

Jesus and the End Time | The Matthean End Time Discourse

Introductory Notes

This End Time discourse document is a part of the End Time prophecy website titled *Jesus and the End Time*. In this document the writer shows and discusses End Time prophecies of Jesus that are described in the End Time or Olivet discourse of the Gospel of Matthew in the King James Bible (or KJV Bible), a discourse which includes almost all of the Bible passages ("texts" for short) that appear in chapters 24 and 25 of that Gospel. This discourse and its Markan and Lukan counterparts, the Markan and Lukan End Time Discourses, are intended to serve as expanded, stand-alone versions of other documents in which this website discusses prophecies Jesus made on or near the Mount of Olives shortly before his arrest. Specifically, this document is intended to serve as a more complete and user friendly (text searchable, resizable, etc.) alternative to the web page version thereof that appears on the Home page of this website, and as an expanded but more narrowly focused alternative to the whole-Gospel version thereof that appears on its Table of Contents page.

In this document the writer presents the End Time teachings of Jesus by showing, in the order in which they appear in the Gospel of Matthew, sets of texts that quote or describe prophecies and other teachings of Jesus about the End Time. To save time and space, the writer will refer to texts of these kinds as "End Time texts". He will also use this term because it is now a common practice for the popular apocalyptic literature and End Time prophecy websites to use short generic terms like "End Time" and "End Times" (and variants thereof like End-Time, End-Times, Endtime and Endtimes) instead of longer and/or more specific terms, such as the time of the end, the end of the world (the end of the age in the NRSV), the regeneration, the world to come, the Second Coming, the Eschaton, the Parousia, etc.

Importantly, all End Time texts which include verses copied from the KJV New Testament are followed by entries called Notes which cite and/or discuss other New or Old Testament texts that are related to them and, consequently, ought to be read and interpreted in conjunction with them. Especially important among texts of this kind are texts which include similar but differently worded accounts of things Jesus said on the same or similar subjects in other Gospels, or in other parts of the same Gospel. Other examples of texts of this kind include KJV Old Testament texts which underlie, support and help explain End Time prophecies of Jesus. Reading Bible texts of these kinds in conjunction with one another is also important because reading them in this way helps readers understand the End Times teachings or Eschatology of Jesus as a connected whole, and not just as sets of independent stand-alone units.

Of the three End Time discourses, Matthew's is arguably the most consequential. One reason is that his discourse includes the Bible's clearest description of the teachings of Jesus about the Day of Judgment, Matt. 25:31-46. Another is that this discourse includes the only KJV Bible verse that uses the words everlasting punishment as such, Matt. 25:46 (eternal punishment in the NRSV). Because the meanings of these words are more open to interpretation than they may seem, the writer includes two in-depth discussions of their potential meanings. One of these, a set of Notes titled *Notes on Everlasting Punishment*, focuses on the meaning of the words everlasting punishment as a whole. One copy of this set of Notes is included as an Appendix at the end of this document; stand-alone copies of this set of Notes are also included on the Home and Table of Contents pages of this website. The other, a PDF document titled *Senses of the Word Everlasting*, focuses on the meaning of the word everlasting as such. Copies of the latter document may be found among the Auxiliary Sense Files of the Home and Table of Contents pages of this website.

Part 1: Matt. 24:1 Through Matt. 24:36

The writer divides the texts that make up the Matthean End Time Discourse into two parts: a first part that includes Matt. 24:1 through Matt. 24:36, and a second part that includes Matt. 24:37 through Matt. 25:46. He uses Matt. 24:36 as the last verse of Part 1 because it is the verse in which Matthew finishes describing End Time prophecies of Jesus that generally parallel those described in the Markan and Lukan End Time Discourses, and the verse after which Matthew begins describing prophecies of Jesus that do not appear in their discourses or, in all but a few cases, anywhere else in their Gospels. Among these are additional teachings of Jesus about hell, the coming of the Son of man, the throne of his glory, and the Day of Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). By dividing Matthew's discourse into these two parts, the writer draws attention to these differences and lays a foundation for an orderly discussion of their true significance.

Matt. 24:1-22

1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. **P** 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all

nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

- **V. 1-22** above generally correspond to Mark 13:1-20 and Luke 21:5-24 of the Markan and Lukan discourses.
- The words "there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." in **v. 2** are repeated, almost word for word, in v. 2 of Mark 13:1-20 and v. 6 of Luke 21:5-24. These words seem to be an abbreviated version of the words spoken by Jesus in v. 44 of Luke 19:41-44. See also v. 38 of Matt. 23:29-39.
- **V. 2** is clearly a prophecy of Jesus. This is not only because it describes a future event, but also because it begins with words ("verily I say unto you") that are similar to prophecy introducing phrases like "Thus saith the Lord". Less clear is whether **v. 2** is one of the End Time prophecies of Jesus. This is because **v. 4** describes Jesus speaking about the end of the world only after he is asked about it in **v. 3**, a verse which suggests the passage of a period of time that is not described.
- While the last part of **v. 3** describes the disciples asking Jesus "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?", its Markan counterpart, v. 3-4 of Mark 13:1-20, describe four named disciples asking him "when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?". In the most nearly similar Lukan passage, v. 7 of Luke 21:5-24, persons who may or may not be disciples are described as asking him "when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?".
- The "sign" that disciples ask about in **v. 3** may correspond to "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" that Jesus speaks about in v. 30 of Matt. 24:29-36. In the Markan and Lukan counterparts of the latter, Mark 13:24-32 and Luke 21:25-37, only Luke describes Jesus speaking of "signs" (Luke 21:25), and describes them as signs in the sun, moon, and stars.
- The first part of the question that the disciples ask Jesus in **v. 3** above seems to generally parallel the question that one saint asks another in v. 13 of Dan 8:5-14. Interestingly, both **v. 2** and v. 11 of Dan. 8:5-14 make statements about the temple (or sanctuary) being thrown (or cast) down. In addition, the "abomination of desolation" that Jesus speaks about in **v. 15** may correspond to the "transgression of desolation" that one of the saints speaks about in v. 13 of Dan. 8:5-14. Finally, the falling of the stars that Jesus speaks about in v. 29 of Matt. 24:29-36 below may be related to the casting down of the stars mentioned in v. 10 of Dan. 8:5-14.
- The Gospels describe Jesus using the phrase "the end of the world" as such only three times: in v. 39 of Matt. 13:36-43, v. 49 of Matt. 13:47-50 and v. 20 of Matt. 28:16-20. In spite of this, **v. 6, 13** and **14** seem to describe Jesus using the words "the end" as an abbreviated way of referring to the end of the world. The Markan and Lukan discourses also seem to describe Jesus using the words "the end" in this way. See v. 7 and 13 of Mark 13:1-20 and v. 9 of Luke 21:5-24.
- **V. 4-5** above seem to make generally the same point as v. 23-24 of Matt. 24:23-28 below. In addition, **v. 5** and **11** seem to be differently worded forms of a warning about the coming of deceivers.
- **V. 4-5** are repeated, in almost the same words, in v. 5-6 of Mark 13:1-20 of Mark's End Time discourse. These verses are also generally similar to v. 8 of Luke 21:5-24 of Luke's End Time discourse, except that the latter adds the words "the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them."
- **V. 6** and **14** seem to complement one another. This is because **v. 6** says when the end will not come, i.e., that "the end is not yet.", while **v. 14** says when the end will come, i.e., when "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world...then shall the end come.". These statements correspond to the generally similar statements Jesus makes in v. 7 and 10 of Mark 13:1-20 of the Markan discourse. While the Lukan discourse includes a verse (Luke 21:9) that corresponds to the first of these sayings (Matt. 24:6 and Mark 13:7), it does not include a verse that corresponds to the second.
- **V. 6-8** above are very similar to v. 7-8 of Mark 13:1-20 of the Markan discourse. They are also roughly similar to v. 9-11 of Luke 21:5-24 of the Lukan discourse, except that the latter also mentions fearful sights and great signs from heaven.
- Although **v. 7** describes Jesus using the word "kingdom", it seems to describe him using this word in a common, general earthly sense in which it has little to do with the kingdom that the writer refers to as the End Time Kingdom (or kingdom of the End Times). In the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Kingdom*, the writer describes the senses in which the Bible uses the word "kingdom" and gives examples of KJV Bible verses that use it in these senses.
- The last part of **v. 9**, "...ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.", is repeated, almost word for word, in the first half of Mark 13:13 and in Luke 21:17. Surprisingly, the words "But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.", which appear in the second half of Mark 13:13, appear word for word in **v. 13**, but do not appear anywhere in the

Gospel of Luke. In addition, the two parts of Mark 13:13, which appear separately in **v. 9** and **13**, appear together and are repeated, almost word for word, in v. 22 of Matthew's account of the sending out of the twelve, Matt. 10:5-23.

- **V. 9-10** use general words like "they" and "many" to describe those who will afflict or kill followers of Jesus before the end comes (**v. 14**). While the Markan and Lukan discourses also use such words, e.g., Mark 13:9 and 11 and Luke 21:12, they also use more specific words like "parents" and "friends", e.g., Mark 13:12 and Luke 21:16.
- **V. 11** seems to be repeated, with some differences in wording, in v. 24 of Matt. 24:23-28 and v. 22 of Mark 13:21-23. **V. 11** also seems to be a differently worded reiteration of the words spoken by Jesus in **v. 5** above.
- **V. 12** above has no counterpart in either the Markan or the Lukan discourse.
- The words spoken by Jesus in **v. 13** are repeated, word for word, in the last part of Mark 13:13, but do not appear anywhere in the Gospel of Luke or John. In Mark 13:13, however, these words are preceded by the words that appear in the last part of **v. 9** above. In spite of this, the words of Mark 13:13 are repeated, almost word for word, in Matt. 10:22.
- **V. 14** is the first verse of the Matthean discourse in which Jesus uses the term "the kingdom" in a sense in which it may refer to an End Time kingdom, such as the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven (or a shortened synonym for it like his kingdom, thy kingdom, etc). In the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Kingdom*, the writer describes the senses in which the Bible uses the word "kingdom" and gives examples of verses that use it in these senses.
- The importance of the meaning of the word kingdom in **v. 14** is clear from the fact that he also uses it in v. 34 of Matt. 25:31-46 to refer to the place where the Son of man (or King) invites "ye blessed" to come.
- The words "this gospel of the kingdom" that Jesus uses in **v. 14** seem to refer to the same thing as the words "the gospel of the kingdom" that Matthew describes him preaching in Matt. 4:23-24 and Matt. 9:35. It also seems to refer to the same thing as "the gospel of the kingdom of God" that Mark describes him preaching in Mark 1:14-15. Surprisingly, the Gospel of John never uses the word "gospel", and uses the word "kingdom" only three times, in John 3:3 and 5 and John 18:36.
- **V. 14** describes Jesus saying, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world...then shall the end come.". The most nearly similar part of the Markan discourse, Mark 13:10, describes him teaching only that "the gospel" must be published among all nations *first*. In the Lukan discourse, Jesus uses the words "the end" only in Luke 21:9 and says nothing about the gospel being preached in all the world. Luke does, however, describe him preaching repentance and the remission of sins among all nations at his ascension, i.e., at Luke 24:47. See also Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 1:8.
- By using the word "then" in **v. 14** Jesus seems to suggest that the end will come soon after "this gospel of the kingdom" is preached in all the world. If this is correct, then **v. 14** may convey an idea like that conveyed by v. 28 of Matt. 16:24-28 and v. 34 of Matt. 24:29-36. See also the Notes included with Matt. 13:24-30 and Matt. 13:47-50 concerning the time of harvest and the time when the net is full. Finally, consider the use of the word "immediately" in v. 29 of Mark 4:26-29.

