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Exegesis of Matthew 24:14: The Meaning of “the End”

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Abstract

Matthew chapter 23-25 records Jesus' Eschatological discourse with His disciples. In the midst of this discourse Jesus said in Matthew 24:14: “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.” This text has been studied by many scholars in order to have a better understanding of it. What is the meaning of “τὸ τέλος” (the end)? The study aimed to do an exegesis of Matthew 24:14 in order to arrive at the appropriate meaning and interpretation of the word “the end.” The methodology was an analysis of historical and literary contexts of the passage. An exegesis of the disputed word in Matthew 24:14 were also studied. The study concluded that the primary meaning and interpretation of “τὸ τέλος” is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. However, it is also possible to give a secondary meaning to “τὸ τέλος (the end)” as referring to the second coming of Jesus since it has commonalities with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Keywords: Exegesis, Matthew 24:14, Meaning, End

Introduction

Matthew chapter 23-25 records Jesus' Eschatological discourse. It is called the Olivet discourse. It was Christ purpose to give to the disciple a clear picture of what will happen to the world and to prepare his disciple to face life in understanding the future events. In the midst of this discourse Jesus said in Matthew 24:14: “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.” This text is one of the most important text in the New Testament for this passage of Jesus mentions three of the major themes of the New Testament, i.e., the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the return of Christ.

Matthew 24:14 has been studied by many scholars in order to understand it better. Many have focus their studies to try to comprehend the meaning of “the end” or “τὸ τέλος” in Matthew 24:14. What is the meaning of “τὸ τέλος”? Many interpretations have been given to the expression “the end.” One approach holds that it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem or the temple by the Roman army in 70 CE within Jesus generation.¹ The second opinion holds that v14 is only eschatological. The third option urges that the text refers to both the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Jesus with a close chronological sequence.² Moreover, the fourth approach considers it as both 70 CE and the end. Lastly, others think that “this meant the destruction of the ‘old age’ and the obvious rule of the kingdom of God. The objective, then, is to achieve exegetical meaning and interpretation of Matthew 24:14, with the aim to get the appropriate meaning and interpretation of the word “the end.” The methodology will be an analysis of historical and literary contexts of the passage.

An exegesis of the disputed word in Matthew 24:14 will also be presented for a meaningful understanding on the interpretation of “τὸ τέλος.”

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¹ Dale C. Allison Jr. “Matthew,” *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (OBC), ed. John Barton, John Muddiman (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2001), 876.

² This view is held by the vast majority of commentators (e.g., John Calvin, David Dickson, Matthew Henry, James Moffat, William). Manson, R. C. H. Lenski, William Hendriksen, R. V. G. Tasker, David Hill.

Gospel of Matthew: Historical Background

Matthew 24:14 is part of the Gospel of Matthew. Hence, for a proper exegetical analysis of the text there is the need to consider certain points such as the authorship, the date, and the audience of the Gospel of Matthew.

The Authorship: The question about the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew has raised a lot of controversial arguments, since “the author never adverts to his being an eyewitness of his gospel’s events (nor does he ever indicate an eyewitness source).”³ However some evidences seem to propose that the use of the name Matthew instead of Levi mentioned in the list of the twelve disciples (Mt. 10:3, Mk. 3:18, Lk. 6:15, Acts 1:13) with the addition of the title “tax collector”⁴ serve as autobiographical touches. According to church tradition, it is accepted as far back as the early second century that the apostle Matthew was the author of this gospel.⁵ “We have no direct evidence that the early church ever challenged the gospels attributions to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.”⁶ And it is evident from the testimony of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius⁷ and several others that Matthew is the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

The Date: The gospel was probably written in the last quarter of the first century, possibly in Syrian Antioch.⁸ Moreover, the gospel attributed to Matthew seems to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem in the Roman War (70 CE; cf. Mt. 22:7), is rather late for an apostolic writing⁹.

The Audience and Purpose: Many scholars agree to the fact that the Gospel was addressed to Jews living in the diaspora. Firstly because of the fact that it is accepted that the book was written in the Greek language, though many defend the view that it was written in Hebrew. This is expressly stated by Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, and Gregory Nazianzen.¹⁰ Secondly, “the genealogy of Jesus goes back only to Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race.”¹¹ And finally, one can see that there are a lot of Jewish features expressed in the book.

It is clearly seen throughout the book that it was Matthew’s purpose to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, the great Davidic King and the Messiah promised by the

prophets. Matthew seems to show by his narrative to the readers how all the prophecies made by the prophets have had their fulfillment in the life and the ministry of Jesus.

