



The Use of the Second Person Plural (“You”) in Matthew 24 Parts 1-4

Aug 10, 2020 by [Gary DeMar](#)

While doing my daily stroll down Facebook lane, I came across an advertisement for a debate on the timing of the “abomination of desolation” ([Matt. 24:15](#)) between two former full preterists. Brock Hollett has jumped the shark and rejected even a partial preterist position and adopted a form of premillennialism while arguing like a dispensationalist as I point out in my book *Debunking a Debunker of Preterism: A Response to Brock Hollett’s Book Debunking Preterism*.

It’s hard to take Hollett’s current arguments seriously since he made such a radical jump from one well-argued position (e.g., “A Critique of R.T. France’s Division of Matthew 24,” *Fulfilled Magazine* [Spring 2012], 8–9.) to one with unconvincing arguments for his new position.

Here is what I wrote in my initial Facebook comment:

“When YOU see the abomination of desolation...” Audience indicator. Debate over. A future interpretation would require a rebuilt temple, something the NT never mentions. It would also negate what Jesus says in [Mt. 24:33–34](#). There’s nothing to debate here.

My friend Mike Bull had something similar to say:

“People are still debating this?” They are and charging \$20! The following material in this short series will save you \$20 if you were planning to attend the debate.

As you can imagine, not everyone agreed with my FB comment. One commenter turned to the book of Deuteronomy as an example of how “you” does not only refer to a present audience but also a future audience. Why go to Deuteronomy when you have Matthew 21, 22, 23, and 24 to see how the second person plural is used by Jesus? Immediate context should be the first place an interpreter should look. How does Matthew use the second person plural when he has a specific audience in view?

Let’s look at Deuteronomy and compare it to Matthew 24:

Now Moses called **all Israel** and said to them: “You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders” ([Deut. 29:2–3](#)).

The commenter went on to argue the following:

Who is the “you” in these verses? Very clearly the initial audience Moses is addressing who had seen the signs God did when delivering them out of Egypt. But as we continue to read, we find that “you” in many instances cannot refer to them as it refers to events that took place many

centuries later. [Dt. 29–30](#) is just one of many such examples where we see this. And if we see such a precedent in prophetic texts in the old testament, then it is at least possible that we have the same in the new. Therefore, just as we would not force the fulfillment of what Moses predicted in [Dt. 30](#) back into the time of his initial audience based on his usage of “you,” so too we should not force the fulfillment of **all** Jesus predicted in the Olivet discourse based on his usage of “you.”

How do we know that some of the events would take place to later generations? Because we are told in Deuteronomy 29 and 30 that there are future events with future generations in view. This is not the case in Matthew 24. There is no indication that two audiences are in view or that the Olivet Discourse is mixed with contemporary and distant future events. The near/far interpretation is a popular view. I discuss it in detail in my book [Prophecy Wars](#).

Bear in mind that the use of the audience reference “you” is not the only factor employed to argue that [Matthew 24:15](#) is fulfilled prophecy. We are told by Jesus that the generation of His day, the one to whom He is speaking, would not pass away until all the events He prophesied took place. What Jesus says in [Matthew 24:34](#) is clear as I point out in my books [Last Days Madness](#), [Is Jesus Coming Soon?](#), [Wars and Rumors of Wars](#), and in John Bray’s [Matthew 24](#) (which is being reprinted):

Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until **all these things take place**.

That generation passed away, therefore “all these things” spoken by Jesus had taken place because the use of “this generation” in Matthew’s Gospel and elsewhere in the gospels refers to the generation to whom Jesus was speaking ([Matt. 11:16](#); [12:41](#), [45](#); [23:36](#); [24:34](#); [Mark 8:12](#), [8:38](#); [13:30](#); [Luke 7:31](#); [11:29](#); [11:30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [50](#), [51](#), [17:25](#); [21:32](#)). Here are four examples from well respected orthodox Bible commentators who would not self-identify as preterists (for a more complete list see my book *Wars and Rumors of Wars*, pages 155–165):