The Meaning of the Abomination of Desolation

- In the 1989 edition of the NRSV published by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the words "abomination of desolation" in **v. 15** are rendered into English as "desolating sacrilege".
- The teachings of Jesus about the abomination of desolation described in **v. 15** are similar to those described in v. 14 of Mark 13:1-20 of the Markan discourse. This abomination seems to correspond to the "abomination that maketh desolate" that Daniel speaks of in v. 11 of Dan. 12:8-13. Note, for example, that the parenthetical phrase "(whoso readeth, let him understand:)" seems to correspond to v. 10 of the latter text. Other possibilities exist, however, including Dan. 8:13, Dan. 9:27 and Dan. 11:31. Of these, Dan. 8:13 is of special interest because it includes the asking of a question similar to that described in **v. 2-3** above. Importantly, while these verses include some variations in wording (e.g., "the transgression of desolation" appears in v. 13 of Dan. 8:5-14), they all appear in contexts that involve some supremely grave violation of the first and second commandments, such as worshipping the image of a foreign god, especially an image of this kind that has been placed in the temple of God in Jerusalem.
- The correctness of the above meaning of 'the abomination of desolation' seems to be confirmed by the fact that, after the time in which the book of Daniel is set, a foreign ruler who fits the description Daniel gives him, the king (or prince) of Grecia, Antiochus IV "Epiphanes" (= manifestation of God), put an image of Zeus in the temple and had a pig sacrificed on its altar. See Dan. 8:15-27/21 and Dan. 10:5-21/20. Contrary to what Daniel says in Dan. 9:24-27/26, however, the temple was not destroyed, but only polluted and later purified and rededicated, an event Jews still celebrate as Hanukkah.
- Daniel's description of the entity Jesus refers to as the abomination of desolation (**v. 15**) can reasonably be regarded as patterned after a roughly similar prophecy of the prophet Jeremiah. In the document titled *Old Testament Auxiliary Files*, the writer shows in full the parts of this prophecy that are of interest for present purposes, but divides it into parts that correspond to its KJV Bible paragraph breaks, namely, Jer. 7:8-16, Jer. 7:17-28 and Jer. 7:29-34. In this prophecy, Jeremiah uses the word "abomination" to describe the making of offerings to foreign gods (Jer. 7:10) and setting them up in God's temple (Jer. 7:30), and says that God will punish his people by doing to the temple what he did to Shiloh (Jer. 7:14) and leave the land desolate (Jer. 7:34). Unlike the prophecy of Daniel, however, the persons who commit these abominations are the people of God, and the prophecy is fulfilled when the temple is destroyed by the Babylonians. The

idea that Daniel's prophecy was influenced by Jeremiah is suggested by the fact that Daniel attributes some of his ideas to things he learned from books "whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah"; see Dan. 9:2.

- The KJV Bible includes a number of texts which suggest that the teachings of Jesus about the abomination of desolation were influenced by the ideas of both Daniel and Jeremiah. The most explicit of these include his reference to Daniel as a prophet in **v. 15** above, and his use of similar terminology. One suggestion of the influence of Jeremiah is the last part of Mark 11:17, in which Jesus' statement about the house of God being a den of thieves seems to be based on Jeremiah's similar statement about its being a den of robbers in v. 11 of Jer. 7:8-16. More generally, there is the fact that Matthew describes a situation in which the priestly authorities want to put Jesus to death for prophesying the destruction of the temple, while the book of Jeremiah describes a situation in which the priestly authorities want to put Jeremiah to death for making a similar prophecy. See in this connection Jer. 26:4-16.
- The question of whether events that occurred after the time of Jesus represent fulfillments of his prophecy about the destruction of the temple is interesting, but controversial. One of these was the attempt of the Roman emperor Caligula to place in the temple a statue of Zeus that had been modified to show his own head, an attempt that would probably have succeeded, if the statue had been finished before Caligula was assassinated in 40 AD. Another was the desecration, plundering and destruction of the temple during the first Jewish revolt of 66-73 AD. Still another was the erection of a new temple in Jerusalem in which the emperor Hadrian placed a statue of Zeus (and a statue of himself) after the end of the Second Jewish revolt of 132-135. Many contemporary Christians, however, believe that the real fulfillment will be in our future, after a third Jewish temple is built in the city of Jerusalem as it exists today.
- Although the abomination of desolation mentioned in **v. 15** is also mentioned in v. 14 of Mark 13:1-20, it is not mentioned anywhere in the Gospel of Luke. Instead, in the part of the Lukan discourse where Luke would be expected to mention it, just before v. 21 of Luke 21:5-24 ("Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains;"), Luke includes v. 20 which says, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.", words that seem to be an abbreviated reiteration of the words spoken by Jesus in v. 43 of Luke 19:41-44.
- **V. 16** describes Jesus saying, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:". This statement appears, in almost the same words, in the last part of v. 14 of Mark 13:10-20 and in the first part of v. 21 of Luke 21:5-24. All of these statements seem to be based on v. 5 of Zech. 14:1-11. Unlike its Matthean and Markan counterparts, however, Luke 21:21 includes two more statements, a first that urges those in the midst of it [Judaea] to "depart out;", and a second that advises those "in the countries" not to "enter thereinto."
- The things Jesus says about persons on the housetop and in the field in **v. 17-18** above closely parallel the things he says about them in v. 15-16 of Mark 13:1-20 of the Markan discourse. While Jesus does not say anything about these persons in the Lukan discourse, he does say similar things about them in v. 31 of Luke 17:26-37.
- The things Jesus says in **v. 19-20** lamenting the fate of those who are with child and give suck in those days (**v. 19**), and urging prayer that their flight not be in winter (**v. 20**), appear in the same order and in almost the same words in v. 17-18 of Mark 13:1-20 of Mark's discourse, although only **v. 20** above refers to the sabbath day. In Luke's discourse, Jesus says similar things about those who are with child in those days (Luke 21:23), but says nothing about the Sabbath or winter.
- In **v. 21** Jesus speaks about a "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time,". This verse seems to correspond to v. 19 of Mark 13:1-20, in which Jesus speaks about a time of "affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation...unto this time,". In the most nearly similar Lukan verse, v. 22 of Luke 21:5-24, Jesus says, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." The Lukan phrase "days of vengeance" seems to allude to the "day of vengeance" mentioned in v. 2 of Is. 61:1-11, part of which Jesus quotes in v. 19 of Luke 4:16-21. See also v. 4 of Is. 63:3-9 and v. 10 of Jer. 46:9-12.
- In **v. 21** Jesus seems to allude to the middle part of v. 1 of Dan. 12:1-4, which speaks about "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:". Another possibility, however, is v. 7 of Jer. 30:4-17, a possibility that is supported by the apparent End Time significance of Jer. 30:18-24.
- The words "no flesh be saved:" in **v. 22** above and its Markan counterpart, Mark 13:20, seem to echo the words "end of all flesh" in v. 13 of Gen. 6:1-13. See also v. 17 of Gen. 6:17-18. This idea seems to be confirmed by the fact that v. 37-39 of Matt. 24:37-51 and v. 26-27 of Luke 17:26-37 describe Jesus comparing these days to those of Noe. Unlike Matthew, however, Luke expands this comparison by adding three verses (Luke 17:28-30) which compare the day when the Son of man is revealed to the days of Lot, when "it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."
- **V. 22** and its Markan counterpart, Mark 13:20, both include statements about "those days" being shortened "for the elect's sake", although Mark adds, "whom he hath chosen,". The most nearly corresponding verse of the Lukan discourse, Luke 21:24, does not use any clearly similar words and says only that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.", words that seem to be a differently worded reiteration of the words spoken by Jesus in Luke 21:20 and in Luke 19:43-44.
- **V. 22** is the first of only three verses in which Jesus uses the word "elect" in the Gospel of Matthew, the other two being Matt. 24:24 and 31. Similarly, Jesus uses the word "elect" in only three verses in the Gospel of Mark, i.e., in Mark 13:20,

22 and 27. In the Gospel of Luke, on the other hand, Jesus uses the word "elect" only once, in v. 7 of Luke 18:6-8.

- In spite of differences in wording, the events Jesus describes in **v. 16** and **22** and their Markan and Lukan counterparts seem to parallel parts of the "day of the Lord" prophecy of Zech. 14:1-11. The flight to the mountains Jesus speaks about in **v. 16**, Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:21, for example, seems to parallel that mentioned in Zech. 14:5, while the desolation (or treading down) of Jerusalem he speaks of in Luke 21:20 and 24 seems to parallel that mentioned in Zech. 14:2. Similarly, the shortening of the days Jesus speaks about in **v. 22** and Mark 13:20, and the fulfilling of the time of the Gentiles he speaks about in Luke 21:24, seem to involve a divine intervention like that mentioned in Zech. 14:3. Finally, Zech. 14:1-11 describes these events as associated with the coming of the Lord (Zech. 14:5) and the establishment of the Lord's kingship (or kingdom?) "over all the earth:" (Zech. 14:9), events that seem to parallel the coming of the "it" or kingdom of God that Jesus speaks about in v. 33 of Matt. 24:29-36, v. 29 of Mark 13:24-32 and v. 31 of Luke 21:25-37.

Matt. 24:23-28

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. [end par.]

- **V. 23-24** seem to repeat, with some variations in wording, the things Jesus says in v. 4-5 and 11 of Matt. 24:1-22 above. See also v. 5-6 of Mark 13:1-20 and v. 8 of Luke 21:5-24.
- The warning Jesus gives in **v. 23-25** generally corresponds to the warning he gives in v. 21-23 of Mark 13:21-23, except that Mark's version of this warning is not followed by a reference to lightning or to a carcass where eagles gather. The warning Jesus gives in **v. 23-25** also roughly corresponds to the warning he gives in v. 22-23 of Luke 17:20-25. Unlike Matthew, however, Luke speaks about a body where eagles gather, in a different context, in v. 37 of Luke 17:26-37.
- **V. 24** is the second of only three verses in which Jesus uses the word "elect" in the Gospel of Matthew. The other two verses are v. 22 of Matt. 24:1-22 and v. 31 of Matt. 24:29-36. Similarly, Jesus uses the word "elect" in only three verses in the Gospel of Mark, i.e., Mark 13:20, 22 and 27. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus uses "elect" only once, in Luke 18:7.
- The words Jesus speaks in **v. 26-27** above are roughly similar to the words he speaks in v. 23-24 of Luke 17:20-25.
- **V. 27** is the first verse of the Matthean discourse in which Jesus uses the words "the Son of man" in a sense that is of End Time significance. In the accompanying Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of Phrases Like Son of Man* the writer describes the senses in which the KJV Bible uses phrases of this kind (a son of man, the son of man, etc.) and gives examples of Bible verses that use them in these senses.
- The Son of man that Jesus speaks about in **v. 27** seems to correspond to the "one like the Son of man" that Daniel speaks about in v. 13 of Dan. 7:9-14. This person may also correspond to the "the likeness of the appearance of a man" that Ezekiel speaks about in v. 26 of Ezek. 1:26-28.
- The words of Jesus comparing the coming of the Son of man to lightning in **v. 27** seem to include an allusion to v. 14 of Zech. 9:9-17, especially since the latter also includes Zechariah's prophecy about Jerusalem's King entering it while riding on an ass. Other possibilities exist, however, including v. 13-14 of Ezek. 1:13-17 and v. 5-6 of Dan. 10:5-21.
- **V. 23-28** are immediately followed by Matt. 24:29-36, in which Jesus describes the coming of the Son of man, and then by Matt. 24:37-51, in which he compares the coming of the Son of man to the days of Noe. In the most nearly similar Lukan texts, Luke 17:20-25 and 17:26-37, Jesus compares the days of the Son of man both to the days of Noe and to the day fire destroyed Sodom. In Luke, however, Jesus describes the coming of the Son of man only much later, in Luke 21:25-36 of Luke's End Time discourse.
- **V. 23-28** are shown as a separate part of the Matthean discourse, not so much because of what they themselves say, but rather because they appear between two highly distinctive parts of the Matthean discourse, Matt. 24:1-22 and 29-36, just as Mark 13:21-23 appears between two highly distinctive parts of the Markan discourse, Mark 13:1-20 and 13:24-32.

