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THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:1-36

A. Introduction. – Two Sharply Contrasting Eschatological Perspectives.

In these increasingly darkening turbulent times, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is especially dear to the Christian. It is this present glorious hope, not some fleeting earthly agenda, that encourages believers to be “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of [the] faith” (Heb. 12:2). The Apostle John encourages us today, not just his immediate addressees, to anticipate this climactic event. “We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (I John 3:1). Here is no promise of some mystical, unreported or unobserved revelation of Christ, as some preterists might suggest concerning 70 AD, but the one who John earlier described as He who was “from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands [following His resurrection], concerning the Word of Life” (I John 1:1). This is the Jesus who John observed ascending into a cloud and then received the angelic promise that this same Jesus “will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). This is indeed the glory of futurism.

Then along comes the preterist and declares that, “No, no! You have got it all wrong. Jesus really came in 70 AD, and most, if not all of the New Testament eschatological statements, focused on that past event. Even the partial preterist, in admitting to a mystical return in 70 AD, then a future return of Christ at the end of this present “millennial age” according to say I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4, nevertheless makes little complaint of an alleged real return in 70 AD and defers to, even compliments the main thrust of the full preterist so that together they continue to have very cordial relations with one another. You would think that their difference here is minor, although in truth it is not. Rather the major issue for them all is seen to be the squeezing of New Testament prophetic references into the narrow mold of the pre-70 AD era, in conjunction with a rigid understanding of Matthew 24:34 and an early date for Revelation. So much, if not all, is in the past. This is the constant realm of focus. At best, any future and post-resurrection glory is a somewhat indistinct bland hope. There are no “last” of the “last days,” there is no imminent “great tribulation,” since we are presently living in the “millennium.” Therefore the inevitable consequence here is an assault upon futurism, in all of its strands, even with mockery, a proclivity to debate and shock tactics. This being the case, and having given fresh attention to this whole controversy according to the Word of God, I present the following as, more than ever, strengthened heartfelt conviction that the fundamental case of the preterist is seriously flawed; it is the cause of detouring many Christians from the glory to come which in turn detracts from encouragement “to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Tit. 2:12).

1. Preterism

- a. All of Matthew 24-25 is fulfilled up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, as with James Stuart Russell, David Chilton (full preterists) and Gary DeMar (partial preterist). Some suggest, as with J. Marcellus Kik and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. (partial preterists), that Matthew 24:35 and onward looks to Christ's eschatological coming a second time in judgment at the end of this age. Here then, within preterism, is a significant cleavage concerning Christ's *prophetic future vision* in the whole of the Olivet Discourse. As an Achilles heel, it tends to be smothered, as if of no great significance, rather than being seen for the vital distinction that it is.

As with the early date authorship of Revelation prior to 70 AD, being approximately 65 AD,¹ the overall preterist view of Matthew 24:1-34 is set in concrete, particularly because of the understanding of vs. 29-31, 34, otherwise the system breaks down. Any futurism in Matthew 24:1-34 is unacceptable, however slight the crack in the dyke may be. But further, so often Matthew 24, in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, may be likened to a ravenous sinkhole that consumes all around it. So when we come to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and its confirmation (Acts 1:8) as well as Christ's promised return (Acts 1:11), all here are consumed by the events of 70 AD and the concluding destiny of Israel. Furthermore and generally speaking, other great prophetic passages are all consigned to the same past fulfillment (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:13-5:11; II Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 2:12-13; II Thess. 2:1-12; II Pet. 3:3-13²). Zechariah 14 suffers the same fate.³ Thus Thomas Ice is correct when he writes:

¹ Refer to the devastating article by Mark Hitchcock, "The Stake in the Heart: The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation," Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *The End Times Controversy*, pp. 123-150.

² Kenneth Gentry is an exception here since he believes that II Peter 3 is future, that is beyond 70 AD.

³ In Gary Demar's *Last Days Madness*, Appendix 5 titled "Zechariah 14 and the Coming of Christ," he vainly attempts to force Zechariah 14 into the preterist 70 AD vortex by means of ignoring careful exegesis of the more broad context of Zechariah 12-14. It would be hard to find a more disjointed, cherry-picking explanation that clearly is directed by a preterist preunderstanding of Scripture. In 12:1-9 where Jerusalem is besieged so that "all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it, v. 3, how is it "in that day I [the LORD] will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem"? To suggest a parallel with the demise of the Roman empire some considerable time after 70 to 135-136 AD is quite futile. In 12:10-14, when has such a prolonged mourning of Israel come about because of its "piercing" of the LORD in His Son? What is the rescued, one third remnant of 13:8-9? When will the fortunes of perennially assailed Israel be reversed according to 14:1? Could there be a parallel between Jesus' ascent from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1-9-11) and 14:4? What is the "unique day" when evening light shall come, 14:7? When will the LORD be "king over all the earth," 14:9, and "Jerusalem will dwell in security," 14:11, in relation to His previously revealed coming "to

