

# Usages of “This Generation” in the Synoptic Gospels

Jesus used the word “generation” (γενεά - genea) 13 times when synthesizing the 3 synoptic accounts. Separately, Luke records it 11 times, Mark 4 times, and Matthew 9 times, for a total of 24 verses. Look at the usages below. In every case Jesus referred to those alive at that time. (30 AD)

Matthew 11:16; 12:39, 41, 42; 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; 24:34 (9 times)

Mark 8:12; 8:38; 9:19 (3 times)

Luke 13:30; 7:31; 11:29-32, 50-51; 9:41; 17:25; 21:32 (12 times)

## “This generation” and its descriptors:

This generation is like **unwise children** who are never pleased.

(Matthew 11:16-19) <sup>16</sup>“But to what shall I compare **this generation**? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces, who call out to the other *children*, <sup>17</sup>and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a song of mourning, and you did not mourn.’ <sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ <sup>19</sup>The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ And yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

(Luke 7:31-35) <sup>31</sup>“To what then shall I compare the people of **this generation**, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup>They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a song of mourning, and you did not weep.’ <sup>33</sup>For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ <sup>34</sup>The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ <sup>35</sup>And yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.”

This **evil and adulterous generation** craved a sign.

(Matthew 12:39-42) <sup>39</sup>But He answered and said to them, “**An evil and adulterous generation** craves a sign; and so no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup>for just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

<sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh will stand up with **this generation** at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, *something* greater than Jonah is here. <sup>42</sup>The Queen of the South will rise up with **this generation** at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, *something* greater than Solomon is here.

(Matthew 16:4) <sup>4</sup>**An evil and adulterous generation** wants a sign; and so a sign will not be given to it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.

(Mark 8:12) <sup>12</sup>Sighing deeply in His spirit, He \*said, “Why does **this generation** demand a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to **this generation!**”

This generation is **wicked** and seeks a sign.

(Luke 11:29-30) <sup>29</sup>Now as the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “**This generation is a wicked generation**; it demands a sign, and so no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. <sup>30</sup>For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to **this generation**.

This generation will be **condemned** at the judgment by the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba.

(Matthew 12:41-42) <sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh will stand up with **this generation** at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, *something* greater than Jonah is here. <sup>42</sup>The Queen of the South will rise up with **this generation** at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, *something* greater than Solomon is here.

(Luke 11:31-32) <sup>31</sup>The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of **this generation** at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, *something* greater than Solomon is here. <sup>32</sup>The men of Nineveh will stand up with **this generation** at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, *something* greater than Jonah is here.

This generation is like a **demon possessed** person who repents but ends up much worse.

(Matthew 12:45) <sup>45</sup>Then it goes and brings along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they come in and live there; and the last *condition* of that person becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with **this evil generation.**”

This generation is **adulterous and sinful**.

(Mark 8:38) <sup>38</sup>For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in **this adulterous and sinful generation**, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

This generation is **unbelieving and perverted**.

(Matthew 17:17) <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered and said, “You **unbelieving and perverse generation**, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.”

(Mark 9:19) <sup>19</sup> And He answered them and \*said, “O **unbelieving generation**, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”

(Luke 9:41) <sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said, “You **unbelieving and perverse generation**, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.”

This generation **will rejected Jesus and had Him murdered**.

(Luke 17:25) <sup>25</sup> But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by **this generation**.

This generation **will be charged with all of the murders** of the prophets.

(Matthew 23:36) <sup>36</sup> Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon **this generation**.

(Luke 11:50-51) <sup>50</sup> so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against **this generation**, <sup>51</sup> from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against **this generation**.'

### Prophetic warnings

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

(Mark 13:30) Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place.

(Luke 21:32) Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all things take place.

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### The rest of the New Testament's use of “generation”

The word “generation” is used 12 other times in the New Testament. “Generation” is never used to refer to “race” as C.I. Scofield attempted to argue in Matthew 24:34.

(Philippians 2:15) <sup>15</sup> so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a **crooked and perverse generation**, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

(Luke 1:48) <sup>48</sup> For He has had regard for the humble state of His bond-servant; For behold, from now on **all generations** will call me blessed.

(Luke 1:50) “AND HIS MERCY IS UPON **GENERATION AFTER GENERATION** TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

(Acts 2:40) And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from **this perverse generation!**”

(Acts 8:33) “IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL LATE **HIS GENERATION**? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH.”

(Acts 13:36) “For David, after he had served the purpose of God **in his own generation, fell asleep**, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

(Acts 14:16) “**In the generations gone by** He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;

(Acts 15:21) “For Moses **from ancient generations** has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

(Ephesians 3:5) which **in other generations** was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

(Ephesians 3:21) **to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations** forever and ever. Amen.

(Colossians 1:26) that is, the mystery which has been hidden from **the past ages and generations**, but has now been manifested to His saints,

(Hebrews 3:10) “THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH **THIS GENERATION**, AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’;

(Jude 1:14) It was also about these men that **Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam**, prophesied, saying, ” Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones.