timing of the claims as though it is relevant to the need for skepticism.

understanding v. 22 as resuming the general subject of the days of distress in vv. 4-14, of which the fall of Jerusalem is a part, weigh in favor of that understanding.

Matthew 24:22-25 corresponds to Mk. 13:20-23. There is no corresponding section in Luke's account. There is no corresponding section in Mark or Luke's account to Mat. 24:26-28.²⁸

F. Mat. 24:29-31

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Immediately after the "birth pains of the Messiah," there will be a divine judgment on the ungodly. The language of heavenly upheaval in v. 29 is drawn from Isa. 13:10 and 34:4. Most basically this language depicts what we might call "earth-shattering" events, those interventions by God that seem to "turn the world upside down." In Isa. 13:10 it refers to God's judgment against Babylon; in Isa. 34:4 it refers to God's judgment against "all the nations" but particularly Edom.

Similar language is used elsewhere of God's judgment within history on cities and nations (e.g., Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9), but as Donald Hagner states, "[t]here is, however, a tendency for this language to shade into a description of the eschatological Day of the Lord. This tendency becomes more apparent in the utilization of the same language in the Pseudepigrapha (e.g., Ass. Mos. 10:5; Sib. 3:801 f.) and in the NT."²⁹ In other words, this language became an image for the ultimate divine intervention, that which occurs at the end of the age and most radically alters this reality (age) by bringing it to a close and ushering in the final, eternal state, the consummated kingdom of God. This is easy to understand, especially if, as I think likely, the final judgment of God is a complex of events that begins with a judgment within history and culminates in the Lord's return (the Parousia), the resurrection, and the irrevocable assignment of beings to their eternal abodes.

The regular way of taking this kind of language about the coming of the Son of Man is as a reference to the Parousia. Carson writes:

Compare closely 13:40-41; 16:27; 25:31; 1 Corinthians 11:26; 15:52; 16:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2:1-8; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 1:7 (cf. Didache 16). Here are references to the Son of

²⁸ But Lk. 17:23-24, 37 parallels Mat. 24:26-28.

²⁹ Donald Hagner, "ἡλιος" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 3:731.

Man's coming, angels gathering the elect, trumpet call, clouds, glory, tribes of the earth mourning, celestial disturbances – all unambiguously related to the Second Advent. It seems very doubtful, to say the least, that the natural way to understand vv. 29-35 is as a reference to the Fall of Jerusalem.³⁰

Blomberg similarly states:

Attempts to take the "coming on the clouds of the sky" as Christ's coming spiritually in judgment against Israel at the time of the destruction of the temple, so that all of vv. 15-35 refer only to the first-century events, have to take *parousia* ("coming") in v. 27 in a way that is otherwise entirely unparalleled in the New Testament. It is much more natural, therefore, to understand Christ's coming here to earth, as in Rev 19:11-16, when Jesus brings with him all the company of the redeemed already in heaven to join his faithful people yet on earth and still alive to meet him (cf. Zech 2:6 and Deut 30:4). All this is heralded by an angelic trumpet blast (cf. 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16; and perhaps based originally on Isa 27:13).³¹

Many other recent commentators on Matthew recognize that Mat. 24:29-31 refers to the Parousia.³² Recent commentators on the parallel passages in Mark and Luke also overwhelmingly recognize it is a reference to the Second Coming.³³

This section corresponds to Mk. 13:24-27 and Lk. 21:25-28.

³⁰ Carson, 493.

³¹ Blomberg, 363.

³² These include David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 322-323; Morris, 608-611; W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew Volume III*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1997), 357-364; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 583-588; Wilkins, 784; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 981-986; and Turner (2008), 581-584; Osborne, 893.

³³ Recent commentators on Mark who recognize that the Markan parallel (Mk. 13:24-27) refers to the Parousia include Lane, 473-477; Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 221-222; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 318-319; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 744-745; Garland, 500-501; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 347-348; Edwards, 402-404; and Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 610-616. Recent commentators on Luke who recognize that the Lukan parallel (Lk. 21:25-28) refers to the Parousia include Marshall, 774-777; Joseph A Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1348-1350; Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 327-328; Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 310; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 523-525; John Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 1004-1007; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1682-1687; and Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 739-741.

G. Mat. 24:32-35

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

Just as there are signs of a fig tree that *precede* the coming of summer, when they see "all these things," meaning the "birth pains," the conflict and upheaval that will *precede* the Lord's coming, they can know they are in the penultimate stage of history. The Judgment/Parousia is the next major step in God's redemptive purpose.

