Fulfilled Prophecies

Why Jesus Said Some Standing There Would See The Kingdom



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Jesus made one of the clearest time statements in the New Testament when He told His disciples that some standing before Him wouldn't die before seeing Him come in His Kingdom. This wasn't a promise about an event thousands of years in their future. Jesus was speaking directly to people who were standing there listening to Him (Matthew 16:27-28).

† The problem begins when people separate Matthew 16:28

from Matthew 16:27. Verse 27 describes the Son of Man coming in the glory of His Father with His angels to repay every person according to his deeds. Verse 28 tells us when that coming would occur. These verses belong together because Jesus was describing the same coming and identifying the generation that would witness it (Matthew 16:27-28).
† Some interpret verse 28 as referring only to the Transfiguration six days later. Others place verse 27 thousands of years into the future while claiming verse 28 describes something entirely different. But Jesus didn't introduce a new subject between these verses. His promise concerned His coming in glory, judgment, and Kingdom authority (Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1).
† To understand His words, we must examine the immediate context, the parallel Gospel accounts, the Old Testament background, and the historical fulfillment of His promise. When Scripture interprets Scripture, the first-century fulfillment becomes clear (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30-34).

Jesus Connected His Coming With His Disciples' Lifetime
Matthew 16:27-28
For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.
† Notice that Jesus didn't stop speaking after verse 27. He immediately explained that some standing before Him would remain alive until they witnessed the coming He had just described (Matthew 16:27-28).
† The words some of those who are standing here identify His original audience. Jesus wasn't speaking about people living thousands of years later. He was addressing His disciples and others present during His earthly ministry (Matthew 16:28).
† The expression will not taste death establishes a lifetime boundary. Some would die before the event, while others would live to witness it. That makes sense when applied to AD 70,

approximately forty years after Jesus spoke these words (Matthew 16:28; Matthew 24:34).
† Verse 27 describes judgment and repayment according to deeds. Verse 28 identifies the coming of the Son of Man in His Kingdom. Separating these statements creates two different events where Jesus presented one connected promise (Matthew 16:27-28).
† The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in AD 70 publicly demonstrated Christ's authority over the Old Covenant order. It was the covenantal judgment Jesus had repeatedly warned His generation about (Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:1-2).

Mark Confirms The Same Coming And Kingdom
Mark 8:38-9:1
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. And Jesus was saying to them, Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.
† Mark records the same teaching and connects the coming of the Son of Man with the arrival of God's Kingdom in power. The chapter division doesn't change the subject Jesus was discussing (Mark 8:38-9:1).
† Jesus specifically mentioned this adulterous and sinful generation. His warning concerned the generation rejecting Him and His message during His earthly ministry (Mark 8:38; Matthew 23:36).
† The Kingdom's arrival in power wasn't a prediction that Jesus would establish an earthly political government thousands of years later. It concerned the vindication of His authority and the fulfillment of God's covenant promises (Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 21:31-32).
† Mark's account strengthens the connection between judgment, glory, and Kingdom fulfillment. The same people hearing the warning were told that some among them would live

to witness its fulfillment (Mark 8:38-9:1).

Luke Confirms The Same Lifetime Promise
Luke 9:26-27
For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.
† Luke preserves the same connection between Christ's coming in glory and the Kingdom being witnessed by people who were alive when Jesus spoke (Luke 9:26-27).
† Matthew emphasizes the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. Mark emphasizes the Kingdom coming with power. Luke emphasizes seeing the Kingdom of God. These accounts complement one another rather than describe unrelated fulfillments (Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1).
† All three Gospel writers preserve the lifetime limitation. Jesus wasn't describing an event that required His original audience to remain alive for thousands of years (Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27).
† The Kingdom was already being announced during Jesus' ministry, but its covenantal establishment would be publicly demonstrated through the judgment ending the Old Covenant age (Luke 11:20; Luke 21:20-22, 31-32).