- “This generation” has been used frequently in this gospel for Jesus’ contemporaries, especially in a context of God’s impending judgment; see 11:16; 12:39, 41–42, 45; 16:4; 17:17, and especially 23:36, where God’s judgment on “this generation” leads up to Jesus’ first prediction of the devastation of the temple in 23:38. It may safely be concluded that if it had not been for the embarrassment caused by supposing that Jesus was here talking about his *parousia*, no one would have thought of suggesting any other meaning for “this generation,” such as “the Jewish race” or “human beings in general” or “all the generations of Judaism that reject him” or even “this kind” (meaning scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees). Such broad senses, even if they were lexically possible, would offer no help in response to the disciples’ question “When?” ^[1]
- “The phrase ‘this generation’ is found too often on Jesus’ lips in this literal sense for us to suppose that it suddenly takes on a different meaning in the saying we are now examining. Moreover, if the generation of the end-time had been intended, ‘that generation’ would have been a more natural way of referring to it than ‘this generation.’” ^[2]
- “Matthew uses *genea* here for the tenth time. Though his use of the term has a range of emphases, it consistently refers to (the time span of) a single human generation. All the alternative senses proposed here [in 24:34] (the Jewish people; humanity; the generation of the

end-time signs; wicked people) are artificial and based on the need to protect Jesus from error. 'This generation' is the generation of Jesus' contemporaries." ^[3]

- "The significance of the temporal reference has been debated, but in Mark 'this generation' clearly designates the contemporaries of Jesus (see on Chs. 8:12, 38; 9:19) and there is no consideration from the context which lends support to any other proposal. Jesus solemnly affirms that the generation contemporary with his disciples will witness the fulfillment of his prophetic word, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dismantling of the Temple." ^[4]

Part two will be posted on August 11, 2020.

1. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 930. [\[↵\]](#)
2. F. F. Bruce, *The Hard Sayings of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 227. [\[↵\]](#)
3. John Nolland *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 988–989. [\[↵\]](#)
4. William L. Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 480. [\[↵\]](#)

“His blood shall be on us and on our children!”

Part 2

For Part One of this series read "[The Use of the Second Person Plural \('You'\) in Matthew 24](#)," a response to an upcoming debate between Brock Hollett and Sam Frost on whether the abomination of desolation mentioned by Jesus in [Matthew 24:15](#) is fulfilled prophecy or yet to be fulfilled.

For a study of some of Brock Hollett's shifting prophetic views, see my book [DEBUNKING A DEBUNKER OF PRETERISM](#).

Jesus has a single generation in view for judgment in Matthew 24 because it was the single generation that turned Jesus over to the Romans and pronounced a curse on themselves.

When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to *that* yourselves.” And **all the people** said, “**His blood shall be on us and on our children!**” Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified ([Matt. 27:24–26](#)).

Indeed, the judgment on Jerusalem was on them and their children. This was to be a national judgment (23:37–38) that could be escaped by leaving the city (24:16–17; [Luke 21:20–24](#)). No future generation was guilty of the crime of crucifying “the Lord of Glory” ([1 Cor. 2:8](#): note “the rulers of this age”) and choosing someone like Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus and declaring that they had “no king but Caesar” ([John 19:15](#)). A future generation of Jews isn’t guilty of this particular evil, therefore, why should it be judged?

There is no comparable time limiter in Deuteronomy 29–30. When you read further in Deuteronomy, you find the following:

Now **not with you alone** am I making this covenant and this oath, **but both with those who stand here with us today** in the presence of the LORD our God **and with those who are not with us here today** ([Deut. 29:14–15](#)).

Israel was directly told that some of what was said would apply to “the generation to come” (29:22). Those who made up that contemporary generation would have their heart circumcised **and the heart of their descendants** (30:6; also v. 19).

In Deuteronomy 31, we find a prophecy about what is specifically said about the future. The prophecy is not limited to “this,” that is, their generation as it is in the Olivet Discourse.

The other problem the futurist interpretation of [Matthew 24:15](#) must face is where the abomination of desolation will appear. All agree that it’s in the temple, the temple that Jesus said would be destroyed before that generation passed away. “Not one stone **here** shall be left would be left upon another, which will not be torn down” ([Matt. 24:2](#)). All agree that this took place in AD 70.

First, as we’ve seen, there is no indication that the use of the second person plural (you) refers to a non-identified future generation. Unlike Deuteronomy 29–30, Jesus does not mention distant generations. The use of the second person plural is used consistently for those of that generation. Consider [Matthew](#)

[24:33](#): “so, YOU too, when YOU see all these things, recognize that He/it is near, right at the door.” It is beyond me how anyone can claim that the first use of “you” is different from the second use of “you” separated by nearly 2000 years.