They will live to see these birth pains, to see the general upheaval and the destruction of Jerusalem, but that does not mean they will see the Judgment/Parousia. In other words, the birth pains, including the destruction of the temple, must *occur* within their generation, but they need not *end* within that time. Only the Father knows how long the birth pains will last (v. 36). As Carson puts it:

[A]ll that v. 34 demands is that the distress of vv. 4-28, including Jerusalem's fall, happen within the lifetime of the generation then living. This does *not* mean that the distress must end within that time but only that "all these things" must happen within it. Therefore v. 34 sets a *terminus a quo* [no earlier than] for the Parousia: it cannot happen till the events in vv. 4-28 take place, all within a generation of A.D. 30. But there is no *terminus ad quem* [no later than] to this distress other than the Parousia itself, and "only the Father" knows when it will happen (v. 36).³⁴

David Mathewson likewise states:

[I]t is more likely that the "all/these things" refer back to all the signs that Jesus describes in the prior verses: wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, and the rise of false "Messiahs" (Mark 13:7-23; Matt 24:6-26; Luke 21:9-21). This also includes one particularly disastrous event: the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Mark 13:14-20; Matt 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24). All of these would be the referent of "all/these things." In fact, the disciples did witness all of this in their lifetime. . . . But Jesus' words do not demand that he comes back within the lifetime of his disciples. It only means that *once all these events take place, Jesus can come back at any time*. . . . [T]hese are signs that throughout the entire age call the church to preparedness and watchfulness, as the parables of Jesus in the rest of Matthew 24-25 call for, not signs that predict *when* exactly Christ will return.³⁵

³⁴ Carson, 507.

³⁵ David L. Mathewson, *Where Is the Promise of His Coming? The Delay of the Parousia in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 29.

It is as if someone in America in the 1980s said (this is an illustration, not a call to political action): "When you see sexual perversion being taught to children in schools, corporations colluding with the government to silence inconvenient speech, and leaders insisting that people can choose whatever sex they want to be, you know that the revolution is not far away. This generation will see all these things, but just when the revolution will come is not known by any person." You see, a declaration that one will witness the precursors of an event is not a declaration that one also will witness the event.

This section corresponds to Mk. 13:28-31 and Lk. 21:29-33.

H. Mat. 24:36-42

³⁶ *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*

As just stated, only the Father knows how long the birth pains, this age of distress, will last; only he knows when the Parousia will occur, when the end will arrive. This, of course, raises the question of how Jesus, being God in the flesh, can be ignorant about anything since omniscience is an essential aspect of Godhood. This is obviously a large and deep topic, but my short answer is that Jesus was omniscient in his divine nature – he never ceased to be God by surrendering an essential attribute of deity – but chose to forego using certain aspects of his deity in keeping with the Father's will for the purpose of the divine mission. Carson states:

The Son of God abandoned any use of his divine prerogatives and capabilities which, as a man, he would not have enjoyed, *unless his heavenly Father gave him direction to use such prerogatives*. He therefore would not use his powers to turn stones into bread for himself: that would have been to vitiate his identification with human beings and therefore to abandon his mission, for human beings do not have instant access to such solutions. His mission prohibited him from arrogating to himself the prerogatives rightly his. But if that mission required him to multiply loaves for the sake of the five thousand, he did so. Even his knowledge was self-confessedly limited (Matt. 24:36).³⁶

The uncertainty about the moment of his coming calls for steadfastness on the part of Christians. Carson states: "Jesus expects ceaseless vigilance of his followers, for

³⁶ D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 35-36.

the final climax of human history will suddenly come on ordinary life. In the human condition massive distress and normal life patterns coexist. For the believer the former point to the end; the latter warn of its unexpectedness."³⁷

The separation that occurs at that time will be based on one's faith in Christ, and therefore some who are similarly situated, working side by side, will have differing fates. One will be taken, which by analogy to the people in v. 39 who were swept away in the flood, means taken in judgment. It does not mean "raptured," taken to be with the Lord in heaven. It is the one who is left, the one who is not taken in judgment, who will be with the Lord.

Matthew 24:36 corresponds to Mk. 13:32. There is no corresponding verse in Luke. There is no corresponding section in Mark or Luke's account to Mat. 24:37-42.³⁸

II. A Few Other "Coming" Texts

A. *Mat. 16:27-28 (par. Mk. 8:38-9:1; Lk. 9:26-27)*

²⁷ *"For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.* ²⁸ *Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."*

Any attempt to make Mat. 16:27 refer to anything other than the Parousia stumbles on the parallel language in Mat. 25:31, a certain Parousia text, and on the fact the coming referred to is specifically said to include a universal judgment, a repaying of *each person* according to what he has done. As Turner notes, this verse "clearly refers to the coming of Jesus to the earth and the final judgment (cf. Matt. 13:40-41; 24:30-31: 25:31; 26:64)."³⁹

The coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom that some who were present would not die before seeing (v. 28) most likely refers to the immediately following Transfiguration event understood as a kind of preview of the Parousia that only Peter, James, and John were privileged to receive. This is how most of the early Church Fathers understood these verses.⁴⁰ Modern commentators on Matthew who so understand it include Craig Blomberg, Craig Keener, R. T. France, Michael Wilkins, and David

³⁷ Carson (1984), 509.

³⁸ But Lk. 17:26-27, 30, 34-35 and Lk. 12:39-40 parallel Mat. 24:37-41 and 24:42-44 respectively.

³⁹ Turner (2008), 413.

⁴⁰ W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew Volume II*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1991), 677.

Turner.⁴¹ Numerous recent commentators on the parallel texts in Mark and Luke likewise understand it as a reference to the Transfiguration.⁴²

The careful noting by all the Synoptic writers of the time between Jesus' promise and the Transfiguration event (Mat. 17:1; Mk. 9:2; Lk. 9:28) indicates a clear literary or thematic link between the two suggesting that the writers intended the Transfiguration to be understood in some sense as the fulfillment of the promise. Michael Green states, "The Synoptic Gospels all see the transfiguration as a foretaste not so much of the resurrection as of the parousia of Jesus."⁴³

The fact only three of the disciples were privy to the vision explains the reference in the promise to "some." As Cranfield remarks, the three had "the privilege of seeing in the course of their natural life what others would only see at the final judgment."⁴⁴

The emphasis in the Transfiguration account on the visual aspect correlates with the reference in the promise to "see." This interpretation also satisfies the usual meaning of the conjunction *heōs* ("until"), which implies that those who saw the kingdom come as promised in v. 28 would die at some point thereafter, as Peter, James, and John died after having seen the Transfiguration.

Perhaps most importantly, Peter in 2 Pet. 1:16-18 confirms that the Transfiguration was a foreshadowing of the Parousia. Modern commentators who understand 2 Peter this way include Michael Green, Douglas Moo, Thomas Schreiner, Peter Davids, and Gene Green.⁴⁵ Mathewson concludes regarding this text:

⁴¹ Blomberg, 261; Keener, 436; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 641 (cautiously); Wilkins, 574-575; and Turner (2008), 413.

⁴² Recent commentators on Mark who understand the Markan parallel (Mk. 9:1) to refer to the Transfiguration include Lane, 313-314; Walter W. Wessel, "Mark" in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:697-698; James A. Brooks, *Mark*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 138-140; Witherington, 261-262; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 345 (cautiously); and Stein (2008), 410-411. Recent commentators on Luke who understand the Lukan parallel (Lk. 9:27) to refer to the Transfiguration include Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke" in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:924 (cautiously); Evans, 149; Stein (1992), 280; and J. Green, 376.

⁴³ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 92.

⁴⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, quoted in Blomberg, 261 (fn. 8).

⁴⁵ M. Green, 92. Douglas Moo states in *2 Peter and Jude*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 84: "Peter, James, and John saw – not in a vision or a dream, but at a specific time and place in history – Jesus' Parousia glory. And Peter wants us to believe that Christ will come again in glory because he did see this." Thomas Schreiner states in *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 312: "Peter defended the truth of the coming of Christ in a surprising manner. He appealed to the eyewitness testimony of what occurred at the transfiguration. Apparently he conceived of the transfiguration as a proleptic and prophetic indication of the glory and power of Christ that would be displayed at his future coming." Peter Davids states in *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 202: "2 Peter . . . says that the Transfiguration was a view into the future of the coming exaltation of Jesus, a view of his second coming with power and glory." Gene Green states in *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on

Added up, what this all means is that the transfiguration itself is a foretaste, a proleptic experience, of the coming of the kingdom of God/Son of Man in power in the future. The transfiguration is "a foreshadowing of the future glorious coming. . . . The transfiguration will be a glorious experience (17:2, 5), but it will only be a temporary preview of what will come with permanence when Jesus returns to the earth" [quoting Turner]. In this way, some of the disciples did indeed see the kingdom of God and the Son of Man coming with power, not in its final glorious form, but in a way that anticipated that final glorious arrival.⁴⁶

B. Mat. 26:64 (par. Mk. 14:62; Lk. 22:69)

⁶⁴ *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."*

Jesus is telling the Sanhedrin ("you" is plural) that though they are about to condemn him they soon will see him in a different light. As the present turning point plays out in his crucifixion and resurrection, they will see him exalted to God's right hand in that they will see things indicative of that exaltation, even if they do not fully grasp what they are seeing. They will see the three-hour darkness over all the land, the tearing of the temple curtain, the earthquake, the empty tomb, and dead saints raised to life, which events were sufficient to draw a confession from the centurion and his troops (Mat. 27:45-54), and they will see the preaching, powerful works, and changed lives of the disciples.