Matt. 24:29-36

P 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. **P** 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

- **V. 29-36** above generally correspond to Mark 13:24-32 and Luke 21:25-37 of the Markan and Lukan discourses.
- The prophecy of Jesus about the darkening of the sun and moon in **v. 29** is repeated, almost word for word, in v. 24 of Mark 13:24-32. This darkening seems to refer to that mentioned in v. 10 of Is. 13:6-15, v. 7 of Ezek. 32:3-10, v. 10 of Joel 2:1-11 and v. 15 of Joel 3:9-21. The corresponding prophecy in the Lukan discourse, v. 25 of Luke 21:25-37, is worded more broadly and states, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;". As a result, the Lukan version of this teaching may refer not only to the above cited texts, but also to v. 23 of Is. 24:17-23, v. 30-31 of Joel 2:28-32, v. 9 of Amos 8:7-10 and v. 6 of Zech. 14:1-11.
- **V. 29** is the first verse of the Matthean discourse in which Jesus uses the words "heaven" and "heavens". These words may have any of the meanings they have when they are used in longer phrases like the God of heaven, the host of heaven, the heaven of heavens and kingdom of heaven, and apparent contractions thereof like heaven, the heaven and the heavens. In the accompanying Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Heaven*, the writer describes the senses in which the KJV Bible uses words of this kind and gives examples of verses that use them in these senses.
- The prophecy of Jesus that the stars shall fall from heaven in **v. 29** parallels his prophecy that the stars of heaven shall fall in v. 25 of Mark 13:24-32. No similar prophecy appears in the Lukan discourse. These prophecies of Jesus seem to be related to the prophecies about the falling of the host of heaven that appear in v. 4 of Is. 34:1-12 and v. 10 of Dan. 8:5-14.
- The prophecy of Jesus that the powers of the heavens shall be shaken in **v. 29** parallels his prophecy that the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken in v. 25 of Mark 13:24-32, and his prophecy that the powers of heaven shall be shaken in v. 26 of Luke 21:25-37. These prophecies of Jesus all seem to be related to a shaking of the kind prophesied in v. 13 of Is. 13: 6-15, v. 10 of Joel 2:1-11, v. 16 of Joel 3:9-21, v. 6 of Hag. 2:1-9 and v. 21 of Hag. 2:20-23.
- The sign that Jesus speaks about in **v. 30** may be the sign that Matthew describes the disciples asking him about in Matt. 24:3 above. While Mark and Luke also describe disciples asking Jesus about a sign early in their discourses (Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7), only Matthew and Luke seem to describe Jesus answering their question. Unlike Matthew, however, Luke seems to describe Jesus answering their question by prophesying great signs from heaven (Luke 21:11) or signs in the sun, moon and stars (Luke 21:25).
- **V. 30's** description of the teachings of Jesus about coming of the Son of man is repeated, almost word for word, in v. 26 of Mark 13:24-32 and v. 27 of Luke 21:25-37. See also v. 31 of Matt. 25:31-46. All of these descriptions of his teachings on this subject seem to generally correspond to the description of the coming of "one like the Son of man" that appears in v. 13 of Dan. 7:9-14. One or more of these references to the Son of man may be related to the reference to "the likeness as the appearance of a man" that appears in v. 26 of Ezek. 1:26-28.
- The teachings of Jesus about the Son of man that are described in **v. 30**, v. 26 of Mark 13:24-32, v. 27 of Luke 21:25-37 and v. 31 of Matt. 25:31-46 all seem to be related to the teachings of Jesus described in v. 28 of Matt. 16:24-28, v. 38 of Mark 8:34-9:1 and v. 26 of Luke 9:23-27. See also v. 41 of Matt. 13:36-43, v. 27 of Matt. 24:23-28, v. 37 and 39 of Matt. 24:37-51 and v. 26-30 of Luke 17:36-37. See also, however, v. 23 of Matt. 10:5-23.
- The words spoken by Jesus in **v. 30** are similar to those spoken by him in v. 64 of Matt. 26:62-66 and v. 62 of Mark 14:60-64, i.e., during his trial before the high priest, except that he there adds, "sitting on the right hand of power,". In the most nearly similar Lukan account of his Jewish trial, Luke 22:66-71, Jesus does not mention cloud(s), and says only that the Son of man shall "sit on the right hand of the power of God." (Luke 22:69).
- Examples of Bible verses that illustrate how it couples the words "right hand" with references to God include 1Kings 22:19 and 2Chron. 18:18, and the following verses from Psalms: Ps. 16:11; 20:6; 63:8; 80:17; 110:1 and 5; 138:7 and 139:10. Among the latter, Ps. 110:1 is of special interest because all three Synoptic Gospels describe Jesus discussing the meaning of this verse with the Pharisees and scribes. See Matt. 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37 and Luke 20:41-44.
- The Son of man that Jesus describes as coming in the clouds of heaven in **v. 30** seems to correspond to the "one like the Son of man" that v. 13-14 of Dan. 7:9-14 describe as coming with the clouds of heaven to "the Ancient of days" and being given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom. While Daniel does not explicitly describe the Son of man as the judge of the Day of Judgment, Jesus seems to do so in Matt. 25:31-46 of the Matthean discourse, although he there refers to the judge as "the King". Mark, on the other hand, does not describe the Son of Man as the judge of the Day of Judgment, even though it refers to this Day as such in v. 11 of Mark 6:7-13. In addition, Luke suggests that the Son of man will be this judge, but does not explicitly say so. See v. 22 of Luke 19:11-27 and v. 36 of Luke 21:25-37.
- Surprisingly, while **v. 30** and the corresponding parts of the Markan and Lukan discourses describe the Son of man coming in the clouds (or in a cloud) with power and great glory, none describes him coming in or with his kingdom, like Matt. 16:27-28 does. One possibility explanation is that his coming in his kingdom (or in his kingship) is implied by the words "with power and great glory" in **v. 30**. Another is that **v. 29-36** do describe the Son of man coming in his kingdom, but describe him doing so by means of a parable in **v. 32-34**, rather than by implying it in **v. 30**. See in this connection the discussion of the meaning of the words "summer" and "it" that appears in a Note included with **v. 32-34** below.
- In **v. 30** Jesus describes the persons who see the coming of the Son of man as "all the tribes of the earth" and says that they will mourn. In Mark 13:26 of the Markan discourse Jesus describes these persons only as "they" and says nothing

about their reaction. In Luke 21:26-27 of the Lukan discourse Jesus also describes these persons as "they" and says that their hearts will fail them for fear. Of these, **v. 30** is of special interest because it seems to echo v. 5 of Is. 40:1-11, which speaks of the glory of the Lord and says, "all flesh shall see it together:". Notice in this regard that John the Baptist quotes from v. 3 of the latter text in v. 3 of Matt. 3:1-6, v. 3 of Mark 1:1-11 and v. 4 of Luke 3:1-9, and that v. 6 of Luke 3:1-9 even describes John adding, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

- In **v. 31** Jesus describes the Son of man sending his angels to gather his elect from the four winds. See also v. 27 of Mark 13:24-32. It is not clear, however, how this gathering is related to the gathering of all nations before the Son of man that he speaks about in his description of the End Time Judgment, Matt. 25:31-46. In the corresponding part of the Lukan discourse, Luke 21:25-37, Jesus does not mention either of these gatherings and says only that the day of the Son of man shall come as a snare on "all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."
- The gathering angels that Jesus speaks about in **v. 31** seem to be the same as the angels he speaks of in v. 41 of Matt. 13:36-43 and v. 49 of Matt. 13:47-50, except that the latter verses suggest that the angels will gather the wicked first, especially when these verses are considered in conjunction with v. 30 of Matt. 13:24-30.
- The angels Jesus speaks about in **v. 31** may correspond to the angels he describes as ascending and descending on the Son of man in v. 51 of John 1:49-51. See also v. 27 of Mark 13:24-32. In the corresponding part of the Lukan discourse, Luke 21:25-37, Luke does not describe Jesus saying anything about angels. This silence is surprising because Luke does describe Jesus speaking about the Son of man coming in the glory of the holy angels in v. 26 of Luke 9:23-27.
- **V. 31** is the last of three verses in which Jesus uses "elect" in the Gospel of Matthew. See Matt. 24:22 and 24 above.
- Interestingly, the summer (or "it") referred to in the fig tree parables of **v. 32-34** above and Mark 13:28-30 is called the kingdom of God in Luke 21:29-32, a fact which clearly suggests that all of these parables relate to the kingdom of God. In addition, the similarities between the description of the coming of the Son of man included in **v. 30-31** and those included in Mark 13:26-27 and Matt. 16:27-28 suggest that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Son of man are either one and the same or closely related. However these kingdoms may be related, what is important for present purposes is that they both seem to relate to a kingdom associated with the End Time or, in other words, to an End Time Kingdom.
- The previous Note leaves open the question of *how* the kingdom of God that Jesus speaks of in Luke 21:29-32 is related to the kingdom of the Son of man that Jesus speaks of in Matt. 16:28. One possibility is that Jesus thought that the Son of man would sit on the throne of the kingdom of God or, in other words, have God as his kingly overlord* or suzerain. See in this connection v. 32 of Luke 1:26-33 in conjunction with v. 5 of 1Chron. 28:2-8. This possibility may also help explain the meaning of the prophecy of Jesus about the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power (or the power of God) at his Jewish trial. See, for example, v. 64 of Matt. 26:62-66, v. 62 of Mark 14:60-64 and v. 69 of Luke 22:66-71 in conjunction with v. 1 of Ps. 110:1-7. * Special Note: V. 7 of 2Kings 16:5-12 is an example of a verse in which a Jewish king, Ahaz, acknowledges the overlordship of another king, Tiglath-pileser, by speaking of himself as his son.
- The things Jesus says in **v. 33-34** are similar to the things he says in their Markan and Lukan parallels, Mark 13:29-30 and Luke 21:31-32. With the possible exception of Luke 21:32, all of these verses suggest that Jesus taught that the Son of man would come in the way described in **v. 30** before the passing away of the generation of people that lived when he spoke these words. This idea seems to be confirmed by Matt. 16:28, Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27, which describe Jesus saying that some standing here shall "not taste of death" till they "see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28), "have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1) or "see the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:27). Because the Son of man did not come in this way before the passing away of that generation of people, these verses have long presented interpretation difficulties for Christians who believe that Jesus will come in this way in the future. Because it is impossible to thoroughly discuss these difficulties in a document of this kind, the writer will here include only a few basic Notes that discuss how the Gospels describe Jesus using the key words or phrases used in these verses. The most important of these include: all these things, till all these things be fulfilled, and this generation.
- Turning first to the phrase "all these things" in **v. 33** and **34**, it will be seen that Jesus seems to use this phrase simply to refer back to the things he just mentioned, including the darkening of the sun and moon (**v. 29**) and the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven (**v. 30**). This phrase may also include the prophecy of Jesus about the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (Matt. 24:15). Jesus also uses "all these things" or "these things" in the same way in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. Interestingly, while the Synoptic Gospels all describe Jesus using both of the phrases "all these things" and "these things", Matthew and Mark typically describe him using "all these things" while Luke typically describes him using "these things". As a result, it seems unlikely that these phrases alone are responsible for the above-mentioned interpretation difficulties.
- The situation is less clear in the case of the longer phrase "till all these things be fulfilled." in **v. 34**. This is because, while **v. 34** and its Markan and Lukan parallels (Mark 13:30 and Luke 21:32) all begin with almost the same words, they end differently. Specifically, Mark's version ends with "till all these things be done", while Matthew's and Luke's versions end with "till all these things be fulfilled" and "till all be fulfilled". One possible explanation for these different endings is that they all mean essentially the same thing. Another, however, is that Luke intended the things Jesus said at this point to

apply not just to the fulfillment of the prophecies he makes earlier in his discourse, but also to the fulfillment of all Bible prophecies about the End Time. Unfortunately, while the former possibility is supported by the fact that both Matthew and Mark repeatedly describe Jesus saying "these things" and "all these things", the latter is supported by the fact that Luke elsewhere describes sayings of Jesus, such as v. 22 of Luke 21:5-24 and v. 44 of Luke 24:44-51, in which he refers to *all* of the things written in the Scriptures. Examples of prophecies that fall within the meaning of Luke's broader phrase, but not within the meaning of Matthew's and Mark's narrower phrases, are prophecies about a restoration to Israel of a king of the house of David. See, for example, 2Sam. 7:12-16, Ps. 132:8-18, Is. 9:1-7 and Jer. 33:19-26, among others.

The Meaning of *This Generation*

- Turning next to the meaning of 'this generation' in **v. 34**, one encounters what may be the most problematic phrase in the End Time discourses. One reason is that **v. 34** and its Markan and Lukan counterparts, Mark 13:30 and Luke 21:32, all begin with almost the same words: "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till...". Another is that Jesus' use of "you" with "This generation" suggests that he is using these terms to refer to the same people, i.e., the people to whom he is speaking. As a result, if **v. 34** accurately reflects what Jesus said at this point and is interpreted literally, it seems to say that the Son of man will come in the clouds of heaven (**v. 30**) while at least some of those people are still alive, an idea that seems to be confirmed by the above-quoted parts of Matt. 16:28, Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27. In order to deal with the difficulties associated with the fact that the Son of man has not yet come in this way, some Christians offer non-literal interpretations that avoid them. One is that "this generation" means the Jews as a people, regardless of when or where they live. Another is that "this generation" means the generation of people that is alive when **v. 29-31** are fulfilled. Rather than spend time discussing the merits of interpretations like these, the writer will now simply point out and discuss examples of other texts in which Jesus uses phrases like "this generation", especially those in which he uses them in combination with words like "you" and "ye".
- To begin with, the three Synoptic Gospels make clear that the phrase "I say unto you, This generation shall" in **v. 34** is one example of a type of phrase in which Jesus uses the word "generation" with the words "you" (or "ye"), "this" and "O" when directly addressing a group of people. Examples of other verses of this type include: "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt 23:36), and "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you..." (Mark 8:12). Examples of verses of this type that do not use the word "this" include: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12:34), and "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?" (Matt. 17:17). An example of a verse of this type that uses "we" rather than "you" or "ye" is Matt. 12:38-39: "...we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;". From these examples, it seems reasonable to conclude that, when Jesus uses "generation" in these ways, he uses it as a non-repetitious substitute for the word "you" (or "ye" or "we") that tactfully leaves open to interpretation when he is speaking narrowly about all of the persons who are then physically present, and when he is speaking broadly about some, many or all of the persons who are alive at that time, but who may or may not be then physically present.
- One of the most interesting of the above-mentioned examples involves the similarities between **v. 34** and v. 36 of Matt. 23:29-39. This is because these verses not only use many of the same words or phrases, but also combine the words "you", "this generation" and "all these things" in ways that support the idea that both of these verses apply directly to the persons to whom Jesus is speaking. This is also because, if this conclusion is correct, it means that the words "all these things" in v. 36 of Matt. 23:29-39 may include the damnation of hell that Jesus speaks about in v. 33 of that text.
- In addition to including texts that use the word "generation" in the ways described in the previous Note, the Synoptic Gospels include texts that use it the same way we use it today. Examples of texts of this kind include Matt. 1:17: "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations;" and Luke 1:50: "And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation." See also v. 8 of Luke 16:8-13: "...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.". Curiously, however, the Gospel of John does not use the word "generation" even once.
- For the sake of completeness, the writer will now include some examples of KJV Old Testament texts that use the word "generation". Examples of this kind that are shown in the accompanying document titled *Old Testament Auxiliary Text Files* include: v. 10 of Judg. 2:6-10: "and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord,;" v. 18 of Ps. 102:13-28: "This shall be written for the generation to come:;" v. 8 of Is. 53:1-12: "who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living:;" and v. 20 of Joel 3:9-21: "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.".
- If the above-discussed facts and inferences about the meaning of 'this generation' are correct, it would be reasonable to think that the prophecies of Jesus about the coming of the Son described in **v. 30** above, in v. 26 of Mark 13:24-32, and in v. 27 of Luke 21:25-37 (among others) failed to come to pass and, consequently, are false prophecies within the meaning of v. 22 of Deut. 18:20-22. Ominously, v. 20 of the same text says that prophets who claim to speak in God's name words which God did not command them to speak shall be put to death. As a result, one cannot dismiss out of hand that the possibility that one of the reasons the Jewish authorities wanted to put Jesus to death was the non-fulfillment of Son of man prophecies of the kind Matthew describes Jesus making in v. 23 of Matt. 10:5-23.