Daniel Explains The Son Of Man Coming In Glory
Daniel 7:13-14
I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
† Daniel provides the prophetic background for Jesus' description of the Son of Man coming in glory. The Son of Man

comes to the Ancient of Days and receives dominion, glory, and an everlasting Kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).
† Notice the direction of the coming. Daniel doesn't describe the Son of Man descending to stand on planet Earth. He describes the Son of Man approaching the Ancient of Days to receive royal authority (Daniel 7:13-14).
† Jesus used this prophetic language to describe His vindication and Kingdom authority. His coming in judgment demonstrated that the rejected Messiah was the enthroned Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 26:64).
† The Kingdom Daniel described wouldn't be destroyed. That's why the fulfillment of Christ's coming doesn't require the destruction of the physical universe. His Kingdom continues because His dominion is everlasting (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).
† The judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70 demonstrated that the Old Covenant authorities who rejected Christ couldn't prevent His Kingdom from being established (Matthew 21:42-43; Luke 21:20-22).

Jesus Promised His Coming Before The Mission Was Finished
Matthew 10:23
But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.
† Jesus connected His coming with the mission and persecution of His disciples in the cities of Israel. He didn't describe a mission extending thousands of years beyond their lifetime (Matthew 10:16-23).
† The disciples were instructed to flee from one city to another when persecution arose. Jesus assured them that the Son of Man would come before they completed that mission (Matthew 10:23).
† This statement agrees with Matthew 16:28. Both passages place the coming of the Son of Man within the historical circumstances of Jesus' original disciples (Matthew 10:23;

Matthew 16:28).
† The first-century persecution recorded in Acts demonstrates that Jesus' warnings weren't theoretical. His followers experienced opposition while proclaiming the Kingdom throughout Israel (Acts 8:1-4; Acts 14:19-22).
† Jesus didn't give His disciples a promise that couldn't be fulfilled until countless generations after their deaths. His coming belonged to the same first-century period in which they were commissioned and persecuted (Matthew 10:23; Matthew 24:9-14).

Jesus Told The High Priest He Would See His Vindication Matthew 26:64
Jesus said to him, You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.
† Jesus addressed the high priest directly and applied Daniel's Son of Man prophecy to His own vindication. The religious authorities condemning Him would witness the evidence of His heavenly authority (Matthew 26:63-64; Daniel 7:13-14).
† Coming on the clouds was familiar prophetic language for divine judgment. It didn't require Jesus to physically descend from heaven and place His feet on the earth (Isaiah 19:1; Daniel 7:13).
† Jesus joined His heavenly enthronement with His coming in judgment. The destruction of Jerusalem would demonstrate that the One condemned by the religious leadership was reigning at the Father's right hand (Matthew 26:64; Acts 2:32-36).
† This agrees with Matthew 16:27-28 because both passages connect the Son of Man's glory and authority with people living in the first century (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 26:64).

Jesus Identified The Generation Of His Coming Matthew 24:30, 34
And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the

SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Jesus again described the Son of Man coming with power and great glory. He then established the time boundary by declaring that this generation wouldn't pass away until all these things occurred (Matthew 24:30, 34).
† The expression this generation refers to the generation Jesus was addressing. It doesn't naturally describe an unidentified generation thousands of years into the future (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).
† The coming described in Matthew 24 agrees with Matthew 16. Both concern the Son of Man's glory, authority, and judgment, and both place fulfillment within the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:30-34).
† Jesus had already identified Jerusalem's coming destruction as the fulfillment of the written judgments. Luke records that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies and that its desolation would be near (Luke 21:20-22).
† AD 70 fulfilled this covenantal judgment when Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. The event demonstrated the end of the Old Covenant order and the authority of Christ's everlasting Kingdom (Matthew 24:1-2; Hebrews 8:13).