Jesus’ enemies certainly understood the audience relevance of His words after a series of parables. Who is Jesus referring to when He asks, “But what do you think?” ([Matt. 21:28](#)) and “Did you never read in the Scriptures?” (21:42), and “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (21:43)? It seems the chief priests and Pharisees had a better understanding of language than many modern-day prophecy theorists:

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, **they understood that He was speaking about them** (21:45).

The second person plural in Matthew 24 begins with verse 2 (“do you not see”) and can only refer to those in Jesus’ audience. At what point does the use of “you” switch to a future audience? A comment in Tim LaHaye’s *Prophecy Study Bible* claims that “you” in [Matthew 24:15](#) “must be taken generically as ‘you of the Jewish nation.’”¹ Where in the text does it say this? There is no evidence offered by the editors to substantiate a shift in audience reference from the disciples of that generation to Jews living at a time far removed from their day. If Jesus had wanted to refer to a different audience, He could have said, “When they see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).” Even if the “you” in 24:15 does refer to the “you of the Jewish nation,” the reference is to the Jews of that generation alone based on verses 33 and 34. Brian Schwertley in his commentary “[Matthew 24 and the Great Tribulation](#)” frames the argument well:

Speaking directly to the disciples, ... Jesus said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you” (v. 4); “you will hear of wars” (v. 6); “see that you are not troubled” (v. 6); “they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations” (v. 9); “when you see the abomination of desolation” (v. 15); “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!” (v. 33), “Assuredly I say to you this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (v. 34). Given all these things we can say with assurance that the disciples most likely took Christ’s words at face value. If one accepts the futurist interpretation of [Matthew 24:5–34](#), then one has accepted an interpretation of which the apostles were almost certainly ignorant.

Why confuse the disciples when Matthew includes the phrase, “let the reader understand” (24:15)? They were to understand, not just about the abomination of desolation but about the entire discourse because they would have to take action when certain events took place (24:16–17; [Luke 21:20–24](#)).

1. Tim LaHaye, ed. *Prophecy Study Bible* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), 1038, note on [Matthew 24:15](#).[\[↩\]](#)

Exegetical Gerrymandering to Overcome the Obvious

Part 3

This is the third part of my series on the use of the second person plural in Matthew 24 ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)). Preterists aren't the only ones who identify the use of the second person plural as indicative of a first-century fulfillment. Anyone reading the passage for the first time would conclude that Jesus was referring to those of His generation, that's why so much exegetical gerrymandering is needed to overcome the obvious. The following is from Jonathan Menn's *Biblical Eschatology*: ^[1]

Both the historical and literary contexts of the reference "*abomination of desolation*" indicate a historical event surrounding the AD destruction of Jerusalem, not an "end-time" Antichrist. Christ's admonition to his disciples, "*when you see*" the abomination of desolation or Jerusalem surrounded by armies ([Matt. 24:15](#); [Mark 13:14](#); [Luke 21:20](#)) suggests the events of AD 70 since Jesus was talking to his disciples, "you" as in the second person plural, and the events of AD 70 were in the lifetime of the disciples. Kenneth Gentry articulates what should otherwise be self-evident: "Surely Jesus does not denounce the first-century temple in which He is standing (24:1) by declaring it 'desolate' (23:38), prophesying its total destruction (24:2), then answering the question 'when shall these things be?' (v. 3), and warning about the temple's 'abomination of desolation' (v. 15) only to speak about the destruction of a totally different temple two thousand years (or more) later." ^[2]

Second, for a future abominable event to take place as is described in 24:15, there would need to be another rebuilt temple. Jesus does not say anything about a future physical temple. There isn't a single verse anywhere in the New Testament that says the temple needs to be rebuilt or will be rebuilt. The temple was standing when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2) and when Revelation was written ([Rev. 11:1-2](#)). Even those who claim a temple will be rebuilt admit there is no verse to support their claim. For example, rebuilt-temple advocates Thomas Ice and Randall Price acknowledge, "There are no Bible verses that say, 'There is going to be a third temple.'" ^[3] The burden of proof is not on to the preterist to prove that the New Testament doesn't say anything about another rebuilt temple. It's up to futurists like Brock Hollett to prove the Bible says the temple will be rebuilt and Jesus is making a case for such a position in [Matthew 24:15](#) given the use of the second person plural, [Matthew 24:33](#) ("when you see these things"), and [Matthew 24:34](#) that clearly states the prophetic events described by Jesus took place before their generation passed away.