- The prophecy of Jesus about the passing away of heaven and earth in **v. 35** above is repeated, word for word, in v. 31 of Mark 13:24-32 and v. 33 of Luke 21:25-37. This passing away seems to correspond to that mentioned in v. 25-26 of Ps. 102:13-28, v. 4 of Is. 34:1-10, v. 6 of Is. 51:1-11, v. 17 of Is. 65:6-25 and v. 22 of Is. 66:15-24. Interestingly, the two last-cited verses from Isaiah speak about new heavens and a new earth. It is possible that this "new earth" is what Jesus had in mind when he described his teachings about the world to come in v. 32 of Matt. 12:31-32, v. 30 of Mark 10:28-31 and v. 30 of Luke 18:28-30, and his teachings about the regeneration in v. 28 of Matt. 18:27-30.

Notes on the Ending of Part 1

- **V. 35** is the last verse in which the words of the Matthean discourse generally parallel those of the Lukan discourse. This is because **v. 35** and its Lukan counterpart, v. 33 of Luke 21:25-37, appear at the points after which the Matthean and Lukan discourses unfold very differently. Specifically, Luke 21:33 appears at the point after which Luke describes Jesus exhorting his listeners to be watchful and alert, providing additional information about the coming of the Son of man and then ending his discourse. **V. 35**, on the other hand, appears at the point after which Matthew describes Jesus pointing out similarities between the time of the coming of the Son of man and the days of Noe (v. 37-39 of Matt. 24:37-51), telling a long parable about wise and evil servants (v. 42-51 of Matt. 24:37-51), and then continuing through all of chapter 25 of his Gospel before ending his discourse.
- Similarly, **v. 36** is the last verse in which the words of the Matthean discourse generally parallel those of the Markan discourse. This is because **v. 36** and its Markan counterpart, v. 32 of Mark 13:24-32, appear at the points after which the Matthean and Markan discourses unfold very differently. Specifically, Mark 13:32 appears at the point after which Mark describes Jesus telling a short parable about watchful servants and then ending his discourse. **V. 36**, on the other hand, appears at the point after which Matthew describes Jesus pointing out similarities between the time of the coming of the Son of man and the days of Noe (v. 37-39 of Matt. 24:37-51), telling a long parable about wise and evil servants (v. 42-51 of Matt. 24:37-51), and then continuing through all of chapter 25 of his Gospel before ending his discourse.
- The teaching of Jesus in **v. 36** that only "my Father" knows the day and hour when the Son of man will come highlights the importance of the fact that this time is unknown. Mark 13:32 includes a similar teaching, but uses the phrase "the Father" rather than "my Father", and includes "the Son" among those to whom this time is unknown. The most nearly similar Lukan verses are v. 40 and 46 of Luke 12:35-48, which only describe Jesus teaching that the Son of man will come at a time "when ye think not." (v. 40) or when he is not looked for (v. 46). See also v. 35 of Mark 13:32-37, v. 42, 44 and 50 of Matt. 24:37-51 and v. 13 of Matt. 25:1-13.
- The writer has included **v. 36** with **v. 29-36** above in spite of the fact that Bibles that show paragraph symbols show it appearing after a paragraph break. He has done this in part because Jesus' use of the words "But" and "that day" in **v. 36** suggests that Jesus intended this verse to complete the thoughts he expresses in **v. 35** (among others), and in part because **v. 36** seems to fit as well with the verses that precede it as it does with the verses that follow it.

Part 2: Matt. 24:37 Through Matt. 25:46

This is the second of the two parts into which the writer divides Matthew's End Time discourse. In this part he shows and discusses End Time prophecies of Jesus which differ from those he includes in Part 1 and/or which have no counterparts in Mark's or Luke's End Time discourses. Prominent among these are additional prophecies of Jesus about the coming of the Son of man, the Day of Judgment, and the separation of the persons being judged into those who will have life eternal and those who will suffer everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:31-46). Because these prophecies are so important the writer discusses them, and especially the meaning of the words everlasting punishment, at length below in the Appendix titled *Notes on Everlasting Punishment*.

Matt. 24:37-51

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. **P** 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [end ch.]

- **V. 37-39** roughly correspond to v. 26-27 of Luke 17:26-37, but have no counterpart in the Gospel of Mark or John.
- By comparing the coming of the Son of man to the days of Noe in **v. 37-39**, Jesus explicitly alludes to texts like Gen. 6:1-13 and Gen. 6:17-18, in which God speaks of the "end of all flesh" (Gen. 6:13) and destroying "all flesh" (Gen. 6:17). This, in turn, seems to clarify the things Jesus has in mind when he speaks about "no flesh" being saved in v. 22 of Matt. 24:1-22 above and its Markan counterpart, v. 20 of Mark 13:1-20. See also v. 26-27 of Luke 17:26-37.
- In the Gospel of Luke, the counterpart of **v. 37-39**, Luke 17:26-27, is immediately followed by Luke 17:28-30, which describe Jesus comparing the days of the Son of man to those of Lot, when fire and brimstone rained from heaven, and destroyed them all. While Jesus does not mention Lot by name in Matthew or Mark, he may well have had him in mind when he compared the Day of Judgment to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah as he sent out the twelve to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. See v. 15 of Matt. 10:5-23 and v. 11 of Mark 6:7-13. See also v. 12 of Luke 10:1-16.
- The two persons and two women mentioned in **v. 40-41** seem to correspond to those mentioned, with some variations in wording, in v. 35-36 of Luke 17:26-37. Neither of these pairs of persons is mentioned in the Gospels of Mark and John.
- The command to watch in **v. 42** seems to be repeated in v. 13 of Matt. 25:1-13 below, but with the phrase "your Lord" replaced by the phrase "the Son of man". This command is also similar to that included in v. 35 of Mark 13:32-37, even though the latter is longer and uses "the master of the house" where **v. 42** uses "your Lord". See also Mark 13:33.
- The command to watch that Jesus gives in **v. 42** seems to be related to the warning against drunkenness he gives in **v. 49**. In spite of differences in wording and word order, this relationship seems to parallel that between the command to watch that Jesus gives in v. 36 of Luke 21:25-37 and the warning against drunkenness he gives in v. 34 of that text.
- **V. 42, 44** and **50** seem to reiterate an idea that is expressed in more absolute terms in v. 36 of Matt. 24:29-36 and in v. 32 of Mark 13:32-37. The most nearly similar verses in the Gospel of Luke, v. 40 and 46 of Luke 12:35-48, say that the Son of man will not come when people think (v. 40) or will come when they are not looking for him (v. 46).
- **V. 43-44** are generally similar to v. 39-40 of Luke 12:35-48. No similar verses appear in the Gospels of Mark and John.
- The servant parable Jesus tells in **v. 45-51** parallels the parable he tells in v. 42-46 of Luke 12:35-48, except that Luke describes the unwise servant as included with unbelievers and beaten with stripes, while Matthew describes him as included with hypocrites where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.". Luke does, however, use the latter phrase once, in v. 28 of Luke 13:22-30.
- The unusual phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in **v. 51** above also appears in v. 12 of Matt. 8:10-12, v. 13 of Matt. 22:1-14 and v. 30 of Matt. 25:14-30. It also appears once in Luke (v. 28 of Luke 13:22-30), but does not appear anywhere in the Gospels of Mark and John. In addition, the similar phrase "wailing and gnashing of teeth" appears in v. 42 of Matt. 13:36-43 and v. 50 of Matt 13:47-50. All phrases of these kinds seem to be based on v. 10 of Ps. 112:1-10.
- Among texts that use phrases like weeping (or wailing) and gnashing of teeth, Matt. 13:36-43 and Matt. 13:47-50 are of special interest because they couple these phrases with references to the end of the world and to persons who are cast into a furnace of fire. Matt. 25:14-30 is also of special interest because it uses "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in a verse that immediately precedes and lays a foundation for the teachings of Jesus about the End Time Judgment described in Matt. 25:31-46, v. 46 of which is the only KJV Bible verse that uses the words "everlasting punishment" as such.
- The above-mentioned similarities between **v. 42** and v. 35 of Mark 13:32-37, and between **v. 42** and **v. 48** and v. 36 and 34 respectively of Luke 21:25-37, are more significant than they may at first appear. This is because, as in the case of Matt. 24:29-36 above, these Markan and Lukan verses appear near the ends of their discourses, while **v. 42** and **v. 48** appear near the middle of the Matthean discourse. The significance of these facts will be discussed more fully in Notes that the writer includes at the end of Part 2.

Matt 25:1-13

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. [end par.]

- **V. 1** begins a parable about virgins who are expected to have their lamps burning while they wait for a bridegroom. While no other Gospel includes this parable as such, Luke 12:35-48 includes a similar parable about men who wait for their lord's return from a wedding and are expected to have their lights burning. Interestingly, both **v. 13** and v. 40 of Luke 12:35-48 command listeners to watch (or be ready) because the hour when the Son of man cometh is unknown.

- **V. 1** is the first verse of the Matthean discourse that uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" as such. While the Gospel of Matthew uses this phrase over thirty times, the other Gospels do not use it even once. They do, however, often use the phrase "kingdom of God". Examples of verse pairs that use these phrases interchangeably are shown in the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Kingdom*. See also the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Heaven*.
- A number of parallels exist between **v. 5-12** and v. 5-10 of Luke 11:5-13. Both texts, for example, involve persons who are asleep at midnight, and who are awakened and asked for something. Both texts also involve shut doors. In **v. 5-12**, the request is refused, but in Luke 11:5-13 the request is granted. One explanation may be that **v. 12** involves persons who are not known to the person inside the door, while Luke 11:5 and 8 involve a person who is a friend of the person inside. See also, however, Luke 13:22-30, which involves persons who are known to the person inside, but are turned away because they are workers of iniquity (v. 27).
- The parable Jesus tells in **v. 5-12** has no obvious counterpart in the Gospel of Mark, which does not use door (or gate or way) imagery with enter (or open or come) imagery to contrast the fate of those who are saved and not saved. The Markan text that is most similar to a text of this kind is Mark 10:17-27, v. 25 of which describes Jesus saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." (v. 25), a text that clearly corresponds to v. 24 of Matt. 19:16-26 and v. 25 of Luke 18:18-27. Jesus does, however, use door and way imagery in the Gospel of John. See, for example, v. 1-3 and 7-9 of John 10:1-14 and v. 5-7 of John 14:1-7.
- **V. 11-12** seem to be related to v. 21 of Matt. 7:21-23, in which Jesus says, "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven". That the idea he conveys here is not as simple as it may seem is suggested by v. 14 of Matt. 7:13-14, which says that few will find and enter the straight gate that leads to life, and v. 7-8 of Matt. 7:7-12, which say that he who asks (or knocks) will receive (or be opened). See also v. 16 of Matt. 20:13-16 and v. 14 of Matt. 22:1-14.
- V. 22-26 of John 16:19-28 is still another text that arguably affects the meaning of **v. 11-12**. This is because the latter text describes Jesus speaking about the importance of how, when and of whom a person asks for things.
- It is unclear how the things said in **v. 11-12** are related to similar things said in the Old Testament. V. 32 of Joel 2:28-32, for example, says, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.". See also Ps. 145:17-20.
- The command to watch in **v. 13** corresponds to that in v. 42 of Matt 24:37-51, except that **v. 13** uses the phrase "the Son of man" where Matt. 24:42 uses "your Lord". In most other respects, these commands seem to be only further indications of the importance of the fact that the time of this coming is unknown. See in this connection v. 36 of Matt 24:29-36 and v. 44 and 50 of Matt. 24:37-51 above. See also v. 32 and 35 of Mark 13:32-37 and v. 40 and 46 of Luke 12:35-48.

