

Looking past matthew 24

Full/partial Preterist & Historicist view:

1. To be interpreted *literally* [earthly signs] and *figuratively* [signs in the sky; coming on clouds; son of man, **Dan 7**].
2. *End of the age* = end of Torah/Old covenant age.

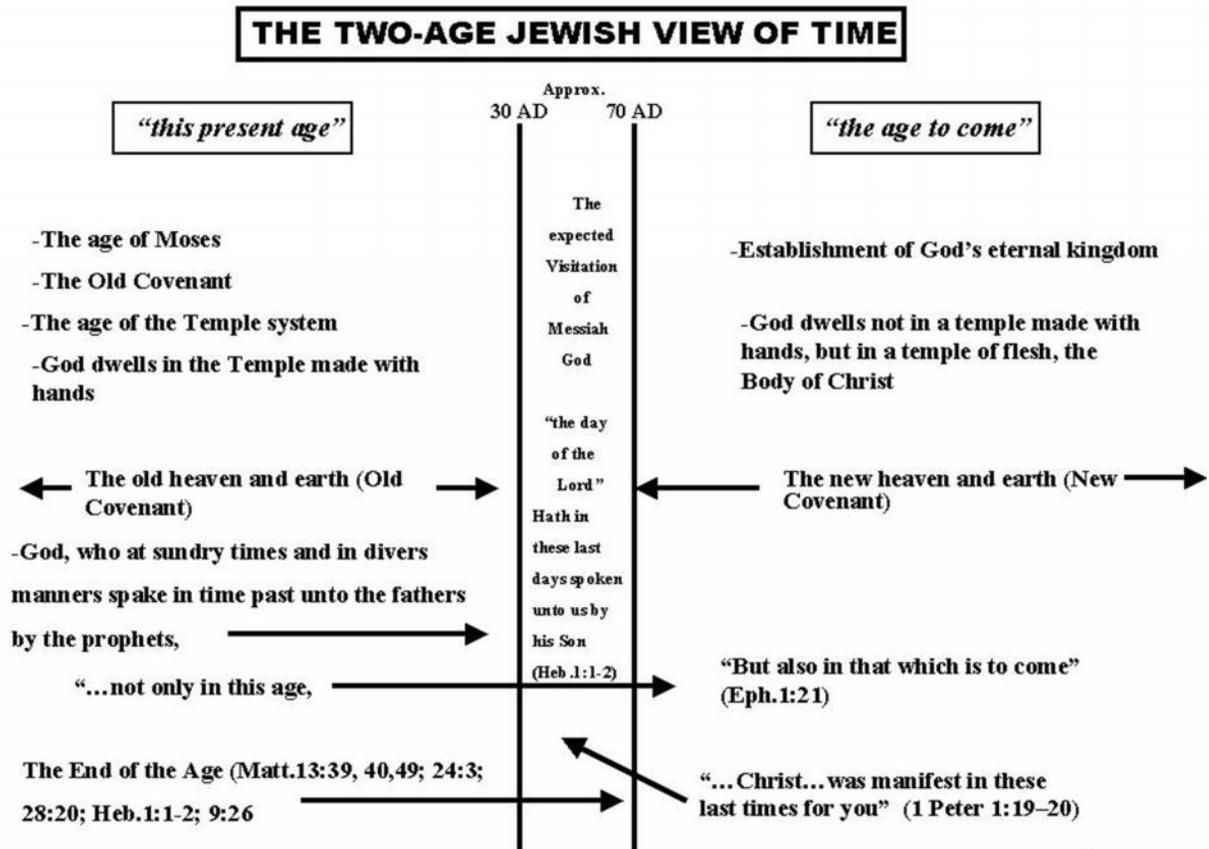


Figure 1

3. The *world/earth* [*oikoumenē*] = known world *only*; “heaven and earth” = The Temple.
4. The “coming” [Parousia] = God’s judgment, *not* the 2nd coming of Jesus.
5. Jesus and not the Anti-Christ, is the one who “desolates”/destroys the Temple.
6. Last of the 70 weeks = Stephen’s death; the Great Tribulation *moved up* to 66-70AD.
7. Jesus said “this *generation* shall not pass away”, i.e. 40 year period only.
8. Pitting Jesus against Paul: **1Thess 2.13-18**
9. Church fathers not futurists.

Preterists:

Past: Jonathan Edwards, John Lightfoot, Hort & Westcott, C.F.D. Moule.

Modern adherents: Matthew Henry, Jamison, Fausset & Brown, D. Chilton, R.T. France, R.C. Sproul.

Historicists: Protestant Reformers: Calvin, Luther.

COMING BACK STRONG!

Matthew 24 Redux

1. Bad exegesis:

- Even if all these are metaphors for God's judgment, for the Jew this resulted in the restoration of the Kingdom/resurrection of the dead.
- In the NT "*coming on the clouds*" refers to 2nd coming

"From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming on the clouds of heaven." **Mar 14.62; Mat 26.64**

"Look! He is coming in the clouds. Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. Every tribe on earth will mourn because of him. This is true. Amen." **Rev 1.7**

- Blurs Daniel's vision by splitting the image of "the Son of Man coming on the clouds".
- The Jewish-Christian belief was of a coming with his angels/saints to rule ALL nations [**Dan 7.14**].
- The sign of the Son of Man is his own sign, which is his own coming!

"The first thing to be said of the Son of Man is that he is an eschatological figure. He has not yet appeared; but in the last times he will be revealed. [His coming] means the end of the heathen human empires of this [age], and the dawn of the Kingdom of God."

Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p 358.

2. The phrase "*the end of the age*" = final judgment/resurrection of the dead [cp. "*end of days*" = "*end of the age*", Dan 12.13 LXX]:

- **Matt 13.39-40**: parable of tares = "*end of the harvest*" [**Rev 14.14f.**].

- **Matt 13.49**: parable of the dragnet-fish gathered by angels & the wicked thrown in hell.

Jesus' use of "*end of the age*" is the day of final judgment/resurrection of the saints when the harvest [wheat/weeds], fish [cp. sheep/goats **Matt 25**], are finally *separated* and given their allotted rewards/punishment.

- Confusing covenants with the Jewish, 2-stage, age worldview.

"The contrast between a present age dominated by evil and an age to come is explicitly drawn only in the later Jewish apocalypses 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, but it is a natural development of such seminal passages as the vision in Daniel 2 and 7, was implicit in Qumran's talk of "the time of wickedness" (CD 6.10, 14; 12.23; 15.7; 1QpHab 5.7), and was probably already part of the Jesus tradition ('*in this present age...the age to come*', **Matt. 12.32; Mark 10.30; Luke 20.34-35**)." Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, pp 40-41.



- The cross and *nothing else* ended the Old Covenant:

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." Luke 22.20

"I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." **John 2.19-22**

"Here it is symbolic of Jesus' **resurrection and the resulting community.**" [NABRE]

"Christ is the end of the Jewish Law." **Rom 10.4**

How do we make *sense* of the **command** to the church to preach “this Gospel about the coming KOG” and to “make disciples of all nations...to the very end of the age” [Mat 28.19-20]?

3. The phrase “heaven and earth” cannot mean the Temple *in this context!*

- “Until heaven/earth [the Temple] pass away” Torah will remain [Mat 5.18] as strained as saying Torah remains *regardless* of whether or not “heaven/earth [the Temple] pass away” [Luke 16.17].

- The word for *earth/world* [*oikoumenē*] = “heavens”:

“...the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken...And he will send out his angels with a trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

Mat 24.29, 31 [cp. Gen 1.1, LXX]

- *Kosmos* = can be *worldwide*:

“Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from *the foundation of the world.*” **Mat 25.34**

- The “land” [*ges*] simply establishes the fact that *all the nations over the land* will be subjugated.

4. Multiple *parousias* and redefinition:

- Only in **Matthew 24.3, 27, 37, 39**; the “end” same *meaning*, **24.6, 13-14**.

“A term associated with military and imperial parades.” *Jewish Annotated NT*.

- Implies an “invisible, inaudible, localized” coming of Jesus himself as opposed to a visible [angels gathering the church/resurrection of the dead], audible [trumpet call, “nations of the earth mourning”] and public [clouds, glory, lightning, earth/heaven signs].