Beyond that, and tied to his exalted status, they also will see the Parousia, the Son of Man returning to judge those who had unjustly judged him. Nolland states, "With only an adjustment from third person plural to second person plural, 'you will see the Son of Man . . . coming on the clouds of heaven', with its allusion to Dn. 7:13, repeats language from 24:30. It must, therefore, refer to the same event: the climax of history in the eschatological coming of the Son of Man to gather the elect."⁴⁷ Robert Mounce says, "a reference to the Parousia is quite clear."⁴⁸

The fact they will long have been dead when that occurs does not mean they will not see it. All mankind, living and dead, will witness that event in that all mankind will

the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 216: "The particular tenet of the heretics' teaching that Peter counters has to do with the eschatological parousia of Christ (v. 16; 3:3-4). He presents the transfiguration, with its revelation of Christ's kingship, as the guarantee of that final event."

⁴⁶ Mathewson, 21.

⁴⁷ Nolland (2005), 1131.

⁴⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, Good News Commentary (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 256. See also, Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 545; Blomberg, 403; Morris (1992), 685; Davies and Allison (1997), 530-531; Keener, 650; and Turner (2008), 640. Recent commentators on Mark who understand the Markan parallel (Mk. 14:62) to refer to the Parousia include Lane, 537; Wessel, 769; Gundry (1993), 886-887; and Stein (2008), 684-685.

stand before his judgment throne (Mat. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10; 2 Tim. 4:1). At his return, every being shall kneel in honor of his name and every tongue shall openly declare that he is Lord (Phil. 2:9-11). Moreover, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) suggests the possibility that even before they are resurrected the dead will be able to see what is transpiring beyond their lot in Hades.

C. 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.

This is a notoriously difficult text,⁴⁹ but I think Jesus is forewarning the church that Jewish hostility to the gospel will be an ongoing feature of its mission. On the heels of charging the disciples to evangelize Israel (10:5-6), Jesus tells them to flee from one town to the next when persecuted. He then solemnly informs them, in so many words, that the persecution that causes them to flee, that drives them from a town prematurely thus barring them full access to it, will to some extent remain until the time of his return. They will not finish all the towns of Israel, the Jewish mission, prior to that time because hostility will bar them, and perhaps eventually discourage them, from doing so.⁵⁰

Mathewson comments:

In this case, Jesus predicts his return before this broader mission of his followers comes to an end with reference to their mission to Israel. Thus, alongside of their work with the gentiles, Jesus envisions an ongoing work with Israel, even in the face of persecution. Jesus, then, is not predicting when the return will take place, but envisions the coming of the Son of Man before their mission is complete.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Carson (p. 250) says it "is among the most difficult in the NT canon."

⁵⁰ This is or is similar to the view of Gundry (1982), 194-195; F. F. Bruce, *The Hard Sayings of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 108-109; Davies and Allison (1991), 190; Blomberg, 176; Keener, 324; and Turner (2008), 277. Turner (2008, p. 277) lists the following as plausible explanations:

1. Jesus will soon follow up on the ministry of the disciples. In this view, the coming is not eschatological but simply refers to Jesus's rejoining the disciples before they complete their immediate ministries.
2. Jesus's resurrection amounts to a coming, since by it the new era of the church is inaugurated (Albright and Mann 1971: 125; Stonehouse 1979: 240).
3. The coming of Jesus is a process beginning with the resurrection, continuing through Pentecost, and culminating in his return to earth (Hendricksen 1973: 467-68).
4. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 amounts to a coming in judgment upon Israel (Carson 1984: 252-53; Hagner 1993: 279-80).
5. Jesus will return to the earth before the disciples complete their mission to Israel (W. Davies and Allison 1991: 192; Blomberg 1992a; 176; Garland 1993: 112; Gniska 1986-88: 1.379; Gundry 1994: 194-195; Harrington 1991: 147-48; Keener 1999: 324-25; Schnackenburg 2002: 98-99).

⁵¹ Mathewson, 25.