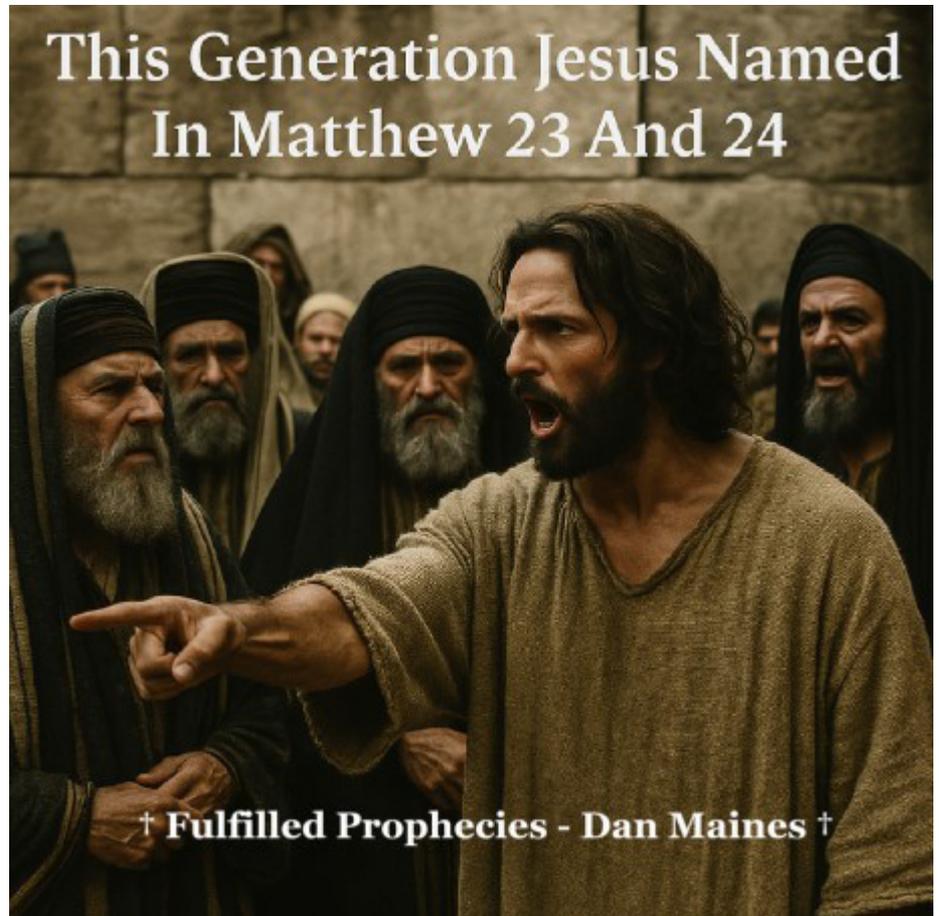


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Generation - This Generation Jesus Named In Matthew 23 And 24



By Dan Maines

This Generation Jesus Named In Matthew 23 And 24

Introduction

† Jesus already answered the timing question Himself. There's no guesswork, no secret code, no deeper hidden meaning that overrides His own words. When He used the phrase this generation, Scripture itself defines which generation He meant. † Before anyone tries to stretch Matthew 24 into a two thousand year church age, we have to let Matthew 23 and 24 speak in the order the Spirit gave them. Matthew didn't chop these chapters apart. The break between chapter 23 and 24 was added by

men, not by Jesus. The conversation flows straight through.

† So the issue is simple.

† Either we let Jesus define this generation by His own words to His own audience, or we let later tradition redefine it into something He never said.

† I'm not going to let tradition rewrite the Lord's timing.

† Jesus already nailed it down for us.

Jesus defined this generation before Matthew 24 even starts

† Right in the middle of His woes on the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said:

Matthew 23:31

So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Matthew 23:32

Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

Matthew 23:33

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

† He's not giving a vague, symbolic speech about some far away church era. He's staring straight at the covenant leaders standing in front of Him. He tells them they're the sons of those who murdered the prophets, and He commands them to fill up the measure of the guilt of their fathers.

† Then He explains what that means.

Matthew 23:35

So that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth.

† Not on a distant future generation.

† On you.

† On that first century covenant leadership.

† Then He locks it down with the timing statement that people keep trying to dodge.