- In the NT *parousia* refers to a person’s physical presence, the others are all about the Parousia:

1Cor 16.17: “I rejoice in the *parousia* of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, because they made up for your absence...”

2Cor 7.6-7: “But God, who encourages the downcast, encouraged us by the *parousia* of Titus, and not only by his *parousia* but also by the encouragement with which he was encouraged in regard to you...”

2Cor 10.10: “For someone will say, ‘His letters are severe and forceful, but his [person] *parousia* is weak, and his speech contemptible’.”

Phil 1.26: “...your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound on account of me when I *parousia* again.”

Phil 2.12: “So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present [*parousia*] but all the more now when I am absent...”

2Thess 2.9: “...the one whose *parousia* springs from the power of Satan in every mighty deed and in signs and wonders that lie...”

- The coming of the Son of Man = the coming of the KOG [see Mowinckel].
- The transfiguration [Mat 16.28] = Parousia *vision*, [*orama*] **Mat 17.9**; cp. **2Pe 1.16-21**; NOTE: transfiguration “lightning” = sign of the Son of Man:

Mat 28.3: “His appearance was like *lightning* and his clothing was white as snow.”

Luke 9.29[NIV]: “As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of *lightning*.”

Mat 24.27: “For as *lightning* that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

5. The 2nd figure in Dan 9.26b [cp. Mar 13.14] is missed/ignored:

Dan 9.26 [CJB]: “Then, after the sixty-two weeks, *Mashiach* will be cut off and have nothing. The people of a prince yet to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but **his end** will come with a flood, and desolations are decreed until the war is over.”

Mark 13.14: “But when you see the abomination of desolation, *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, standing where **HE** ought not (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...”

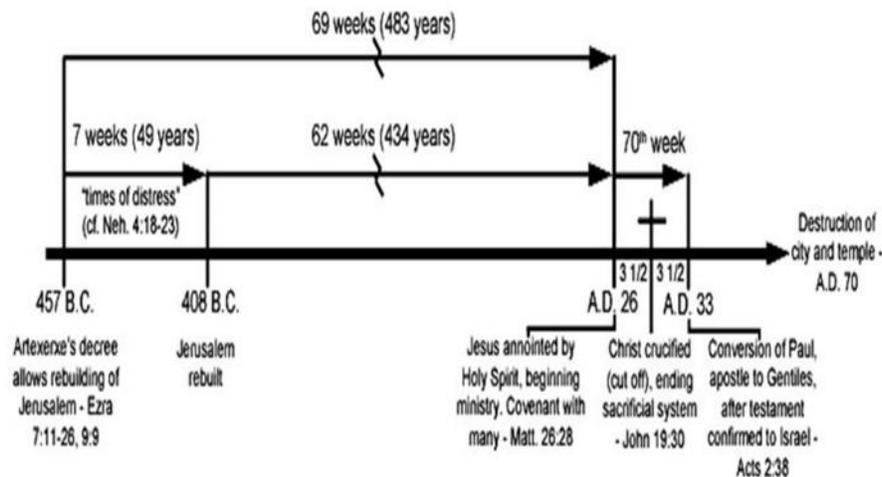
Pulpit Commentary: “In the Authorized Version, after the word “desolation,” the words “spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” are introduced, but without sufficient authority. **They were probably interpolated from St. Matthew, where there is abundant authority for them;** and thus their omission by St. Mark does not affect the argument drawn from them **in favor of the genuineness of the Book of Daniel, against those, whether in earlier or in later times, who reject this book, or ascribe it to some mere recent authorship.**”

- Anthony has written *extensively* in the *Focus & Articles – Prophecy: “A Close Look at Daniel 9:26, 27: Antichrist’s Reign of Terror”*.

6. Bad exegesis: Great Tribulation/2nd coming/Resurrection of the dead ripped out!

- A mix of Preterist/Historicist:

70 Weeks of Daniel 9 - Fulfilled



- They don't take into account "*immediately* after the tribulation of those days" [24.29].

Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: "The expression Great Tribulation refers to the time of trouble which will usher in the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 2:22; 7:14). Jesus warned that the great tribulation would be so intense that its calamities will nearly decimate all of life...The allusion to Daniel 12:1 suggests an eschatological [future] view of the great tribulation...Although this event should rightly be regarded as future, attempts to connect the time of tribulation with specific events or persons [in history] have proven futile."