Matt. 25:14-30

P 14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained another two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [end par.]

- This text is a prime example of an End Time text. This is because **v. 14-15** and **19** describe the lord of the servants going away and returning after a long absence, and because **v. 20-30** describes him judging his servants on the basis of what they have done in his absence. As a result, this text seems to be a thinly veiled description of the importance of what a person does before Jesus returns to preside over the End Time Judgment.

- The End Time parable Jesus tells in **v. 14-30** is similar to the parable he tells in Luke 19:11-27, in spite of the fact that it

involves three servants and eight talents, while Luke 19:11-27 involves ten servants and ten pounds. One reason is that these parables have similar overall structures and involve similar sequences of events. A second is that the rewards given to the good servants in **v. 21** and **23**, like those in v. 17-19 of Luke 19:11-27, involve granting rule or authority over others. A third is that **v. 24-28** and v. 20-24 of Luke 19:11-27 not only closely parallel one another, but also include the only two verses of the New Testament that use the word "usury". Finally, **v. 29** above, the next to last verse of this text, appears almost word for word in v. 26 of Luke 19:11-27, the next to last verse of that text.

- In spite of the above-mentioned similarities, the parables Jesus tells in **v. 14-30** and in Luke 19:11-27 have a number of differences. One is that, while Matthew's parable relates to a man who travels to a far country for an unstated reason (**v. 14-15**) and calls for a reckoning on his return (**v. 19**), Luke's parable relates to a nobleman who goes into a far country to receive a kingdom (v. 12) and returns after receiving it (v. 15). Thus, Luke's parable seems to allude to the End Time Kingdom mentioned in v. 13-14 of Dan. 7:9-14, while Matthew's parable does not.
- A second difference between these parables is that, while both describe the wicked or slothful servant having his talent (or pound) taken and given to a servant who already has ten (**v. 28** above and v. 24-25 of Luke 19:11-27), they end very differently. Specifically, Matthew's parable ends with **v. 30**, which describes the lord of the servants ordering the slothful servant to be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Luke's parable, on the other hand, ends with v. 27, which does not say anything more about the fate of wicked servant, but describes the nobleman ordering those citizens who do not want him to reign over them to be brought before him and slain.
- The gain mentioned in **v. 17, 20** and **22** and the return with usury mentioned in **v. 27** seem to symbolize something Jesus speaks about many times in the Gospels: the importance of bearing fruit or, in other words, persuading others to repent and follow him. These references to gain seem to correspond to those made in v. 15-18 and 23 of Luke 19:11-27.
- Jesus' use of the word "enter" in **v. 21** and **23** seems to foreshadow his use of the words "come" and "inherit" in v. 34 of Matt. 25:31-46 below. Similarly, Jesus' use of the words "cast...into outer darkness:" in **v. 30** seems to foreshadow his use of the words "depart" and "go away" in v. 41 and 46 of Matt. 25:31-46.
- The importance of the teaching of Jesus described in **v. 29** is suggested by its appearance, with variations in wording, not only in v. 26 of Luke 19:11-27, but also in v. 12 of Matt. 13:10-17, v. 25 of Mark 4:21-25 and v. 18 of Luke 8:16-18. It may be that this teaching is related to that described in v. 48 of Luke 12:35-48: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
- **V. 30** is the second verse of the Matthean discourse in which Jesus uses the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth", the first being v. 51 of Matt. 24:37-51 above. As explained in a Note associated with the latter text, this phrase appears in a number of other verses in the Gospel of Matthew, e.g., v. 12 of Matt. 8:10-12 and v. 13 of Matt. 22:1-14. It also appears once in the Gospel of Luke (v. 28 of Luke 13:22-30), but not at all in the Gospels of Mark and John. All of these phrases seem to be based on v. 10 of Ps. 112:1-10.
- **V. 30** is of special interest because the words "weeping and gnashing of teeth" are very similar to the words "wailing and gnashing of teeth", which Jesus uses in Matt. 13:36-43 and Matt 13:47-50 and which he couples with references to the end of the world and to persons who are cast into a furnace of fire. **V. 30** is also of special interest because it immediately precedes and lays a foundation for the teachings of Jesus about the End Time Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) and because the latter text includes the first and only verse of the King James Bible that uses the words "everlasting punishment" as such to describe one of the outcomes of that Judgment.

Special Introductory Note on Jesus and the Day of Judgment: Matt. 25:31-46

Matt. 25:31-46 below is the last text that the KJV Bible includes as a part of the Matthean End Time discourse. In this text the KJV Bible provides its longest and most complete description of prophecies of Jesus about the End Time Judgment. More particularly, it describes prophecies of Jesus not only about the events that immediately precede this Judgment, but also how and by whom it will be conducted, who will be judged, the criteria that will be used to judge them, and the future destinies that will be decreed for them. As a result, this text and its associated Notes are discussed and should be read with special care and attention to detail. In addition, this text includes the only instance of a verse in which the KJV Bible uses the words everlasting punishment as such. Because the meaning of everlasting punishment has an importance that is difficult to overstate, the writer has prepared a special set of Notes titled *Notes on Everlasting Punishment* that discusses this subject at length. For the convenience of everyone concerned, the writer includes a copy of this set of Notes both as an Appendix at the end of this document, and as stand-alone web page and PDF documents that may be found on the Home and Table of Contents pages of this website. Also of interest in connection with the Judgment described in Matt. 25:31-46 is the discussion of the meaning of the word everlasting that the writer includes in Part B of the document titled *Senses of the Word Everlasting*. A copy of this document may be found among the Auxiliary Sense Files of the Home and Table of Contents pages of this website.

Matt. 25:31-46

P 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. [end ch.]

- **V. 31-46** above bring the Matthean discourse to a close by describing a trial-like proceeding or judgment of a kind that has no counterpart in either the Markan or Lukan discourse or anywhere in the Gospel of John.
- The events Jesus describes in **v. 31-46** roughly parallel those he describes in Matt. 13:36-43 and 13:47-50, although the latter texts are shorter and portray these events more as a separation of the righteous from the wicked than as a separation of those who help him from those who do not. While none of these texts uses phrases like the Day of Judgment and the Judgment as such, Jesus does use phrases like these numerous times. See, for example, v. 15 of Matt. 10:5-23, v. 22 and 24 of Matt. 11:20-24, v. 36 of Matt. 12:33-37 and v. 41-42 of Matt. 12:38-42. See also Mark 6:11 and Luke 10:14.
- The coming of the Son of man Jesus describes in **v. 31** seems to be the same as the coming he describes in v. 30 of Matt. 24:29-36 and its Markan and Lukan counterparts, v. 26 of Mark 13:24-32 and v. 27 of Luke 21:25-37. These descriptions of his coming all seem to be related to the coming he describes in v. 28 of Matt. 16:24-28, v. 38 of Mark 8:34-9:1 and v. 26 of Luke 9:23-27. See also v. 41 of Matt. 13:36-43, v. 27 of Matt. 24:23-28, v. 37-39 of Matt. 24:37-51 and v. 26-30 of Luke 17:36-37. See also, however, v. 23 of Matt. 10:5-23.
- The things Jesus teaches in **v. 31** are similar to the things he says in v. 64 of Matt. 26:62-66 and v. 62 of Mark 14:60-64, i.e., at his trial before the high priest, except that he there adds, "sitting on the right hand of power,". In the most nearly similar Lukan account of his Jewish trial, Luke 22:66-71, Jesus does not mention cloud(s), and says only that the Son of man shall "sit on the right hand of the power of God." Because the significance of the latter verses is discussed in Notes included with v. 30 of Matt. 24:29-36 above, this significance will not be discussed again here.
- In view of the similarities and differences between **v. 31** and Matt. 24:29-36 (v. 30), it may be that Jesus meant the latter to describe what people see as the Son of man draws near, and the former what people will see after he has arrived.
- While **v. 31** is similar to the last part of v. 30 of Matt. 24:29-36, it adds the unusual phrase "the throne of his glory", a phrase that Jesus uses in only one other verse of the New Testament, v. 28 of Matt. 19:27-30, a verse that is itself unusual because it is the only Bible verse that uses the word "regeneration" as such to describe the End Time. It is unclear if and how this regeneration is related to the restoration of all things that Jesus speaks about in v. 11 of Matt. 17:10-13.
- The phrase "the throne of his glory" is interesting because the two verses in which Jesus uses it, **v. 31** above and v. 28 of Matt. 19:27-30, both mention the Son of man and speak about persons who sit in judgment. The most nearly similar Markan and Lukan verses are v. 37 and 40 of Mark 10:35-40 and v. 29-30 of Luke 22:24-30. Among these, Matt. 19:28 and Luke 22:30 are of special interest because they are the only KJV Bible verses that describe teachings of Jesus about disciples judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The phrase "the throne of his glory" in **v. 31** is also interesting because, while the Bible includes many verses that use phrases like the throne of the Lord, his throne, etc. and phrases like the glory of the Lord, his glory, etc., only Jesus is described as combining them into the phrase "throne of his glory". Examples of verses of the former kind include 1Kings 22:19, 1Chron. 29:23 and Ps. 9:7, 11:4 and 103:19. Examples of verses of the latter kind include Exod. 16:10, 1Kings 8:11 and Ps. 8:1, 72:19 and 102:16.
- In **v. 32** Jesus describes all nations being gathered before the Son of Man. It is not clear how this gathering is related to v. 31 of Matt. 24:29-36 above and v. 27 of Mark 13:24-32, which describe the Son of man sending his angels to gather his elect from the four winds. The most nearly similar part of the Lukan discourse, Luke 21:25-37, does not mention such a gathering and says only that this day shall come as a snare on "all of them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."
- Except for their inclusion of all nations, **v. 32** and **33** above describe events which generally parallel those described in Ezek. 34:6-24. More particularly, **v. 32** generally parallels the gathering mentioned in v. 13 of Ezek. 34:6-24, while **v. 33**

generally parallels the judging between rams and goats mentioned in v. 17 of Ezek. 34:6-24.