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If preterism is true—especially full preterism—then we are already at the end of history and don't really know where it is headed. . . . If preterism is true, then the New Testament was written primarily to believers who lived during the 40-year period between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Therefore, virtually no part of the New Testament applies to believers today, according to preterist logic. There is no canon that applies directly to believers during the current age. . . . Preterism tends to start with its different interpretation of the phrase “this generation” in Matthew 24:34, but usually does not rest until one's perspective of the entire Bible has been infected.⁴

As a result the partial preterist struggles to find any remnant of Scripture that declares Christ's future, personal, bodily second coming while the full preterist looks forward to a nondescript future void of any personal, bodily revelation of Christ whatsoever.

So we repeat that there is disagreement amongst Preterists as to whether Christ's return, alleged to be at 70 AD, was His second parousia (full preterism), or a spiritual appearing by means of the visitation of Christ's judgment upon Israel, with a subsequent, personal third coming at the end of this age (partial preterism). Full preterists include James Russell, David Chilton, Max R. King, etc. Partial preterists include, Gary DeMar, Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., R. C. Sproul, etc.

- b. With the exception of Max King who is of a Campbellite/Church of Christ background, modern preterism tends toward reconstructionism, according to Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton, Kenneth Gentry, Jr., Gary North, Gary DeMar, etc., and is thus predominantly Presbyterian, covenantal in a systematic sense, and modified in its postmillennialism that differs from the classic postmillennialism of the likes of Jonathan Edwards. Refer to this writer's *Future Israel*, Appendix A. Unlike much earlier postmillennialism, it tends to be anti-Judaic with regard to a covenantal future for the Jews, the nation of Israel and the land that, since 70 AD, has been superseded by the new spiritual Israel, the Christian Church. Somewhat ostrich-like concerning the state of contemporary world affairs, preterism tends to be more optimistic with regard to the course of this present “millennial” age in which the Christianizing of the world will inevitably result in the progressive and ultimate triumph of the Church. As David Chilton puts it:

fight against those nations, ” 14:3, that gather against “the apple of His eye,” 2:8? For clarity on these matters refer to David Baron's enlightening and detailed commentary, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, 554 pp.

⁴ Thomas Ice, “Some Practical Dangers of Preterism,” Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *The End Times Controversy*, pp. 420-421, 426.

We therefore have no Biblical warrant to expect increasing apostasy as history progresses; instead we should expect the increasing Christianization of the world.⁵

In this regard, refer to Appendix B where Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' assessment of this increasingly decadent world appears to be much closer to reality. The frequent charge of the postmillennial preterist that both the amillennialist and premillennialist are defeatist and pessimistic regarding this present age is only partially true. However, not being ostrich-like, as if with one's head in the sand concerning the present direction of humanity and the Christian church, the hellish direction of this planet is not downplayed. Nevertheless the futurist is supremely optimistic concerning the ultimate triumph of King Jesus, upon His second coming, when, as a result "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). Then, "the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one" (Zech. 14:9). Then will God's Messiah "speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:10).

2. Futurism.

- a. All of Matthew 24-25, in conjunction with the parallel Mark and Luke accounts, is fulfilled *both* at the destruction of Jerusalem, especially according to Luke 21:20-24, *and* beyond to Christ's future return. An early or a late date for Revelation's authorship can be accepted although the latter predominates. Futurism includes both some preterism and a firm predominant belief in future apocalyptic fulfillment. Like the prospects of preacher Noah (II Pet. 2:5), futurism is unashamedly pessimistic concerning the course of this present age, though supremely optimistic in terms of Jesus Christ's return that will usher in the glorious Messianic/Millennial kingdom, upon earth, and the Lord Jesus' sole earthly dominion.
- b. Modern futurism is predominantly baptistic, premillennial/dispensational, nonconformist. It tends to be pro-Judaic in terms of a covenantal future for Jews and Israel. Historically, with regard to Israel, though not in all instances concerning Revelation, it would include premillennialists Henry Alford, J. C. Ryle, H. Bonar, C. H. Spurgeon, Nathaniel West, etc., as well as dispensationalists John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Dwight Pentecost, etc.

