

The Olivet Discourse: a recap thus far

- I. ***parousia* = “presence” / “arrival” = refers to Christ’s second coming**

- II. **A critical attack on the concept of the *parousia***
 - A. Matt 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.
 - B. Matt 16:23 – 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.”
 - C. Mark 13:30 – Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
[this after Jesus’ discussion about the end of the age, the abomination of desolation, the coming of the Son of Man, not knowing the day or hour]

- III. **“this generation”**
 - A. Matt 24:34 – Truly, I say to you, this generation [Greek *genea*] will not pass away until all these things take place.
 - B. Interpretation
 1. To the original hearers, “this generation” could mean only one thing: those within a *generation*, i.e. 30-40 year timeframe, of the original words.
 2. Evangelical commentators in the past 150 years, though, have been reticent to concede such a timeframe.
 3. Ultimately, two options for interpretation¹:
 - a. The timeframe is figurative, but the fulfillment is literal.
 - b. The timeframe is literal, but the fulfillment is figurative.

“The end of the age”

IV. **Matt 13:36-40**

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.”

- A. “the end of the world” vs. “the end of the age”
- B. “end” vs. “consummation”

V. **The Day of the Lord**

A. **Mal 4:1-5**

1. On v. 5: “The explicit declaration of our Lord that the predicted Elijah was no other than his own forerunner, John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14) enables us to determine the time and the event referred to as ‘the great and terrible day of the Lord.’ It must be sought at not great distance from the period of John the Baptist. That is to say, the allusion is to the judgment of the Jewish nation, when their city and people were destroyed, and the entire fabric of the Mosaic policy was dissolved.”²

B. **The central theme of the book of Joel**

¹ J. Stuart Russell, *The Parousia: A Critical Inquiry into the New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord’s Second Coming*, new ed. (1887; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 84-85 (emphasis original).

² Ibid., 4.

C. Major OT considerations

VI. The age/times of the Gentiles

- A. Luke 21:20-24 – ²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, ²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³ Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

VII. The nearness of the last days to the apostles³

A. Gospels

1. Matt 10:23 – you [the twelve] will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes
2. Matt 26:64 – you [the high priest] will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven

B. Paul

1. Rom 13:11-12 – now it is high time to awake out of sleep...the night is far spent, the day is at hand
2. 1 Cor 7:31 – the form of this world is passing away
3. 1 Cor 10:11 – on [us]...the ends of the ages have come
4. Phil 4:5 – the Lord is at hand

C. General epistles

1. James 5:8-9 – the coming of the Lord is at hand...behold the judge is standing at the door
2. 1 Pet 4:7 – the end of all things is at hand
3. 1 John 2:18 – it is the last hour...we know that it is the last hour

D. Revelation

1. 1:1 – The revelation of Jesus Christ...[shows the] things which shortly must take place
2. 1:3 – the time is near
3. 3:11 – Behold, I come quickly

- E. “It is sometimes said that the whole period between the incarnation and the end of the world is regarded in the New Testament as ‘the end of the age.’ But this bears a manifest incongruity in its very front. How could the *end* of a period be a long protracted duration? Especially how could it be longer than the period of which it is the end? More time has already elapsed since the incarnation than from the giving of the law to the first coming of Christ: so that, on this hypothesis, the end of the age is a great deal longer than the age itself.”⁴

³ Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: The Folly of Trying to Predict When Christ Will Return* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 21-23.

⁴ Russell, *The Parousia*, 75-76.