- **V. 34** describes a prophecy of Jesus about persons who are blessed of his Father inheriting a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, a clear indication that this kingdom is the End Time Kingdom. Another such indication is that Jesus uses the word "prepared" in texts in which he speaks about the places of honor his disciples will have in his kingdom, e.g., Matt. 20:20-23 and Mark 10:35-40. Still another is that Jesus uses the word "inherit". His use of this word is significant because the Old Testament frequently uses one or another form of this word when it refers to the land that God promises to give his people. See, for example, Gen. 28:4, Exod. 15:17 and 32:13 and Is. 65:9.
- **V. 31-46** together comprise the New Testaments' longest and most specific description of the teachings of Jesus about the End Time Judgment. In this text Jesus describes the King (or Son of man) decreeing the fates of those on his right hand (**v. 34-40**) and those on his left hand (**v. 41-45**) using as his judgment criterion whether they received and helped him or "the least of these my brethren" (**v. 40**) or "the least of these" (**v. 45**). This criterion seems to be similar to the one Jesus describes in various ways (e.g., receive, hear, etc.) in v. 14-15 of Matt. 10:5-42 and v. 11 of Mark 6:7-13 of Matthew's and Mark's accounts of the sending out of the twelve, both of which prophesy terrible fates for people who reject his followers and/or the message they preached. See also v. 4-5 of Luke 9:1-6 and v. 10-12 of Luke 10:1-16 of Luke's accounts of the sending out of the twelve and the seventy. Finally, see Matt. 11:20-24 and Luke 11:29-32, both of which describe terrible fates for people who refuse to believe or act on the things Jesus and his followers preached.
- The things Jesus says about giving drink to "the least of these my brethren" in **v. 35-40** and to "the least of these" in **v. 42-45** seem to parallel the things he says about giving drink to disciples in v. 42 of Matt. 10:37-42 and v. 41-42 of Mark 9:41-48. As a result, it is possible that Jesus used terms like "the least of these" in a narrow sense that includes even low-ranking followers, and not in a broad sense that includes any and all persons who need help.
- While the above-mentioned texts use a variety of different words to describe the criteria used to judge a person, all of them seem to involve, in one way or another, the idea of whether a person believes the things that Jesus or his followers preached and/or helps them on the basis of that belief. The importance of belief as a judgment criterion is confirmed by texts like Matt. 18:6, Mark 9:42, Mark 16:16 and Luke 8:12, and numerous texts in the Gospel of John. See, for example, v. 15-16 and 18 of John 3:13-18; v. 35-36 of John 3:31-36; v. 47 and 58 of John 6:47-58; v. 25-26 of John 11:21-27 and John 12:44-50. Since believing a person and being willing to help him normally go together, the writer believes that it would be repetitious to discuss them separately. Accordingly, he will treat them as different aspects of a single judgment criterion, for present purposes, and refer to them collectively as the "belief-help criterion".
- The importance of belief as a judgment criterion is also confirmed by texts like Matt. 10:32-33, Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26 and Luke 12:8-9 which clearly describe Jesus teaching that expressions of belief in him (e.g., confessing him, not denying him, not being ashamed of him, etc.) will play a key role in the Judgment. See also, however, Matt. 11:20-24, Mark 1:14-15 and Luke 11:29-32, all of which suggest that belief in the gospel and/or repentance is an important judgment criterion.
- In spite of the importance of the belief-help criterion, Jesus elsewhere describes many other criteria that can determine the outcome of the Judgment. See, for example, the righteousness he mentions in Matt. 5:17-20, the keeping of the commandments he mentions in Matt. 19:16-26 (**v. 17**), the love of God he mentions in Matt. 22:35-40, the giving to the poor he mentions in Matt. 19:16-26 (**v. 21**), the avoidance of iniquity (or wickedness) he mentions in Matt. 13:36-43 (**v. 41**) and Matt. 13:47-50, and the forgiveness of one another he mentions in Matt. 6:9-15 and Matt. 18:23-35 (**v. 34-35**). Unfortunately, Jesus does not rank these criteria in the order of their importance or make clear how they are related to the belief-help criterion. In short, Jesus does not make clear which of these criteria, if any, are so important that meeting them alone is enough for a person to be judged favorably, or whether he must meet them all. See, however, Matt. 5:48 (not included) and Matt. 19:16-26 (**v. 21**), both of which describe Jesus urging people to be perfect.
- By itself, **v. 34** does not clearly describe the ultimate fate of those who inherit the kingdom prepared for them "from the foundation of the world". **V. 46** clarifies **v. 34** by adding that those who inherit this kingdom will have "life eternal". That this fate is a good one, however, seems clear from v. 4 of Is. 64:1-5, which speaks of the indescribable goodness of the things that God has "prepared for him that waiteth for him." See also the treasure(s) that Jesus describes as being enjoyed in heaven (or the heavens) at Matt. 6:20, Matt. 19:21, Mark 10:21 and Luke 12:33, among others. Based on these texts there can be little doubt that the kingdom Jesus speaks about in **v. 34** is the End Time Kingdom.
- Similarly, **v. 41** and **v. 46** do not clearly describe the ultimate fate of those who depart "into everlasting fire" (**v. 41**) or go "into everlasting punishment" (**v. 46**). This is because the Bible sometimes seems to use the word "everlasting" in a temporally infinite sense in which it refers to things, such as God and His attributes (His power, wisdom, etc.), that will always exist (i.e., will continue or "last" forever), and sometimes seems to use it in an absolutely final sense in which it refers to things, such as divinely decreed fates or appointed ends, that will never be changed or undone (i.e., will be or "stand" forever). Because this difference is so important, the writer discusses it at length in a special set of Notes titled *Notes on Everlasting Punishment*. Copies of this special set of Notes are included both as an Appendix at the end of this document and as stand-alone documents on the Table of Contents and Home pages of this website.
- Although the phrases "everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment" are often used in sermons that warn people of the

fates that await those who are not saved, the KJV Bible uses them as such only a few times, all in passages which include teachings of Jesus described in the Gospel of Matthew. Specifically, the KJV Bible uses "everlasting punishment" as such only once, in **v. 46** above, and uses "everlasting fire" as such only twice, once in **v. 41** and once in v. 8 of Matt. 18:2-9. Similarly, the Bible as a whole uses the words "hell fire" as such only three times, in Matt. 5:22, Matt. 18:9 and Mark 9:47. Because the End Time significance of these and arguably synonymous phrases, such as "a fire...that shall burn for ever" and a "fire that shall not be quenched", is also discussed at length in the above-mentioned special set of Notes titled *Notes on Everlasting Punishment*, the writer will not discuss this subject further here.

- Interestingly, the words the King speaks in **v. 41** parallel the words he speaks in **v. 34**, except that they do not command the cursed to go into a place prepared for them, but rather into an everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. This is interesting because it seems to speak about this fire as a place rather than a thing. One possible explanation for this may be that the King does not choose to dignify this place by describing it as a kingdom over which the devil rules as a king in much the same way he [the King] rules over the End Time Kingdom of God. The correctness of this explanation seems to be confirmed by Matt. 12:26 and Luke 11:18, in which Jesus denies that Satan is divided against himself, and refers to his [Satan's] dwelling place as "his kingdom".
- Surprisingly, **v. 41** is the only verse in the Gospels in which Jesus uses "angels" to refer to beings he elsewhere refers to as "devils" or "a devil". This is surprising because the Old Testament invariably uses words like "angel" or "angel of the Lord" to refer to beings that are obedient servants of God, and even uses the terms "evil spirit from the Lord" or "evil angels" to describe beings that God sends to trouble or harm human beings. See, for example, Judg. 9:23, 1Sam. 16:14 and Ps. 78:49. It is also surprising because the canonical books of the Old Testament do not explicitly describe a fall of angels and use the word "devils" only four times, i.e., in Lev. 17:7, Deut. 32:17, 2Chron. 11:15 and Ps. 106:37. A fall of angels is, however, described in non-canonical books, such as 1Enoch. See in this connection the Note titled *Historical Note on Fallen Angels: The Enoch Literature* that appears at the end of this section of Part 2 below.
- While the writer refers to the events Jesus describes in **v. 31-46** as a trial-like proceeding, these events are actually more like what we would today call a sentencing hearing than it is to a trial. One reason is that **v. 34** and **41** describe the King decreeing the fates of the persons he sets on his right and left before those persons say anything. Another is that, while **v. 35-45** describe the King explaining the reasons for his decrees, they say nothing which suggests that he might reconsider or change them. It therefore seems reasonable to believe that Jesus thought that the Son of man would come not to decide the fates of those being judged, but rather to announce decisions about their fates that have already been made.
- The above-described idea of the End Time Judgment is confirmed by the fact that, while the Old Testament includes many texts that describe God coming to earth to punish people, these texts typically portray Him as executing judgment(s) that have already been made or as simply taking actions that are described without using the word "judgment" as such. Examples of texts that describe God executing judgment include Ps. 9:13-18, Ps. 103:8-19, Ps. 146:1-10, Ezek. 5:7-15 and Mic. 7:8-10. Examples of texts that describe God taking actions that are described without using the word "judgment" as such include Ps. 97:1-10, Is. 13:6-15, Joel 2:1-11, Zeph. 1:7-18 and Mal. 4:1-6.
- Even though only the Matthean discourse includes a prophecy of Jesus about a Last Judgment of the kind described in **v. 31-46** and Matt. 25:14-30, the parts of the Synoptic Gospels that appear before their End Time discourses include many other texts that describe Jesus revealing things about this Judgment or its implementation. See, for example, Matt. 13:36-43 and 13:47-50 and Luke 19:11-27. See also the verbal exchanges that Jesus describes in Matt. 7:21-23 and Luke 13:22-30, both of which include verses that parallel **v. 41**, i.e., Matt. 7:23 and Luke 13:27. Finally, see Mark 9:41-48, a text in which Jesus describes people being cast into a fire that never shall be quenched. In the Gospel of John, on the other hand, Jesus seems to stress the relationship between the Judgment and the resurrection or between the Judgment and everlasting (or eternal) life. See, for example, John 5:19-29, John 6:35-44 and John 6:47-58.

• Interestingly, the KJV Old Testament never uses the phrase "Day of Judgment" as such. It does, however, often use terms like the day of the Lord, day of wrath, day of vengeance, etc. that seem to convey similar ideas. See, for example, Is. 2:10-22, Is. 13:6-15, Joel 2:1-11, Joel 2:28-32, Joel 3:9-21, Zeph. 1:7-18, Zech. 14:1-11, Mal. 3:1-9 and Mal. 4:1-6.

[Historical Note on Fallen Angels: The Enoch Literature:](#)

One possible explanation for the fact that the Old Testament does not explicitly describe a fall or rebellion of beings it calls angels* may be found in books, now often called the Enoch literature, which were known to the Jews during the time of Jesus**, and which describe angels who rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven into a burning valley beneath the earth. In fact, Jude 1:6 is a quotation from one of these books. Those who wish to delve more deeply into this subject should know that, while no copies of these books survived within the Roman empire after about the sixth century, copies of Ethiopic translations thereof were found in Ethiopia in 1763 and are now available in English both in print and online. Of special interest in this connection are the books now commonly referred to as 1Enoch, The Similitudes [or Parables] of Enoch and The Book of Watchers.

* Special Note #1: In spite of not describing a fall of beings it calls angels, the KJV Old Testament does use terms like watchers, holy ones, and sons of God to describe beings who may or may not be angels, and who may or may not have

willfully disobeyed God. See, for example, Gen. 6:2 and 6:4, Dan. 4:13 and 4:17 and Job 1:6 and 2:1. These beings are also mentioned numerous times in the Enoch Literature.

** Special Note #2: One of the most interesting things about the parts of 1Enoch titled *The Similitudes of Enoch* (a.k.a. *The Parables of Enoch*) is the fact that it uses some unusual terms that the Gospels also describe Jesus using. Included among the latter are: 'the Son of man' and 'the throne of his glory'. These uses, in turn, raises interesting but unanswerable questions about if and how much these parts of 1Enoch may have influenced the teachings of Jesus.

Notes on the Ending of Matthew's End Time Discourse

As stated in connection with Matt. 24:29-36 and Matt. 24:37-51, Matthew does not end his End Time discourse in the same way that Mark and Luke end their End Time discourses. More particularly, Matthew does not end his discourse with verses that describe Jesus telling a parable about watchful servants (v. 42-50 of Matt. 24:37-51 above), and that seem to roughly correspond to v. 34-36 of Mark 13:32-37 and to parts of v. 34-36 of Luke 21:25-37. Instead, Matthew describes Jesus continuing to speak, without stopping, not only to the end of chapter 24 of his Gospel, but also through all of chapter 25 thereof. Because these additional verses make the Matthean discourse much longer than either the Markan or Lukan discourse, some scholars may argue that they should not be treated as parts of the Matthean discourse. Because arguments of this kind involve issues too technical and time consuming to discuss in a writing of this kind, the writer will make no attempt to do so. Instead, he will simply treat these verses *as if they were* parts of the Matthean discourse, for present purposes, and focus on pointing out the things they reveal about the teachings of Jesus about the End Time Judgment.

Unfortunately, neither the Markan nor the Lukan discourse includes texts in which Jesus describes trial-like proceedings or judgments of the kind he describes in v. 14-30 and v. 31-46 of chapter 25 of Matthew. As a result, the writer does not have a clear textual basis for discussing how the things Jesus says in these texts affect and are affected by the most nearly similar things he says in the Markan and Lukan discourses. Accordingly, rather than say nothing about this subject in the Markan and Lukan discourses, the writer includes with them extra sets of Notes that discuss how the things Jesus says in these texts are related to the most nearly similar things he says elsewhere in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. See in this connection the set of Notes titled *Comparative Notes on the Judgment* that the writer includes as Appendices at the ends of the Markan and the Lukan versions of these discourses.

Appendix: Notes on Everlasting Punishment

This set of Notes discusses what the writer discovered by studying what the Old Testament in general and Jesus in particular may mean when they use words or phrases like everlasting, everlasting fire and everlasting punishment. In these Notes, the writer will point out and discuss KJV Bible texts in which Jesus uses these and similar words and phrases. He will also point out and discuss Old Testament texts that Jesus quotes or alludes to in order to explain and/or support his teachings about these things. Finally, he will point out and discuss other Old Testament texts that use these and similar words or phrases in ways that shed additional light on their meanings. By doing these things the writer tries to place the teachings of Jesus about everlasting punishment, hell, and damnation in the context of the time and place in which he taught them, and thereby lay a solid foundation for a study of what the New Testament has to say about them.