Revelation Confirms The Nearness Of His Coming
Revelation 1:1, 3, 7
The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.
† Revelation begins by declaring that its prophetic events must soon take place and that the time was near. Those statements

had meaning for the original first-century recipients (Revelation 1:1, 3).
† John connected the coming of Christ with those who pierced Him. This identifies the historical generation responsible for rejecting and crucifying Jesus (Revelation 1:7; Acts 2:22-23).
† The cloud-coming language agrees with Daniel and Jesus' Olivet Discourse. It describes the manifestation of Christ's authority through covenantal judgment (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30).
† Revelation's opening time statements support the same first-century fulfillment Jesus promised when He declared that some standing before Him wouldn't taste death before seeing His Kingdom coming (Matthew 16:28; Revelation 1:1-3).

The Apostles Expected The Coming In Their Lifetime
James 5:8-9
You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.
† James didn't describe the Lord's coming as something thousands of years away. He told his original readers that the coming was near and that the Judge was standing right at the door (James 5:8-9).
† These statements agree with Jesus' promise that some of His original hearers would remain alive until His coming in Kingdom authority (Matthew 16:27-28).
† The first-century believers were experiencing persecution and awaiting Christ's vindication. James encouraged them to remain patient because the promised judgment was approaching (James 5:7-9).
† The coming of Christ in AD 70 demonstrated that Jesus had faithfully fulfilled His promise. The judgment wasn't delayed into an unknown future generation (Matthew 24:34; James 5:8-9).

Why The Transfiguration Doesn't Exhaust The Promise
Matthew 17:1-2

Six days later Jesus *took with Him Peter and James, and his brother John, and *led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.
† Some interpret Matthew 16:28 as referring entirely to the Transfiguration because Matthew records that event six days later. The Transfiguration certainly revealed Christ's glory, but it didn't fulfill every element of the coming described in verse 27 (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 17:1-2).
† Jesus specifically connected His coming with judgment and repayment according to deeds. The Transfiguration didn't involve the judgment of Jerusalem, the removal of the Old Covenant Temple, or the public demonstration of covenantal judgment (Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:1-2).
† The Transfiguration involved Peter, James, and John witnessing a preview of Christ's glory. It confirmed His identity, but the covenantal judgment associated with His coming remained ahead (Matthew 17:1-5; Matthew 24:30-34).
† If Jesus meant only six days later, His statement that some standing there wouldn't taste death becomes an unusual way to describe an event occurring less than a week afterward. The lifetime language is more naturally understood as pointing to a later event within that generation (Matthew 16:28; Matthew 24:34).
† The Transfiguration and the AD 70 judgment aren't competing demonstrations of Christ's glory. The first revealed His glory to selected disciples, while the second publicly vindicated His authority over the covenantal order that rejected Him (Matthew 17:1-5; Matthew 24:1-2, 30-34).

The Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken
Hebrews 12:28
Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;
† Hebrews describes believers receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. This Kingdom wasn't dependent upon the continued

existence of Jerusalem's Temple or the Old Covenant system (Hebrews 12:26-28).
† The shaking described in Hebrews concerned the removal of what was temporary so that what couldn't be shaken would remain. The Old Covenant order was approaching its final removal (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28).
† Christ's Kingdom wasn't destroyed when Jerusalem fell. Instead, the destruction demonstrated that the earthly Temple system was no longer necessary because Christ had fulfilled its purpose (Hebrews 9:11-12; Hebrews 10:19-22).
† That's why the Kingdom Jesus promised continues today. His coming in AD 70 established the public vindication of His reign, not the end of His reign (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who witnessed the Jewish-Roman War, described Jerusalem's siege, the destruction of the Temple, and the suffering of the Jewish population in The Jewish War, Books V-VI.
† Josephus recorded that the Temple was destroyed during the Roman campaign of AD 70. His historical account confirms the destruction Jesus predicted, although Josephus didn't write as a Christian interpreter of Matthew 16:27-28 (Matthew 24:1-2).
† Tacitus, a Roman historian, described the Jewish revolt and Jerusalem's destruction in Histories, Book V. His account provides additional historical testimony concerning the Roman campaign against Jerusalem.
† Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, connected Jerusalem's destruction with divine judgment upon the generation that rejected Christ. His Ecclesiastical History, Book III, chapters 5-7, preserves an early Christian interpretation of these events.
† These historical writers help establish the reality of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70. The identification of that event with Matthew 16:27-28 comes from comparing Jesus' own words with the prophetic and apostolic testimony (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:30-34).