Third, the events that follow [Matthew 24:15](#) can be escaped on foot. This means this was a local event of ancient times that included Sabbath observance, flat roofs, and valuable commodities like a cloak. In [Exodus 22:26-27](#), a person's cloak was often used as a pledge or collateral, as a result, James Jordan writes, the person holding the cloak was "to return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his skin. What else will he sleep in?" Later in Matthew 24, "grinding at the mill" (24:41; see [Deut. 24:6](#)) is mentioned. Who does this today? How does this fit with our modern era? It doesn't. Futurists argue that the events of Matthew 24 refer to a global event. There is nothing global about what Jesus is describing (24:16-17).

If the second person plural is about a future audience, who are the "you" who will see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place? The world won't see it. Some might argue that the event will be seen live on TV. So how would these viewers follow the command of Jesus to flee to the mountains outside of Judea? Only those living in Jerusalem would see it, and what good would it do to flee to the mountains when a global tribulation is supposed to take place when a third of the stars will hit the earth ([Rev. 6:12-14](#))?

One last point. A new temple would not be a God-commissioned temple. The true temple is Jesus Christ ([John 2:14-25](#)) and believers by extension since the Holy Spirit dwells in us ([1 Cor. 3:16-7](#); [6:19](#); [2 Cor.](#)

[6:16](#); [Eph. 2:21](#)). No future temple could have an abomination that causes desolation since a future temple wouldn't have any covenantal significance similar to the way earthly Jerusalem no longer has any covenantal significance ([Gal. 4:21–31](#); [Heb. 12:18–29](#); [1 Peter 2:4–8](#)).

James Jordan has a unique perspective on the identity of the abomination of desolation. Jim is always worth listening to:

Possibly the completion of the temple, now wholly dedicated to preserving the dead forms of Old Creation religion against Jesus Christ, is the specific event Jesus was prophesying. The abomination of desolation stands in the “holy place.” The word “place” here is not the word used for the Holy Place of the tabernacle and temple, the outer room of God’s Palace, the word *hagios*. Rather, the word for “place” here, *topos*, indicates a general area, in this case a holy area. What is in view is the temple mount, and the abomination is the temple.

Jesus had claimed that He was the true Temple. By continuing to build Herod's temple, the Jews were explicitly rejecting Jesus' claim. The completion of that false temple brought to a fulness that sacrilegious rejection, and at that point God completely abandoned the Jews.

The completion of that temple naturally caused great rejoicing among the Jews. Now they were sure that God was on their side. Their leaders, the false messiahs and false prophets, encouraged them to revolt against Rome and to wipe out the obnoxious Christians. The restraint that God had exercised over the Jews had been removed and they attacked in full fury, doubtless also encouraged by Nero's imperial persecution of the Christians, which began at this same time.

Thus, the completion of the temple is not the main sin. It is only a sign to the believers that the Great Tribulation is about to start. That great persecution of believers is the actual abomination that brings about the destruction of Jerusalem, as the blood of the martyrs of Revelation 14 calls down God’s wrath in Revelation 16–17.

These were most likely the “mockers” Peter described in [2 Peter 3:3–4](#) (also [Jude 18](#)). They were mocking because the temple was standing more gloriously than ever before, and yet Jesus had predicted that it would be torn down stone by stone before their generation passed away ([Matt. 23:38](#); [24:1–2](#)).

Fourth, Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour when this judgment coming would take place (24:35–36). This means it could have happened within five years or ten years. The audience reference “you” fits with knowing the generation—their generation—but not the day or hour of that end-of-generation judgment.

1. Jonathan Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications/Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 123–124. [[↩](#)]
2. Kenneth L. Gentry, “The Great Tribulation is Past: Exposition,” in *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future? Two Evangelicals Debate the Question* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999), 24. [[↩](#)]
3. Thomas Ice and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992), 197–198. [[↩](#)]

When Did Jesus 'Come on the Clouds of Heaven'?

Part 4

This is the fourth and final installment in this series ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#)).