Matthew 23:36

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† This is one verse before Matthew 24 even begins.

† He's already identified the people He's speaking to, the guilt they're about to complete, the judgment that'll fall on them, and the generation that'll experience it.

† That generation was special because God placed on them the final measure of Israel's covenant guilt. They were the ones who'd finish the long history of persecuting and killing God's messengers. That's why the judgment had to fall in their lifetime. Jesus said so, openly, in the temple.

Matthew 23 flows straight into Matthew 24 with the same audience and the same judgment

† Here's what people try to ignore.

Matthew 23:36

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† The very next scene:

Matthew 24:1

Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

† Same day, same setting, same people, same judgment topic. There's no hint that Jesus suddenly switches audiences or secretly changes the meaning of this generation.

† Standing there, looking right at those same buildings, He

says:

Matthew 24:2

Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another.

† He's just said in the temple that all these things will come upon this generation. Now He walks out, points to the same covenant house, and announces its total destruction. The disciples aren't confused. They know He's talking about the same judgment He just pronounced over Jerusalem and her leaders.

† Later in the same conversation, on the Mount of Olives, He gives the same timing again:

Matthew 24:34

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

† Same this generation.

† Same speaker.

† Same listeners.

† Same covenant house.

† Same judgment.

† You can't rip Matthew 24 out of Matthew 23 just because the timing destroys futurism. Matthew 23 sets the stage. Matthew 24 describes the details. Both are aimed at the same generation that was about to fill up the measure of covenant blood and feel the weight of covenant judgment.

Jesus didn't invent a word generation and a judgment generation

† Some try to escape the plain meaning by claiming that Matthew 23 talks about a judgment generation and Matthew 24 talks about a word generation, as if generation in one verse means people and in the next verse it suddenly means Christ's words.

† That's not exegesis, that's desperation.

† Scripture never says that.

† Jesus never said that.

† He did say that His words wouldn't pass away, but He didn't say that generation equals His words. Those are two separate statements.

† His words will endure forever.

† The generation standing there wouldn't pass away until all those prophetic words were fulfilled.

† You can't merge those into a new invented definition. That's how tradition tries to rescue a failing system, not how we read Scripture.

† Every time Jesus uses this generation in the Gospels, He's talking about the people of His day, the unbelieving covenant generation that rejected Him and His messengers. He never uses it to mean a two thousand year church age. Futurism does that, not the Bible.

† The only generation Jesus ever directly identified is the one listening to Him.

† That's the generation He meant.

† That's the generation that saw the judgment.

The covenant role of that generation

† Jesus explained why that generation was unique.

Matthew 23:35

So that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth.

† Their generation stood at the end of the Old Covenant age. They weren't more sinful than any other generation in one sense, but they were the ones who'd finish the long history of rejecting God's prophets, culminating in the rejection and crucifixion of the Son Himself.

† That's why He says:

Matthew 23:32

Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

† God let the cup of covenant guilt fill up across the centuries. By the time of Jesus, that cup was almost full. Their rejection of the Messiah and His apostles would fill it to the brim, and judgment had to fall on them, in their time, to close the age.

† Jesus isn't speaking in vague, symbolic terms. He's giving a covenant lawsuit against a real historical generation in a real historical city, standing in a real historical temple that'd really be torn down.

The fig tree parable confirms the timing, it doesn't reset it

† Then we're told that the fig tree in Matthew 24:32 is some code for Israel becoming a nation again in 1948. That has nothing to do with what Jesus actually said.

† Here's what He said:

Matthew 24:32

Now learn the parable from the fig tree.

† He doesn't say that the fig tree is Israel in 1948. He doesn't say it's a future church age. He simply uses a basic, everyday example.

† When a fig tree puts out its leaves, you know summer is near.

† In the same way, when that first century generation saw the signs He'd just listed, they were to know that the end of that Old Covenant age was near.

† Not a different age.

† Not a different generation.

† Not a symbolic two thousand year span.

† The people who saw the signs were the same ones who'd see the fulfillment.

† That's why He repeats the timing right after the fig tree parable:

Matthew 24:34

This generation will not pass away until all these things take

place.

† You can dig as deep as you want, but you can't dig deeper than Jesus' own words. There's no code under His plain statement. The fig tree parable reinforces the nearness of the events for them, it doesn't stretch them away from them.