⁵ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion*, p. 225. Also refer to postmillennialist Lorraine Boettner's *The Millennium* in which there is a chapter titled, "The World is Getting Better." Here this author, who is so opposed to Roman Catholicism, includes statistics that incorporate the Catholic Church within his understanding of expanding Christendom.

B. The preceding eschatology of Passion Week.

At the conclusion of Jesus' northern Galilean ministry, "He was determined to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51) in anticipation of both "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow (I Pet. 1:10-12). What were these "glories"? They were the fulfillment of Scripture through "the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come." Selwyn suggests that Romans 8:18-39 best describes these "glories," that are decidedly, palpably eschatological looking well beyond 70 to 135-136 AD.⁶ Not unrelated is Hort's description of Peter "speaking of the prophets and their several partial Messianic foreshadowings, separate prophecies of suffering being crowned with separate prophecies of glory."⁷ Consequently the point is that Peter describes not only Christ's imminent atonement sufferings but also His eschatological hopes that unquestionably look beyond 70 to 135-136 AD to that time when "the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Likewise we also believe that Christ's revelation in Matthew 24-25 looks not only toward imminent events but also His eschatological hopes that look way beyond 70 to 135-136 AD.

1. Jesus final journeying from Galilee to Judea.

The parable of the fruitless fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) addresses the present evil generation of Israel, as does the initial thrust of the Olivet Discourse, in detailing the imminence of the "cutting down" process, that is the judgments of 70 AD and 135-136 AD. "[After three years], if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down" (Luke 13:7, 9).

To evildoers and workers of unrighteousness, Jesus warns: "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the [Messianic] kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out" (Luke 13:28).

2. Jesus journeying in Perea and Samaria.

Jesus is questioned about the coming of the kingdom of God. To the Pharisees, hardly indwelt by the Spirit of God, Jesus tells them: "Behold, the kingdom of God [preeminently manifest in the King of the Messianic kingdom] is in your midst [before your very eyes]" This prelude to the Olivet Discourse concerns, "the day that the Son of Man is revealed [ἀποκαλύπτω, apokaluptō]" (Luke 17:20-37).

⁶ Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 137.

⁷ F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: 1:1-2:17*, p. 55.

3. Jesus' brief return to Bethany.

The capstone miracle of the raising of Lazarus is but a foretaste, a foreshadowing of that apocalyptic day in which believers “will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (I Cor. 15:51-52). Then shall the redeemed be fitted for the Messianic kingdom.

4. Jesus' final months in withdrawal to Ephraim, Jericho, and back to Bethany.

In Matthew 19:28; cf. 8:11, Jesus advises His disciples that, “in the regeneration/-rebirth [τῆ παλιγγενεσία, *tē palingenesia*] when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious [Messianic] throne, you [the twelve apostles] also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.” Similarly consider Acts 3:20-21 where, upon the future return of Christ, there will be “the period of the restoration of all things [ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων, *apokatastaseōs pantōn*].” Surely these events transcend 70 AD and uphold the continuing future role of Israel in the Messianic kingdom.

C. The eschatology of Passion Week.

1. Friday – Jesus' return to Bethany.
2. Saturday – The Sabbath supper and anointing by Mary.
3. Sunday- Entering Jerusalem as Messiah.

The superficial confession, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matth. 21:9), contrasts with the promise of Tuesday/Wednesday: “Behold, your house [Temple] is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD’” (Matt. 23:38-39). Gary DeMar's explanation of this as an “indefinite possibility,” is highly improbable.⁸

⁸ Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness*, p. 61, cites R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and commentary*, p. 333. He also references three uses in Matthew of the Greek adverb, ἕως, *heōs*, meaning “until” (5:26; 18:30; 18:34) that do express contingency, especially because all three instances describe human parabolic situations. Hence it is alleged that Matthew 23:39 is similarly meant to declare contingency, “until you say,” though maybe you will and maybe you won't. However ἕως, *heōs* is used on sixteen additional times in Matthew, and none of these allow for conditional usage, and especially several, like 23:39, that are eschatological declarations (10:23; 16:28; 17:9; 22:44; 24:34, 39; 26:36).

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4. Monday – Two works of judgment.

The cursing of the fig tree, that is the present evil generation of Israel (Matt. 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14), and the second cleansing of the Temple (Matt. 21:18-22; Mark 11:19-26), soon to be laid desolate.

5. Tuesday/Wednesday – Days of conflict and prophecy.

Again the imminent judgment of the present evil generation of Israel is represented by the morning discovery of the withered fig tree (Matt. 21:18-22). Then Jesus' authority is challenged by the Sanhedrin to whom He responds with three parables of judgment on Israel's leadership, the Parable of the Two Sons, the Parable of the Householder, and the Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 21:23-22:14).