In [Luke 21:20](#) we find a similar audience reference: “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation is at hand.” Many prophecy writers who claim that Matthew 24 is about a yet future coming argue that [Luke 21:5–24](#) describes the judgment on Jerusalem that took place in AD 70. Darrell L. Bock, a premillennialist, is a good contemporary example of this position when he writes, Luke “focuses on the nearer fulfillment in the judgment pattern described here, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, rather than the end (which he will introduce directly in 21:25).” ^[1] Many of the people in Jesus’ audience would have been dead by AD 70 and yet Bock has no problem with Jesus using the second person plural. As we’ve seen, it’s a non-issue and does nothing to affect the near fulfillment (“this generation”) of the prophecy.

Dispensationalists in general take a similar position. For example, Arno C. Gaebelin: “This great prophecy was fulfilled in the year 70 A.D., when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and a million perished, besides 100,000 who were made slaves. It is one of the most awful pages in human history. So has [Luke 21:24](#) been fulfilled.”

I have not found anything that tells me how Hollett interprets [Luke 21:20](#). I did find the following from Mike Coldagelli’s online article “[Luke 21:20-24 Fulfilled or Future?](#),” an interpretation supported by the debate moderator [Alan E. Kurschner](#) or holds to a pre-wrath position:

“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” This wording is identical in all three synoptic gospels. The command flows from a condition that can be seen and understood as a sign. Remember, the questions in all three gospels ask for a sign. All three gospels mention pregnant women, nursing infants, and great distress/tribulation. What is the possibility that these four ideas were applied equally in two different discourses to two different events separated by almost 2,000 years? These four parallels in themselves make a strong case that the discourses in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are the same.

Coldagelli’s position is not common among many premillennialists. For example, non-dispensational premillennialist J. Oliver Buswell, who held a mid-tribulation view of the rapture, taught that “the Olivet discourse predicts two destructions of Jerusalem: an immediate one which occurred in AD 70 by Titus ([Luke 13:34–35](#); [19:43–44](#); [21:20](#)), and a distant one which will usher in the parousia (cf. [Zech 12:2](#); [14:1–9](#); Revelation 19).... [He] saw the prediction of the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem only in Luke, and not in Matthew and Mark” ^[2] as he makes clear in his systematic theology:

Luke’s statements that in connection with a particular future destruction of Jerusalem the enemy would surround it with armies ([Luke 21:20](#)) and would build a wall around it ([Luke 19:43](#)) were so very specifically fulfilled in the destruction of the city by Titus in A.D. 70 that double fulfillment is impossible. ^[3]

I and other preterists take the position that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are describing the same events leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem before that generation passed away. The accounts are different in several ways similar to the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke and refer to the same period of time. "In all probability," Craig Blomberg writes, "Jesus originally uttered one connected, coherent eschatological discourse from which the three Synoptists [Matthew, Mark, and Luke] have chosen to reproduce different portions in different places." ^[4]

How does Hollett get around all of these arguments? Here's his comment which does not answer any of the issues I've raised:

By the way, this force-fitting of [Matthew 24:25](#) [sic] would require the apostles to have been in Jerusalem at the time of the final assault by Titus. Many of them had already died or were evangelizing from afar! Similarly, the elders of the Sanhedrin were dead before AD 70 but DeMar's view requires them ("you") to have been alive (cf. [Matt. 26:64](#))!

The simplest answer to this argument is that the use of the second person plural refers to those of "this generation," that is, the generation that would see the events described by Jesus, the "you" of [Matthew 24:33](#), not only those who first heard Jesus' response to the disciples' questions. Some of those in His immediate audience were most likely alive ([Matt. 16:27-28](#)) and living in Jerusalem since Jesus was addressing His "disciples." This could have included some of the 70 and even some among the "multitudes" who followed His ministry. This is a much better solution than reinterpreting "when you see" to mean "when they see," requiring a temple to be rebuilt, redefining "this generation" to mean any number of things, from this race, this nation, to the generation that sees these signs (but see [Matt. 24:33](#)), this type of generation, this offspring, this spiritual generation, and who knows what else rather than what "this generation" means elsewhere in the gospels.

Hollett might object because in Mark's version of the Olivet Discourse we learn that "Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately" (13:3). The questioning may have been in private but the discourse itself could easily have been given to a larger crowd. Jesus often taught in the temple and "would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him" ([Luke 21:37-38](#)). There may have been a contingent of believers who followed Him. This might explain the questions asked by the four apostles privately.

Luke's version does not limit the audience to the four: "And while **some were talking** about the temple ... Jesus said, 'As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down'" (21:5-6). Jesus then makes His prophetic pronouncement that concludes with, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place" (21:32).