7. Jesus said he didn't know the day or the hour/times or seasons [Mar 13.32; Acts 1.3; cp. "Only YHWH knows", Zech 14.7] yet he knows/*predicts* within 40 years [70AD]?

- No need to reinterpret "*this generation*" in unnatural ways: "the *nation* of Israel", "the Jewish race", "*that generation*" [be it 70AD or in the future, whenever the events take place].
- In this context the more natural reading would be of "*this present evil age*" [Gal 1.4] of human history [Mat 12.39, 45; 16.4; 17.17; cp. Luke 16.8].
- **Mat 24.31** says the Church would be gathered but instead was dispersed.
- "The Day of the Lord" is always "at hand/near" [Zeph 1.14; Ezek 30.3; Oba 1.15; Joel 1.15]; "the Son of Man comes/is seated at the right hand of God" [Matt. 10:23; 16:27ff.; 26:64].

- An argument for a "delay" of the 2nd coming:

Mar 13.7-10: "When you hear of wars and reports of wars do not be alarmed; such things must happen, *but it will not yet be the end*. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes from place to place and there will be famines. *These are the beginnings of the labor pains*."

Luke 17.22: "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it."

Luke 18.1-8: Parable of the Persistent Widow

Mat 24.36-51: "This is why you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect...The master of that servant will come on a day he does not anticipate and at an hour he does not expect."

Luke 19.11-27: "While they were listening to him speak, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the kingdom of God would appear there immediately. So he said, 'A nobleman went off to a distant country to obtain the kingship for himself and then to return'."

Read: Mat 25.1-5; 14-19.

8. Paul learned from Jesus and his Apostles:

The "word of the Lord" [v.15] leads at once into a reminder of the Jesus tradition, that "the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night" (5.2, 4), and thence into a sustained exhortation to wakefulness — again echoing a characteristic theme of Jesus' parables of crisis [Matt. 24.42-43; 25.13; Mark 13.34-37; Luke 12.37. Also Mark 14.34-38 par.].

As with 1 Thessalonians, the [2nd] letter has been occasioned by a particular crisis. There it was the problem of unexpected events prior to the parousia. In this case it is the problem of

escalating expectation, overheated eschatological enthusiasm. The Thessalonians had been given to believe "that the day of the Lord has come," that it was already present (2.2). [Paul's formulation, "neither through spirit[-inspired utterance], nor through word, nor through letter..." (2.2), envisages a continuing ferment, with various communications contributing to the confusion.] Paul's response was to damp down the fires of enthusiasm by insisting that crucial events were yet to intervene before the end (2.3-12).]

[This is one of the clearest examples of a paraenetic [exhortation/advice] tradition (passed on by Paul in founding a new church) whose echoes of a distinctive parable of Jesus (Matt.24.43/Luke 12.39) are best explained if Paul had repeated the parable to them as part of their foundational Jesus tradition.] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp 300-302.

9. Early Church and Fathers ARE futurists:

Didache (AD 100) "then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands...but they that endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first, the sign of an out-spreading in heaven; then **the sign of the sound of the trumpet**; and the third, the resurrection of the dead; yet not of all, but as it is said: The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. **Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.**" (Chapter 16)

Shepherd of Hermas, *Visions 2*, 2.7: c. 100AD

"Stand steadfast, therefore, you who work righteousness, and doubt not, that your passage may be with the holy angels. Happy you who endure **the great tribulation that is coming on**, and happy they who shall not deny their own life. For the Lord has sworn by His Son, that those who denied their Lord have abandoned their life in despair, for even now these are to deny Him in the days that are coming."

"A virgin meets me...I knew from my former visions that this was the Church... 'You have escaped from great tribulation on account of your faith, and because you did not doubt in the presence of such a beast. Go, therefore, and tell the elect of the Lord His mighty deeds, and say to them that this beast is a type of the great tribulation that is coming.'" Vision 4, 2.5.

"For as gold is tested by fire, and thus becomes useful, so are you tested who dwell in it. Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, will be purified by means of it...Wherefore cease not speaking these things into the ears of the saints. **This then is the type of the great tribulation that is to come.**" Vision 4, 3.6.