Specifically Christ declares: "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 21:43). This address is to the present wicked generation of Israel (23:37-38), and not an everlasting disenfranchisement (19:28), since He later reveals: "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Matthew 23:39).⁹ Then follows the Olivet Discourse: Matthew 24:1-25:46; cf. Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36.

6. Thursday – Day of Farewell and church instruction.

7. Friday – Day of Suffering.

8. Saturday – Day of gloom and desperation.

9. Sunday – Day of resurrection.

D. Significant interpretive principles.

1. Prophetic progression from the historic now to the eschatological future,

Prophetic Scripture often transports us from the present to the future, from a human to a divine revelation, from now to not yet. So Matthew 24 takes us from the perspective of pre 70 to 135-136 AD to post 70 to 135-136 AD and beyond into the future and apocalyptic return of Christ. As the following examples indicate,

⁹ See the previous footnote. This is an unconditional eschatological prophecy, which is the majority understanding of the likes of Henry Alford, John A. Broadus, William Hendriksen, and C. H. Spurgeon.

sometimes there is the overlap or abutment of revealed truth, yet nevertheless progression.

- a. The example of Psalm 2. Is it about David alone, or Christ alone, or David and Christ. In the light of Acts 4:25-26, initial reference to David is lost sight of in the light of Christ revealed as sovereign King over all the nations. Spurgeon comments:

If we read over the Psalm, first with an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, and put beyond all dispute by the sacred history. . . . [I]f we take another survey of the Psalm as relative to the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a noble series of events immediately rises to view, and the meaning becomes more evident, as well as more exalted. The coloring which may perhaps seem too bold and glaring for the king of Israel, will no longer appear so when laid upon his great Anti-type.¹⁰

- b. The example of Isaiah 14:3-23 (4, 12-15). Is it about the king of Babylon alone, or Lucifer alone, this name originating here, or the king of Babylon and Lucifer (cf. Luke 10:18)?
- c. The example of Daniel 11:21-35, 36-45. Is this whole section about Antiochus Epiphanes alone, or the coming Antichrist alone, or Antiochus Epiphanes in vs. 20-35 and the coming Antichrist in vs. 36-45?
- d. The example of Micah 5:1-2. In v. 1 there is clear reference to Israel (Judah) being besieged by the Assyrians. Then in v. 2 we are suddenly transported 700 years forward to the Messianic prophecy of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem which is well attested in the New Testament (Matt. 2:5-6; John 7:42).
- e. The example of Zechariah 9. In vs. 1-8 most evangelical commentators, such as David Baron and Charles Feinberg, believe that there is a prophetic revelation of Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine from north to south along the Mediterranean coast that includes his remarkable visit to Jerusalem, as attested to by Josephus.¹¹ Then, quite abruptly, in vs. 9-10 we have the prophecy of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in stark contrast with the preceding more brutal militarism of Alexander, as well as the portrayal of His universal reign: "[T]he bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." So in vs. 8-10, we are swept from 330 BC to 30 AD, that is Christ's first

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, I, p. 11.

¹¹ Flavius Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," *Works*, XI. VIII. 4-5.

coming, v. 9, and then on to His second coming at the end of this present age way beyond 70 to 135-136 AD, v. 10.

- f. The example of Luke 21:7-28. Surely this gospel writer's distinctive contribution concerning the Olivet Discourse, as with the Acts of the Apostles, is that of an historian.¹² In vs. 7-19 Jesus mingles imminent judgment and persecution with ongoing future conflagration and eschatological climax, along with the warning, "but the end does not follow immediately," v. 9. Then follows, in a plainly sequential, historic fashion, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD through to 135-136 AD, vs. 20-24a, on through the times of the Gentiles, v. 24b, followed by the apocalyptic end of this age that climaxes with the glorious return of Christ, vs. 25-28.¹³ Then the parable of the fig tree brings warning concerning the imminent *commencement/beginning* of these traumatic events, vs. 29-33. In conclusion there is additional warning to contemporary and subsequent generations, vs. 34-36. Like the prophets, Jesus has both the *present* and *future* in view.
- g. So with the preceding thoughts in mind, we consider the interpretation of Matthew 24. Is it about the pre-70 to 135-136 AD era alone, or the post-70 to 135-136 era alone, or progression from the former era to a latter eschatological era? We believe in this latter perspective which Alford well describes as follows:

Two parallel interpretations run through the former part [of Matt. 24) as far as v. 28; the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment being both enwrapped in the words, but the former [v. 3), in this part of the chapter predominating. Even in this part, however, we cannot tell how applicable the warnings given may be to the events of the last times, in which apparently Jerusalem is again to play so distinguished a part. From v. 28, the lesser subject begins to be swallowed up by the greater, and our Lord's *Second Coming* to be the predominant theme, with however certain hints thrown back as it were at the event which was immediately in question: till, in the later part of the chapter and the whole of the next, the *second advent*, and at last, the final judgment ensuing on it, are the subjects.¹⁴

¹² William F. Arndt. *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 28. In the main, Mark 13 also agrees with the order of Luke 21. Matthew's account is more complex.

¹³ Mention should also be made of Luke's exclusive record in 17:20-37 concerning "the Son of man . . . in His day," v. 24, "the days of the Son of Man, v. 26, "the day that the Son of Man is revealed," v. 30. Jesus is being questioned by the Pharisees "as to when the kingdom of God was coming." By way of response, Christ's second coming is plainly foretold. In vs. 26-36, in the midst of mundane worldly living even when sleeping in bed or processing grain, a great separation of the unrighteous from the righteous will overtake the world. There is no reference here to the imminent destruction of Jerusalem where flight is recommended (Matt. 24:16-18; Luke 21:21), but *not* separation.

¹⁴ Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, I, p. 217.

2. Proleptic expression in prophecy.

A further indication of this relationship between the present and the future is the frequent employment of proleptic expressions in Scripture, especially in prophetic declarations. In simple terms, a proleptic statement (a prolepsis) is the representation of a thing as existing in the now before it actually does occur. That is, it speaks of a future event as happening in the present. For instance, in John 17:11 Jesus declares, “I am no longer in the world.” He states as a present reality, just prior to His crucifixion, that which will subsequently and certainly come to pass at His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to His Father (John 13:31; 17:4). However in the Old Testament many prophetic declarations also refer to a future event as existing in the past or present. So in Isaiah 53:4, “Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried.” The future saving atonement of Christ is described here as most definitely accomplished. But particularly in the realm of prophecy concerning judgment, the prophet often declares the eschatological future in past or present terms because of its certainty for the present and future generations. We focus on two examples from Isaiah.

a. Isaiah 13:6-12.

“6 Wail, for the day of the LORD near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. 8 They will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. 9 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. 11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. 12 I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger.” Part of v. 10 here is quoted in Matthew 24:29. In this regard Gary DeMar refers to this quotation of Isaiah as “a localized judgment of a world power that existed long ago,”¹⁵ and of course this is partly true. Hank Hanegraaff takes a similar approach.

¹⁵ DeMar, *Last Days Madness*, p. 150.

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[Here in Matthew 24:29, referencing Isaiah 13:10] Jesus is employing hyperbolic language that is deeply rooted in Old Testament history. . . . To those unfamiliar with biblical language, these words may well be taken to mean that the end of the world was at hand. In reality, Isaiah was prophesying that the Medes were about to put an end to the glories of the Babylonian Empire.¹⁶

Again there is partial truth here with regard to the historic present, but it is what is left out concerning the eschatological future that makes such a vital difference, indeed a distortion. Both DeMar and Hanegraaff quote Isaiah 13:6-10, 17a. Yet it is significant that the more eschatological vs. 11-12 are not referenced, presumably because they address “the world,” and “mortal man,” and “mankind,” and thus conflict with a confined preterist understanding. However Delitzsch comments:

Instead of *'eretz* we have here *tēbel* [world], which is always used like a proper name (never with the article), to denote the earth in its entire circumference. . . . Word-painting is Isaiah's delight and strength. . . . Thus does the wrath of God prevail among men, casting down and destroying; and the natural world above and below cannot fail to take part in it.¹⁷

The problem here of DeMar and Hanegraaff is that they are so rigidly locked into a preterist mindset that they cannot understand how Isaiah can combine both a present historic scene with eschatological prospects and grandeur in the same biblical account with close proximity. This is exactly the same problem they have with regard to denying eschatological integration within Matthew 24, and especially with regard to its conclusion. The next reference in Isaiah will make this principle all the more clear.

b. Isaiah 34:1-4.

“1 Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. 2 For the LORD'S indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. 3 So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. 4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.”

Clearly we have here a declaration of God's wrath and prospective judgment against the nations that surely to date have not known fulfillment. Yet v. 2

¹⁶ Hank Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code*, p. 31,

¹⁷ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, II, pp. 300-301.