AD 70: The visible covenant sign that Jesus' timing was true

† If Jesus said that all those things would come on that generation, then history should show a catastrophic judgment on that first century covenant world, centered on Jerusalem and her temple.

† It does.

† In AD 70, the Romans under Titus besieged Jerusalem, destroyed the city, and burned the Second Temple to the ground. Contemporary history records that the temple complex was dismantled so completely that huge stones from its structures were thrown down from the platform and still lie at its base today.

† Josephus, an eyewitness Jewish historian who was there during the war, describes how the city was surrounded, starved, torn apart, and finally leveled, with the temple burned and its remaining structures demolished.

† Later Roman historian Tacitus confirms the crushing Roman campaign against Jerusalem and the devastation poured out on the city.

† Eusebius, an early Christian historian, even mentions that God held back the destruction of Jerusalem for about forty years after the crucifixion, lining up exactly with Jesus' generation language.

† The result matches Jesus' words in every way.

† The temple was left desolate.

† The house of Israel's Old Covenant worship was destroyed.

† The city that killed the prophets and rejected the Son was judged within that generation.

† You don't have to twist the text when you let history stand

where God put it. The plain timing Jesus gave matches the plain fulfillment He brought.

Stop playing games with the text

† So when someone tries to slice Matthew 23 away from Matthew 24, or invents two different kinds of generation in the passage, they're not honoring Scripture. They're trying to protect a system.

† Here's the context they're ignoring:

Matthew 23:36

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† One verse later, the disciples are pointing at the temple buildings, and Jesus says:

Matthew 24:2

Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another.

† And then, in the same conversation:

Matthew 24:34

This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Same this generation.

† Same audience.

† Same judgment.

† Same prophecy.

† Jesus didn't switch audiences mid sentence. He didn't sneak in a new, symbolic meaning of generation that nobody in His hearing would've understood. He spoke to them about their city, their temple, their blood guilt, and their coming judgment, and He put it all inside their generation.

† Futurism is what tries to move the goalposts. It changes the meaning of generation. It separates chapter 24 from chapter 23.

It throws the timing thousands of years into the future and then claims there's no historical evidence for what Jesus actually said would happen.

† The fulfilled perspective doesn't need to play those games.

† We simply let Jesus define His terms, and we let history confirm that He was right.

Historical References

† Early writers and historians bore witness, directly or indirectly, to the very judgment Jesus foretold.

† Josephus, a first century Jewish historian and eyewitness of the war, gives a detailed account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, including the burning of the temple and the leveling of the city.

† Tacitus, a Roman historian, records the Roman campaigns in Judaea and the crushing of Jerusalem, noting the ruin that followed.

† Eusebius, writing in the early fourth century, links the destruction of Jerusalem to God's patience in delaying judgment about forty years after the crucifixion, during which the apostles were still a protection to the city.

† These historical witnesses don't create our doctrine. Scripture does that. But they show that the events Jesus described actually exploded inside the lifetime of the very generation He was speaking to.

How it applies to us today

† This isn't just a timeline debate.

† It's about the reliability of Jesus' words and the integrity of the gospel.

† If Jesus said this generation and meant that generation, then His prophecy was accurate, His timing was faithful, and His covenant warnings were fulfilled right on schedule.

† If we push His words two thousand years away and redefine His terms, we make it look like He missed His own timing, and we end up excusing His language instead of believing it.

† We live on the other side of that fulfilled judgment. The Old

Covenant age ended when that house was left desolate and that temple fell. We're not waiting for the foundation stones of some future temple to be torn down in our time. That sign already happened in theirs.

† For us today, we can trust that when Jesus says something, He keeps it, even when men don't like the timing. We can stop living in fear of a future Great Tribulation aimed at our generation, because the great tribulation He described fell on that covenant world. We can focus on the finished work of Christ and the unshakable kingdom that can't be destroyed, instead of trying to drag Old Covenant judgments into the New Covenant age.

† So if someone wants to keep talking about this, that's fine. But the conversation has to stay grounded in what Jesus actually said, not in traditions He never taught.

† He defined the generation.

† He judged that generation.

† And the fall of the temple in AD 70 stands as the visible covenant proof that His words didn't fail.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 23:23-39; Matthew 24:1-34; Mark 13:1-30; Luke 21:5-24

† Josephus, The Jewish War, Book 6

† Tacitus, Histories 5.1-13

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5

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