

# The Misuse of Matthew 24:14

## The 'Whole World' objection

John Noe

Jesus emphatically specified that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). No way around it, it’s what He said. This condition was a prerequisite for “the end” to come.

How then could the end possibly have come circa A.D. 70, when the gospel had not yet been preached in the Western Hemisphere? The great missionary movement of the 18th and 19th centuries hadn’t taken place, worldwide communications hadn’t been developed, and many nations and people groups in remote tribes had yet to hear the gospel. This fact alone, critics contend, should stop dead in its tracks any idea that the end came circa A.D. 70.

The Bible, however, must be understood on its own terms and in the context of its original hearers. Only then can we properly understand what any portion really means for us today. Therefore, let’s carefully note that the inspired writers of the New Testament confirmed, several times, that Jesus’ prerequisite was accomplished in their day:

- Using hyperbole and in the context of the Jewish worldview, “every nation under heaven” was assembled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5).
- The Apostle Paul, 31 years later, confirmed that “all over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing . . .” (Col. 1:6) and that “the gospel that you heard . . . has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven” (Col. 1:23), and that “your faith is being reported all over the world” (Rom. 1:8). This was not Paul’s opinion. It is inspired Scripture. A few years after Paul said these words, the end came, right on time.
- For more confirmations, read: Rom. 10:18; 16:26; Acts 1:8; 24:5; Jude 3; also compare with Dan. 2:39; 4:1, 22; 5:19; 7:23; Luke 2:1, 30-32; 24:47; Rev. 3:10.

Why is this scripturally-documented fulfillment of Jesus’ prerequisite so hard to believe? The answer is simply the power of the traditions of men rides roughshod over the Word of God (Mark 7:13; Matt. 15:6). According to the Bible itself, and prior to A.D. 70, the gospel was preached to all nations and to the world. The Greek word translated “world” in Matthew 24:14 is *oikoumene*, meaning land (i.e., the [terrene part of the] globe, specifically the Roman Empire). In this commonly used and restricted sense, the then-known Roman world, or the civilized world of that time, was also the “world” of the Jews into which they had been scattered. If the entire global earth was meant, the Greek word *kosmos* would have been used, as it is in Matthew 24:21. But it wasn’t.

Hence, Jesus’ end-coming condition has been scripturally met. This is a truth that has been lost by many today. But early Church father Eusebius clearly understood this linkage and its significance. He confirmed that both the world-wide preaching of the gospel and this end of biblical Judaism were fulfilled:

- Moses had foretold this very thing and in due course Christ sojourned in this life, and the teaching of the new covenant was borne to all nations, and at once the Romans besieged Jerusalem and destroyed it and the Temple there. At once the whole of the Mosaic law was abolished, with all that remained of the Old Covenant. (Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, Bk. I, Ch. 6, 34-35)

Let's further note that the fulfillment of this world mission was an absolutely necessary part of God's plan. Since Jews had been scattered over the world (Jas. 1:1), they all had to have the opportunity to accept the gospel or reject it and persecute its proclaimers. In this way they would and did "fill up, then, the measure of sin of your forefathers" (Matt. 23:32; Isa. 65:6-12). That's why the gospel had to go out into "the whole world." The previously cited verses verify this accomplishment. They cannot be lightly dismissed. So let's just believe what inspired Scripture writers said. God had allowed one generation of time for Jesus' "this generation" for the completion of this missionary task. Once completed, the stage was set. The end could now come. It did, perfectly. It was the end of the Old Covenant, biblical Judaic system, and not the physical creation, which will never end.

**Sources:**

1 *The Perfect Ending for the World* by John Noe

2 *The Last Days According to Jesus* by R.C. Sproul

3 *Last Days Madness* by Gary DeMar

4 *The Works of Josephus* translated by William Whiston

5 *Josephus the Essential Writings* by Paul L. Maier