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need to wait for Jesus to fulfill a promise He specifically made to His first-century audience. His words were fulfilled within the generation He identified (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34).

† We can trust Jesus because He kept His promise. He said some standing before Him would see His Kingdom coming, and the judgment of AD 70 demonstrated His authority exactly within the promised generation (Matthew 16:28; Luke 21:20-22).

† We live under Christ's established Kingdom today. We're not waiting for an earthly government to replace His present heavenly reign (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

† The destruction of Jerusalem didn't mean God abandoned His promises. It demonstrated that those promises had reached their fulfillment in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 8:6-13).

† Our responsibility today isn't to search for another future coming in judgment. It's to live faithfully under the authority of the King who already reigns (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).

† The same Jesus who fulfilled His promises to the first-century believers remains our Lord today. His Kingdom continues, His authority remains, and His people have access to the Father through Him (Ephesians 2:18-22; Hebrews 12:22-24).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Did Jesus say some standing before Him would live to see His coming?

A: Yes. Jesus specifically declared that some standing there wouldn't taste death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28).

Q: Can Matthew 16:28 be separated from verse 27?

A: No. Verse 27 describes the coming in glory and judgment, while verse 28 identifies the lifetime of those who would witness it. Jesus presented the statements together (Matthew 16:27-28).

Q: Was Jesus referring only to the Transfiguration?
A: The Transfiguration revealed His glory, but it didn't accomplish the judgment and covenantal removal associated with His coming. Those events were fulfilled in the first-century judgment of Jerusalem (Matthew 16:27; Matthew 17:1-5; Matthew 24:1-2).

Q: What does coming on the clouds mean?
A: It's prophetic language associated with divine authority and judgment. Daniel described the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days to receive His Kingdom, not physically descending to earth (Daniel 7:13-14; Isaiah 19:1).

Q: When was Jesus' promise fulfilled?
A: From the fulfilled perspective, the coming in Kingdom authority and judgment reached its covenantal fulfillment in AD 70, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed within the generation Jesus identified (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:30-34).

Q: Did Jesus establish His Kingdom only in AD 70?
A: No. His Kingdom was already present during His ministry, and He was exalted following His resurrection. AD 70 publicly demonstrated His established authority through the final removal of the Old Covenant order (Luke 11:20; Acts 2:32-36; Hebrews 8:13).

Q: Does Christ's Kingdom still exist today?
A: Absolutely. Daniel described His Kingdom as everlasting, and Hebrews declares that believers receive a Kingdom that cannot be shaken (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

Q: Are Christians still waiting for the coming described in Matthew 16:27-28?
A: No. Jesus placed that coming within the lifetime of some standing before Him. We now live under His fulfilled Kingdom rather than waiting for that first-century promise to occur again

(Matthew 16:27-28; Colossians 1:13).

† Jesus didn't leave His disciples guessing about the generation that would witness His coming. He identified the people standing before Him, connected His coming with judgment and Kingdom authority, and confirmed that the fulfillment would occur before that generation passed away (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34).
† We shouldn't move His promise thousands of years beyond the lifetime He established. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 demonstrated the authority of the enthroned Son of Man and the fulfillment of His covenantal judgment. His Kingdom remains established forever (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index
† Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1; Luke 9:26-27; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 10:23; Matthew 26:64; Matthew 24:30, 34; Revelation 1:1, 3, 7; James 5:8-9; Matthew 17:1-2; Hebrews 12:28.
† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books V-VI; Tacitus, Histories, Book V; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, chapters 5-7.

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