What should we make of this comment from Hollett?: "the elders of the Sanhedrin were dead before AD 70 but DeMar's view requires them ('you') to have been alive (cf. [Matt. 26:64](#))!" Why would Jesus have used "you" if He did not mean them? Once again, Hollett doesn't have a convincing argument for the generic use of the second person plural here. Caiaphas certainly understood what Jesus meant (26:65).

Who was present during Jesus' interrogation by Caiaphas? The chief priests, scribes, and elders that made up "the whole council" (26:59). There were many people there who could have been alive nearly

40 years later. But 26:64 is not describing events of AD 70 but what was going to come to pass soon—“from now on.” R.T. France explains the timing factor in his commentary on [Matthew 26:64](#):

Coming on the clouds of heaven (together with the phrase “the Son of man”) is a clear allusion to [Daniel 7:13](#), already similarly alluded to in [Matt] 24:30.... We have seen that its natural application in terms of its Old Testament source is to the vindication and enthronement of the Son of man in heaven, not to a descent to earth. It is therefore in this verse a parallel expression to “seated at the right hand of Power”; the two phrases refer to the same exalted state, not to two successive situations or events. In this verse the appropriateness of this interpretation is underlined by the fact that this is to be true “from now on” (*hereafter* is a quite misleading rendering of the more specific phrase *ap’ arti*, which, as in 23:39 and 26:29, denotes a new period beginning *from now*). Indeed it is something which Jesus’ inquisitors themselves *will see* (an echo of [Zc. 12:10](#), as in 24:30?), for it will quickly become apparent in the events of even the next few weeks (not to mention the subsequent growth of the church) that the “blasphemer” they thought they had disposed of is in fact now in the position of supreme authority. ^[5]

N.T. Wright offers a similar interpretation in his commentary on [Matthew 26:64](#) that references [Daniel 7:13](#): “The Daniel text ... has nothing to do with a figure ‘coming’ from heaven to earth. Despite the widespread opinion that this is what it ‘must’ mean in the gospels, there is no reason to suppose that on the lips of Jesus, or in the understanding of the earliest traditions, it meant anything other than vindication.” Anyone familiar with Old Testament language would have understood what Jesus was saying. Jesus’ enemies certainly did.

Wright continues to explain that the passage “speaks of exaltation: of one who, representing ‘the people of the saints of the most high’, is raised up from suffering at the hands of the beasts and given a throne to sit on, exercising royal power... Jesus is not ... suggesting that Caiaphas will witness the end of the space-time order. Nor will he look out of the window one day and observe a human figure flying downwards on a cloud. It is absurd to imagine either Jesus, or Mark, or anyone in between, supposing the words to mean that.” ^[6]

The following is found in the *Expositor’s Commentary* on [Matthew 26:64](#): “[T]he time is coming,” Caiaphas and the Council, “when you and I shall change places; I then the Judge, you the prisoners at the bar.”

Summary

1. The use of the second person plural in the Olivet Discourse is consistently used for the audience to whom Jesus was speaking.
2. For [Matthew 24:15](#) to be a prophecy about a distant future event, another temple would have to be built even though the NT does not say anything about a rebuilt temple. The only temple Jesus mentions in Matthew 24 is the temple that was standing in His day that would be torn down stone-by-stone. No other temple is in view.
3. The judgment was local that could be escaped on foot.
4. The living conditions were ancient with Sabbath observation still operating, houses with flat roofs used for gatherings, and items like cloaks being of value.
5. The use of “this generation” determines the timing of the prophetic events outlined by Jesus.

6. [Matthew 26:64](#) refers to something that was on the immediate horizon, possibly AD 70 or earlier, but certainly not an event 2000 years in the future.
1. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 2:1675. [[↵](#)]
2. Jeffrey Khoo, “Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology: The Contribution of J. O. Buswell to the Millennial Debate,” *JETS* 44:4 (Dec 2001), 702. [[↵](#)]
3. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 2.363. [[↵](#)]
4. Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 185. [[↵](#)]
5. R. T. France, *Matthew: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 381. [[↵](#)]
6. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 524–525. It’s possible that Caiaphas witnessed Jesus’ ascension “on the clouds of heaven” since it happened before “the men of Galilee” and was visible to anyone who cared to see ([Acts 1:2, 9–11](#); [Luke 24:51–52](#)).” [[↵](#)]