In v. 41 of his description of the End Time Judgment, Matt. 25:31-46, Jesus describes the cursed being ordered to depart "into everlasting fire". In v. 46 of that text he describes the cursed as going "into everlasting punishment". These words, however, can mean two very different things, depending on the sense in which Jesus uses the word "everlasting". One possibility is that he uses everlasting in a temporally infinite sense in which it refers to things, such as God and His attributes (His power, wisdom, etc.), which will always exist. Another is that he uses everlasting in an absolutely final sense in which it refers to things, such as divinely decreed fates or appointed ends, that will never be changed or undone. In other words, Jesus may use the word "everlasting" to describe things that will go on or "last" forever, or he may use it to describe things that will endure or "stand" forever. Which of these senses of this word Jesus had in mind in Matt. 25:31-46 could hardly be more consequential. This is because these senses are associated with interpretations of the meaning of everlasting punishment that determine whether the pain that accompanies this punishment will or will not eventually end and, consequently, whether the punishment as a whole is finite or infinite.

Although the answer to the question of whether the punishment mentioned in Matt. 25:46 is finite or infinite may seem simple, it is not. One reason is that, even if it is assumed that the everlasting fire mentioned in Matt. 25:41 will burn for an infinitely long time, it does not necessarily follow that this fire will do to human beings anything different from what any ordinary fire would: injure and kill them and reduce their bodies to ashes or "dust". The writer uses the word "necessarily" because it can be argued that the parallelism between everlasting fire (v. 41) and everlasting punishment (v. 46) suggests that God will enable persons sent into this fire to feel pain without being killed or destroyed. Plausible as this argument may seem, it is inconsistent with the many Bible texts that describe divinely decreed punishments. The reason is that such texts almost always couple words like punish and punishment with words like destroy, devour, consume and perish, all of which involve processes that end naturally when they are completed or left with only ashes or other residues of the things they acted on. Examples of texts of these kinds will be quoted or cited and discussed in the Notes that follow.

Another reason that the answer to the question of whether the punishment mentioned in Matt. 25:46 is infinite or

finite is not simple is that Matt. 25:41 says that the everlasting fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels:". These words are important because the Bible describes angels as spirits and as ministers of flaming fire (Ps. 104:4), but describes human beings as made of dust or, as we would now say, matter (Gen. 2:7 and 3:19 and Eccl. 3:20). As a result, it seems reasonable to ask whether the fire that Jesus speaks about in Matt. 25:41 is a physical fire at all and, if it is, whether this fire affects angels and human beings differently. Such questions are important because, depending on their answers, they may or may not support the idea that angels suffer in this fire for an infinitely long time without being destroyed by it, while human beings suffer in it only until they are consumed or burned to ashes. Since the Bible has little to say about this subject, the writer will now go on to describe not only what he has discovered about how the Bible uses everlasting fire and everlasting punishment, but also what he has discovered about what it means when it uses their constituent words and apparent synonyms, e.g., fire, flame, torment, everlasting, eternal, and for ever ("forever" in modern English).

Judgment and Punishment in the Gospel of Matthew

Surprisingly, none of the words or phrases everlasting punishment, everlasting fire, hell fire, eternal punishment and damnation appears as such anywhere in the Old Testament. In addition, the first two of these phrases appear only a few times in the New Testament, all in verses that include words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Specifically, Jesus uses everlasting punishment only once, in v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46, and uses everlasting fire only twice, once in v. 41 of Matt. 25:31-46, and once in v. 8 of Matt. 18:2-9. Of these, the latter text is important because it includes two verses, v. 8 and 9, that begin with phrases like "If thine...offend thee" and say essentially the same thing, except that v. 8 ends with "everlasting fire" while v. 9 ends with "hell fire", thereby suggesting that these two phrases are synonymous with one another. In addition, Matthew includes an earlier "If thine...offend thee" text, Matt. 5:27-32, v. 29 and 30 of which use the word "hell" by itself at the places where v. 8 and 9 of Matt. 18:2-9 use everlasting fire and hell fire, respectively, thereby suggesting that all these words and phrases have the same or similar meanings. Even these texts, however, do not clearly answer the question of whether Jesus used the word "everlasting" in its temporally infinite sense or in its absolutely final sense. Accordingly, the writer will now discuss other texts that bear on this question, and expand his discussion to include texts that use the words and phrases like hell fire and hell.

Interestingly, both of the above-described Matthean "If thine...offend thee" texts appear near texts which may shed light on the sense in which Jesus used the word "everlasting". Matt. 18:2-9, for example, appears just before Matt. 18:23-35, in which Jesus tells a parable about an unforgiving servant who is tormented "till he should pay all that was due unto him." (v. 34). In addition, Matt. 5:27-32 appears immediately after Matt. 5:21-26, in which Jesus warns a person to avoid being cast into prison because he will not come out till he "hast paid the uttermost farthing." (v. 26). Since both Matt. 18:2-9 and Matt. 5:27-32 use one or more of the words "everlasting fire", "hell fire" and "hell", and appear near texts in which Jesus speaks of punishments that eventually end, it seems reasonable to think that Jesus is more likely to have used these words in their absolutely final sense than in their temporally infinite sense. It seems unclear at this point whether a person who has paid "all that was due", or "the uttermost farthing", is released as a living person, or by the cessation of his existence that accompanies his total destruction. Interestingly, however, both outcomes seem consistent with the idea that, whether a person thinks of hell as a place of torment by fire, or of hell as a place of destruction by fire, he can reasonably think of hell as a place of punishment where the punishment is not everlasting in a temporally infinite sense. The effect of Mark 9:41-48, which comprises still another "If thine...offend thee" text, but seems to use hell fire in a temporally infinite sense, will be discussed later in connection with the Gospel of Mark.

The Gospel of Matthew includes two other texts which shed light on the sense in which Jesus uses the word "everlasting" in Matt 25:31-46 of its End Time discourse. These texts are Matt. 13:36-43 and Matt. 13:47-50, both of which describe those who "do iniquity" (v. 41) or are "wicked" (v. 49), and are gathered (v. 41) or severed (v. 49) by angels and cast into a furnace of fire where "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth". That these texts ought to be regarded as relating to the time of the End Time Judgment is clear from the fact that both texts couple references to a furnace of fire with references to the end of the world (v. 40 and 49) and, in the case of Matt. 13:41, to the Son of man. It is also clear from the fact that the activities of the angels Jesus speaks about in Matt. 13:41 and 13:49 are similar to those of the angels he speaks about in v. 31 of Matt. 24:29-36 of Matthew's End Time discourse. In view of these similarities it is reasonable to think of Matt. 13:36-43 and Matt. 13:47-50 as End Time texts which provide additional information about the fates of those who will be gathered before the Son of man, even though they do not use phrases like everlasting fire and hell fire as such.

Of the similarities and differences between Matt. 13:36-43 and 13:47-50 on the one hand and the Matthean discourse on the other, the most revealing is the use of the unusual phrase "wailing and gnashing of teeth" to describe the fate of those who are cast into a (or the) furnace of fire. This is because the very similar phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is used in 51 of Matt. 24:37-51 and v. 30 of Matt. 25:14-30 of this discourse, i.e., just before the reference to everlasting fire in v. 41 of Matt. 25:31-46. This is also because, as explained earlier in connection with Matt. 24:37-51, all of these phrases seem to be based on v. 10 of Ps. 112:1-10: "The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.". When these New and Old Testaments texts are considered

together, they seem to make clear that there is no real inconsistency between saying that wicked persons will go into everlasting fire and saying that they will melt away or perish. As a result, these texts seem to support the idea that Matt. 25:31-46 uses the word "everlasting" in an absolutely final sense rather than in a temporally infinite sense.

Judgment and Punishment in the Gospel of Mark

While the Gospel of Mark never uses the phrase "everlasting punishment" as such, it does include two End Time texts which describe teachings of Jesus that seem to help shed light on the meaning of this phrase: Mark 3:22-30 and Mark 9:41-48. Turning first to Mark 3:22-30, this text is helpful because v. 29 thereof includes the one and only occurrence of the phrase "eternal damnation" in the KJV Bible, and because the words "everlasting" and "eternal" have senses in which they are synonymous with one another. Both of these words, for example, have senses in which they describe things that continue forever (or are temporally infinite) and senses in which they describe things that do not change with time (or are absolutely final). In fact, the word "eternal", unlike the word "everlasting", also has a more technical sense in which has a meaning related to that of the noun "eternity", a word that philosophers use to describe a plane (or mode) of existence which excludes change because it transcends time. As a result, if this more technical sense of the word "eternal" is taken into account, it arguably favors the idea that the word "eternal" in v. 29 of Mark 3:22-30 is used in an absolutely final rather than in a temporally infinite sense. Also worthy of consideration is the fact that, in the NRSV Bible, v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46 uses the words "eternal punishment" where the KJV Bible uses the words "everlasting punishment".

Turning next to Mark 9:41-48, it is interesting to observe that, although Mark does not use the word "everlasting" or the phrase "everlasting fire" as such, he does use the phrase "hell fire" as such in v. 47 of that text. This is important because the two "If thine...offend thee" verses in Mark 9:41-48 (v. 43 and 45) are related to Matt. 18:2-9, verses 8 and 9 of which treat hell fire and everlasting fire as synonymous with one another. Mark 9:47, however, uses hell fire in the phrase "cast into hell fire", a phrase which seems to be a contraction of the words "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched", and which is repeated, almost word for word, in Mark 9:43 and 45. Even more important is the fact that Mark describes Jesus explaining v. 43, 45 and 47 by coupling them with v. 44, 46 and 48, all of which read, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.". Unfortunately, the true significance of these words cannot be fully understood without understanding the KJV Old Testament passage to which it alludes, v. 24 of Is. 66:15-24. Accordingly, the writer will now digress briefly to discuss how the latter text affects the meaning of Mark 9:41-48.

In the KJV Old Testament, v. 24 of Is. 66:15-24 describes God saying, "...for* their worm shall not die, neither shall their* fire be quenched;". God is described as saying this, however, in the middle of a long verse that begins with the words "And they shall go forth, and look at the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me:", and ends with the words "and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.". In addition, Is. 66:15-18 makes clear that these carcasses are those of persons God will slay with fire and sword when He comes to gather all nations to see his glory, while Is. 66:20-24 adds that all flesh will see these carcasses near Jerusalem. As a result, it is clear that, when Is. 66:24 is read in context, it speaks not about the place Christians call hell, but rather about the place that the Old Testament calls "the valley of the son of Hinnom", the valley south of Jerusalem where trash, human waste, dead bodies, etc. were disposed of in fires that burned day and night. See, for example, 2Chron. 28:1-3, Jer. 7:31-32 and Jer. 19:2-7. This idea is confirmed by the fact that, in their original Greek, Mark 9:43 and 47 refer to this place using the word that transliterates into English as "Gehenna" or "ge Hinnom". Thus, even without more, Jesus' allusion to v. 24 of Is. 66:15-24 suggests that Mark 9:41-48 portrays Jesus warning people about a punishment that involves a single, absolutely final act of destruction by fire, and not about a punishment that involves a temporally infinite process of torment by fire .

* Special Note on Is. 66:24: Surprisingly, v. 44, 46 and 48 of Mark 9:41-48 eliminate the parallelism between the phrases "*their worm*" and "*their fire*" in Is. 66:24, and show these phrases as "*their worm*" and "*the fire*", respectively. In addition, v. 44, 46 and 48 of Mark 9:41-48 use the words "*Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*", at the point where Is. 66:24 uses "... :for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and..." [italics added].

Special Note on Sources: The verses that appear as Mark 9:44 and 46 in the KJV Bible do not appear at all in the NRSV Bible. In "The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament", published by the United Bible Societies, this is said to be because they are "lacking in the best ancient authorities".

Importantly, there are problems with v. 24 of Is. 66:15-24 which make it difficult to reconcile with the idea that Mark 9:41-48 speaks about a punishment that is temporally infinite rather than absolutely final. One problem is the way Is. 66:24 uses the word "worm". More particularly, Is. 66:24 uses the singular noun "worm" with a plural pronoun "their" that refers back to the carcasses of an unspecified number of dead men and thus, if interpreted literally, would seem to call for a single giant worm that "dieth not". If the word "worm" is not interpreted literally, on the other hand, it could be regarded as a metaphor that personifies processes of decay and disintegration that cannot be stopped (dieth not?). The same may be true of the word "fire" because fire produces effects like those of "the worm" and produces them even more quickly. Another problem is that attempts to interpret the word "worm" non-literally as a symbol or disparaging figure of speech for the bodies of evil persons that God will raise from the dead and make indestructible must somehow deal with the fact that the canonical books of the Old Testament do not provide support for this idea. Finally, as stated earlier, the

important thing about a fire is not whether it is everlasting, or cannot be quenched, but rather what it does to persons who are cast into it. Thus, for all these reasons, it seems likely that v. 24 of Is. 66:15-24 supports the idea that Mark 9:41-48 warns of a punishment that is final (or irreversible), and not of a punishment that continues without end for all eternity.