Justin Martyr (AD 100-168) "**Two advents of Christ have been announced**: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but **the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory**, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, **shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians.**" (*First Apology*, Chapter 110)

Irenaeus (AD 180) *Against Heresies*, bk. 5, chs. 25-26: "In which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavoring to show himself as Christ the Lord also declares: '*When you shall see the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place, as Daniel spoke of it...*' Everything will be given into his hands until a time of times and half a time: that is for three and a half years, during which time, when he [Antichrist] comes, he will reign over the earth...The Abomination shall be brought into the temple, even until the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete [Dan 9:27]. Now 3 years and 6 months constitute the half 'week.'"

Hippolytus (AD 170-235) "Now, **concerning the tribulation of the persecution** which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus [Rev 12]...[**Rev 12.14**] **refers to the one thousand two**

hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city, and seeks concealment in the wilderness among the mountains...**The Lord also says [Mat 24.15-22]; and Daniel says [12.11]**... And the blessed Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says [**2Thess 2.1-10**]... These things, then, being to come to pass, beloved, and the one week being divided into two parts, and the abomination of desolation being manifested then, and the two prophets and forerunners of the Lord having finished their course, and the whole world finally approaching the consummation, what remains but the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from heaven, for whom we have looked in hope? who shall bring the conflagration and just judgment upon all who have refused to believe on Him...For the Lord says [**Luke 21.28, 18; Matt 24.27**].” (*Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, 60-64) c.202

Cyprian (AD 200-258)

Nor let any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of **future persecution, or the coming of the threatening Antichrist**, as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and **by the heavenly warnings**. Antichrist is coming... but **immediately the Lord follows to avenge our sufferings and our wounds.**” (*Epistles of Cyprian*, LIII, p.722)

Commodianus (AD250): “Isaiah said, ‘this is the man who moves the world and so many kings and under whom the land will become a desert’ ...Then, doubtless the world will be finished when he appears. He himself will divide the globe into three ruling powers, when however, **Nero will be raised up from hell**, Elijah will first come to seal the beloved ones...**the whole earth on all sides will tremble for 7 years**. But **Elijah will occupy half of the time and Nero the other half**...and the Latin conqueror will then say, ‘I am Christ whom you always pray to.’ And indeed the original ones who were deceived combine to praise him. He does many wonders since he is the false prophet. Especially that they may believe him his image will speak. The Almighty has given it power to appear such. The Jews, recapitulating Scriptures from him, exclaim at the same time to the Highest that they have been deceived...” (*The Instructions of Commodianus*, chs. 41-42).

Victorinus (AD 269-271) "He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles...The Lord, admonishing His churches concerning the last times and their dangers...**three years and six months**, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the Church." (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 20:1-3)

Lactantius (c. 250-330 AD) “Another king shall arise out of Syria, born from an evil spirit...and he will constitute and call himself God, and will order himself to be worshipped as the Son of God, and power will be given him to do signs and wonders. **Then he will attempt to destroy the temple of God and persecute the righteous people; and there will be distress and tribulation such as there never has been since the beginning of the world.**” (*Divine Institutes*, bk. 7, ch. 17).

Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386) “For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, **Then let them which be in Judæa flee to the mountains. Matthew 24:16...for then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. Matthew 24:21** But thanks be to God who has **confined the greatness of that tribulation to a few days**; for He says, **But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened** ; and **Antichrist shall reign for three years and a half only**. We speak not from apocryphal books, but from **Daniel**; for he says, **And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time**. A time is the one year in which his coming shall for a while have increase; and the times are the remaining two

years of iniquity, making up the sum of the three years; and the half a time is the six months. And again in another place Daniel says the same thing, ***And he swore by Him that lives for ever that it shall be for a time, and times, and half a time. Daniel 12:7*** And some perhaps have referred what follows also to this; namely, ***a thousand two hundred and ninety days*** ; and this, *Blessed is he that endures and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. For this cause we must hide ourselves and flee; for perhaps we shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man comes [Matthew 10:23].*" *Catechetical Lecture 15.16*

Summary:

The preterist/historicist view has left us with the wrath of God only without the result of that judgment, the regeneration/rebirth of the new heavens/earth: **Isa 66.7-9.**