Judgment and Punishment in the Gospel of Luke

Although the Gospel of Luke does not include any verses which describe teachings of Jesus that use either of the phrases "everlasting fire" and "hell fire" as such, or any form of words like punish and quench, it does include three texts which describe teachings that use the word "hell" as such: Luke 10:1-16, Luke 12:2-7 and Luke 16:19-31. Of these, Luke 10:1-16 is interesting because it is a description of the sending out of the seventy in which Jesus speaks about hell (v. 15) as a place where a city (Capernaum) can be thrust down. See also v. 23 of Matt. 11:20-24 in which Jesus uses very similar words while upbraiding cities where he did mighty works. These texts are interesting because, by speaking about hell as a place where a city can be thrust down, they suggest that Jesus uses the word "hell" in one of the Old Testament senses discussed in the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Hell*, namely, the sense in which it means a place below the surface of the earth. Thus, there is little about Luke 10:1-16 which suggests that v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46 uses the word "everlasting" in a temporally infinite sense, rather than in an absolutely final sense.

The second Lukan text which describes Jesus using the word "hell" as such, Luke 12:2-7, is interesting because, although it does not use the word "hell" with the word "fire", it warns people to fear most him which "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell;" (v. 5), thereby suggesting that there are punishments which can be inflicted on a person after he is dead. Curiously, however, this Lukan text is closely paralleled by Matt. 10:26-31, v. 29 of which warns the disciples to fear most him which "is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." While interpreting these texts in conjunction with one another raises difficult questions about the nature of life after death, Matthew's version at least suggests that there is nothing inconsistent with a person being in hell and being destroyed, body and soul. As a result, it seems reasonable to think that these texts are consistent with the idea that v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46 uses the word "everlasting" in an absolutely final sense rather than in a temporally infinite sense.

The third Lukan text which describes Jesus using the word "hell" as such, Luke 16:19-31, is interesting because it portrays him using this word to describe a place of torment and flame (v. 23, 24 and 28) which a person cannot leave (v. 26). It is therefore a text which clearly seems to describe teachings of Jesus about hell and damnation which are (or at least once were) a common feature of Sunday sermons. Even this Lukan text, however, says nothing about how long this torment or punishment will last. In addition, the only text in the Gospel of Matthew which describes Jesus using a form of the word "torment" with reference to individuals other than sick persons or devils is Matt. 18:23-35, which describes him teaching that the torment of the wicked servant will last "till he should pay all that was due unto him." (v. 34). See also v. 26 of Matt. 5:21-26, which describes Jesus teaching that a person will not come out of prison till he has paid the uttermost farthing. As a result, it seems reasonable to think that Luke 16:19-31 is at least consistent with the idea that v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46 uses the word "everlasting" in an absolutely final sense, and not in a temporally infinite sense.

Judgment and Punishment in the Gospel of John

Like the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of John does not include any texts that describe Jesus using phrases like everlasting fire and hell fire, or any forms of words like punish, quench, gnash or hell. It does, however, include one text, John 15:1-6, v. 6 of which describes Jesus stating that those who do not abide in him are withered branches that will be cast into the fire and burned, a statement similar to that made by John the Baptist in v. 10 and 12 of Matt. 3:7-12. John also includes texts which describe Jesus comparing the difference between those who are saved and those who are not to that between those who have everlasting or eternal life and those who perish (John 3:14-18) or "come into condemnation" (v. 24 of John 5:19-29). V. 29 of this text clarifies this difference by describing it as that between those who come forth "unto the resurrection of life" and those who come forth "unto the resurrection of damnation", a verse which seems to parallel Dan. 12:2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." As a result, the Gospel of John seems consistent with the idea that v. 46 of Matt. 25:31-46 uses the word "everlasting" in an absolutely final sense, rather than in a temporally infinite sense.

Judgment and Punishment in the Old Testament

Having discussed what the Gospels seem to mean when they discuss teachings of Jesus about everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, hell fire, hell and their apparent synonyms and equivalents, the writer will now discuss what the Old Testament seems to mean when it uses terms of these kinds. Since, as stated earlier, the Old Testament does not use any of the terms "everlasting punishment", "everlasting fire", "hell fire", "eternal punishment" and "damnation" as such, this task reduces itself to that of discussing how the Old Testament uses individual words like everlasting, punishment, fire and hell and their apparent synonyms and equivalents. While doing this necessarily involves discussing some texts that Jesus does not quote from or allude to in the Gospels, the writer believes that they can reveal a lot about what Jesus meant when he used these words. This is because it is reasonable to assume that the books we now call the Old Testament were well known to Jesus and would have affected what he meant when he used words that appear in it.

Turning first to the word "everlasting", a search of the Old Testament reveals that, while it uses this word many times, it never uses it as an adjective with nouns like fire, flame, punishment and torment. It also uses the word "eternal" twice, in Deut. 33:26-29 (v. 27) and Is. 60:1-22 (v. 15), but never as an adjective with nouns like fire, flame, punishment and torment. The Old Testament does, however, often use the word "everlasting" as an adjective with nouns like God, kingdom and mercy. On the other hand, it often uses words like for ever and perpetual, which arguably convey generally the same idea as everlasting, with verbs like destroy, devour, consume and perish. See, for example, Num. 24:14-25 (v. 20), 2Sam. 2:26, Job 4:17-21 (v. 20), Ps. 9:1-8 (v. 5-6), Ps. 52:4-6 (v. 5), Ps 92:7-15 (v. 7) and Obad. 1:10. It therefore seems reasonable to think that, except where the Old Testament uses the word "everlasting" to describe God or things associated with Him, it probably uses this word in an absolutely final sense rather than in a temporally infinite sense.

Turning next to the word "punishment", a search of the Old Testament reveals that, while it includes many texts that use the words "punishment" and "punish" to describe actions that God takes or threatens to take against evildoers, it does not include any texts that couple these words with the word "everlasting". It does, however, include numerous texts that use the words "punishment" and "punish" with words like destroy, devour, consume and cut off. See, for example, Job 31:3, Is. 10:12-18, Is. 13:6-15, Jer. 11:22, Jer. 21:14 and Zeph. 1:7-18. Among texts of this kind, Is. 13:6-15 is of special interest because some of its verses directly parallel parts of the End Time discourses that describe the coming of the Son of man. Compare, for example, Is. 13:6-15 (v. 10 and 13) with Matt. 24:29, Mark 13:24-25 and Luke 21:25-26. Finally, even this search is expanded to include texts that use the words "punishment" and "punish" with words or phrases like for ever and perpetual, rather than with the word "everlasting", it still leads to texts which use these words with verbs like destroy, devour, consume, perish and cut off. See, for example, 2Sam. 2:26, Job 4:17-21 (v. 20), Ps. 9:1-8 (v. 5-6), Ps. 52:4-6 (v. 5), Ps. 92:7-15 (v. 7) and Obad. 1:10. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the Old Testament view of punishment is that it is a thing that *results in* death, rather than a thing that *occurs after* death.

Turning next to the word "fire", a search of the Old Testament reveals that it often uses this word either in beneficial senses in which it refers to a thing that produces heat and light, e.g., campfires and torches, or in destructive senses in which it refers to a thing that destroys other things. Ordinarily, when the Old Testament uses the word "fire" in a destructive sense it uses it with words like devour and consume. Verses that describe fire devouring things include Ps. 21:9, Ps. 50:3 and Zeph. 1:18. Verses that describe fire consuming things include Num. 11:1, 1Kings 18:38 and Neh. 2:3. Texts that describe fire doing other things include destroying them (Dan. 7:9-14), causing them to melt as wax (Ps. 68:1-4) and consume away into smoke (Ps. 37:16-20). On the other hand, the Old Testament rarely uses the word "fire" with the word "punish". In fact, it contains only one verse that uses both of these words, v. 14 of Jer. 21:11-14, a verse that speaks about a fire as devouring "all things round about it.". Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the Old Testament does not support the idea that God uses fire to inflict a punishment by fire that continues without end forever.

Interestingly, the Old Testament includes a number of verses that use "fire" in a sense that bridges the difference between its beneficial and its destructive senses. Specifically, it includes verses that describe fire as a thing that can refine or purify another thing by destroying its impurities. See, for example, Zech. 13:9 and Mal. 3:2. What is intriguing about verses that use fire in this sense is the question of whether and how they are related to texts in which Jesus tells parables about persons who are imprisoned or punished until they have paid in full for the wrong they have done. See, for example, v. 26 of Matt. 5:21-26 and v. 34 of Matt. 18:23-35, which appear either in or close to the only two texts in which Matthew uses the phrase "hell fire" as such, Matt. 5:21-26 (v. 22) and Matt. 18:2-9 (v. 9), respectively. Among these, the latter text is of particular interest because it is the parallelism between v. 8 and 9 thereof which provides the clearest support for the idea that the phrases "hell fire" and "everlasting fire" are synonymous with one another.

Finally, a search of the Old Testament for the word "hell" reveals that it never uses this word in a sense in which it refers a place where evil persons are punished with fire after they die. It does, however, often use senses of this word in which it is synonymous* with words or phrases like the pit (or grave), death and destruction, or in which it refers to a place under the earth where the dead lie, dwell or have their abode. Examples of texts that use the word "hell" in a sense in which it is synonymous with the pit (or grave) include Is. 14:4-19 (v. 15) and Ezek. 31:13-18 (v. 16). Examples of texts that treat hell and destruction, or hell and death, as synonymous with one another include Ps 116:3-9 (v. 3) and Is. 28:14-21 (v. 15), and Job 26:6-12 (v. 6) and Prov. 15:11, respectively. Finally, examples of texts that use hell in a sense in which it refers to a place under the earth where the dead lie include Is. 14:4-19 (v. 9) and Ezek. 32:3-10 (v. 7). These and other senses of the word "hell" are also shown and discussed in the Auxiliary Sense File titled *Senses of the Word Hell*.

*Special Note on Other Translations: The writer here uses the word "synonymous" to avoid the difficulties associated with individually discussing the ways in which the words of the original Hebrew version of the Old Testament and the original Greek version of the New Testament have been translated into the English word "hell" in the KJV Bible. One of these difficulties is that the translators of the KJV Old Testament have used all of the English words hell, grave, pit and death to translate the single Hebrew word which is transliterated into English as "Sheol". Another is that the translators of the KJV Bible have used the single word "hell" to translate all of the words that the New Revised Standard Version of the New Testament shows as Gehenna, Hades and Tartarus.

While there is no objective limit on the extent to which searches of the above-discussed kinds can be expanded, there is a point beyond which such searches yield diminishing returns. Accordingly, instead of discussing more searches of these kinds, the writer will close his description of Old Testament teachings about divinely inflicted punishments by summarizing the teachings of a few Old Testament passages that illustrate how it typically describes such punishments, namely, v. 14-18 of Zeph. 1:14-18, v. 22-24 of Jer. 30:18-24 and v. 1-3 and 5 of Mal. 4:1-6. Among these, Zeph. 1:14-18 is of interest because it describes the day of the Lord as a day of wrath, bloodshed and desolation when a devouring fire from God will eliminate all who have sinned against Him. Similarly, Jer. 30:22-24 is of interest because it describes the pain which the Lord will inflict in his anger in the latter days and adds that this anger will pass after He has "performed the intents of his heart" (v. 24). Finally, Mal. 4:1-3 is of interest because it describes a day that shall burn up as an oven when "all that do wickedly" shall be ashes under the feet of those who fear God's name, and because v. 5 of Mal. 4:4-6 teaches that God will send Elijah (a.k.a. Elias) before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord:", a teaching that figures prominently in the End Times teachings of Jesus. Since the Gospels portray Jesus as having great expertise in the Holy Scriptures as they existed during the time of his public ministry, it is only reasonable to think that his own teachings about a divinely decreed punishment would not differ in any significant way from those included in those Holy Scriptures.

Proposed Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is reasonable to conclude that the King James Version of the Bible does not provide substantial support for the idea of a Judgment at which God imposes on evildoers a punishment by fire that is everlasting because it will go on or "last" forever, but does provide substantial support for the idea of a Judgment at which God imposes on evildoers a punishment by fire that is everlasting because it produces results (being destroyed, devoured, consumed, etc.) that will endure or "stand" forever.

Concluding Conjecture

While it may seem that the total destruction of persons who are not saved is too mild a punishment for those who have lived particularly evil lives, it should be remembered that human beings experience time subjectively. Experiences of joy or triumph that occupy hours or days, for example, can seem to pass very quickly. Experiences of pain or shame that occupy the same amount of time, on the other hand, can seem to drag on forever. It therefore seems reasonable to think that, if the requirements of divine justice were to call for very different afterlife punishments, God might provide for these differences by changing the perceived duration of a punishment, and not its actual duration. Inflicting punishments in this way would, in any case, reflect more favorably on God's wisdom than creating and maintaining a gigantic fiery prison where billions of individuals who did not have a choice about being born will suffer forever at the command of the God who made that choice for them.