The Context of Matthew 24:14

The scripture is found in the context of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (Mt 23-25). In Matthew 23, Jesus had just denounced the Scribes and Pharisees, and have lamented over Jerusalem that later he foretold the destruction of the temple and gave the signs of the end to His disciples in Chapter 24. Then, He closed his discourse in Chapter 25 by talking about the Coming of the Son of Man. It was in the midst of this discourse that the disciples were understandably confused and wanted to know: (i) “when shall these things be” and (ii) “what is the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world” (Mt 24:3). One of Jesus’ responses to the questions raised by the disciples will be “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.”¹² This verse falls in the immediate context in the section that starts from verse 4 to 14, where Jesus gives signs of events to come. These signs are false messiahs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecutions, false prophets, lawlessness, the lack of and the enduring of faith, and the preaching of the gospel to all the world. The section immediately preceding our passage focuses on the destruction of Jerusalem from verse 15 to 20, where Jesus talked about the “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet.”

The Literary and Structure Analysis of Matthew 23-25

Jesus’ Olivet Discourse starts from chapter 23 to 25 and Matthew 24:3 seem to be the key to understand the meaning of the word “τὸ τέλος” in verse 14. In 23:2-39, Jesus address talked about the attitude of Jewish leaders, and pronounced what is been called the “Woe oracles.” In 24:1-3, the disciples asked Jesus the two questions: (i) “when shall these things be” and (ii) “what is the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world.” And Jesus answered in 24:4-8, talking about signs that will come before the “end.” In 24: 9-14, Jesus talked about events that that will happen, and he closed this section with another one. In 24:15-20, he speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem. In the next section, 24:21-31, Jesus spoke about those who will be saved at His second coming. The following section (24:32-35), reads “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Here, Jesus seems to address the destruction of Jerusalem. In 24:36-39, Jesus spoke clearly about the second coming of the son of Man. In the last section of the Olivet discourse (24:40-25:46) Jesus invited the disciple to get ready for His coming.

After what has been said earlier, one can summarize Jesus’ Olivet Discourse as such:

Prologue (23:2-39) Woe Oracles — Destruction of Jerusalem

Two Questions (24:1-3) — Destruction of Jerusalem and the Coming of the Son of Man

A (24:4-8) Destruction of Jerusalem

B (24:9-14) Coming of the Son of Man

A’ (24:15-20) Destruction of Jerusalem

B’ (24:21-31) Coming of the Son of Man

³ Howard Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and Its Readers: A Historical Introduction to the First Gospel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), xxi.

⁴ See Matthew 10:3.

⁵ D. Gurthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 33.

⁶ David E. Aune, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 93.

⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. Ecd.* 3.39, attributes to Papias, a second-century Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, the earliest testimony to Matthew’s authorship.

⁸ D. Moody Smith, “Matthew the Evangelist,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ER), 2nd ed., ed. Lindsay Jones (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 9: 5780.

⁹ D. Moody Smith, “Matthew the Evangelist,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ER), 2nd ed., Lindsay Jones (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 9: 5780.

¹⁰ Berkhof Louis, *New Testament Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1915), 36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Matthew 24:14

A'' (24:32-35) Destruction of Jerusalem

B'' (24:36-39) Coming of the Son of Man

Epilogue (24:40-25:46) Stand Ready for the Coming of the Son of Man

This pattern is a chiasmic structure, illustrating or highlighting the importance of the passage for the author. It has been also suggested by Kidder.¹³

After the analysis of the structure of chapter 24 of Mathew, it is obvious to note that the passage of this study (Mt 24:14) falls in the section that talks about the coming of the Son of Man and the section that comes before it, (24:4-8), talks about the destruction of Jerusalem. The section that comes just after Mathew 24:14 talks also about the destruction of Jerusalem. In between this two sections, Mathew 24:14 which belongs to the section (24:9-14) is found.

Exegetical Analysis of Matthew 24:14

It has been shown that the section of Mathew 24:9-14 – in which falls the passage of this study, talks about the second coming of Jesus. Moreover, it is in between two sections that talk about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:1-3, as a key to understand verse 14.

Matthew 24:14 reads: “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.”¹⁴ This passage was part of the answer to two questions raised by the disciples in v3 of the same chapter. “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?” The questions are linked with the scene mentioned in v1, where the disciples “came to him [Jesus] for to show him the buildings of the temple” (Mt 24:1), hence Jesus’ speech starting from verse two, is his reaction to the disciples’ presentation of the temple of Jerusalem. The use of “ὁ δὲ” by Mathew, or “καὶ” by Marc (Mk 13:2) which are translated as cumulative particles in this context, shows that there is a relationship between v1 and 2, i.e., Jesus’ answer is directly related to what the disciples came to show him – the temple of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:3 starts by the word “δὲ” showing that, this verse is the continuity of the action that started in v2: “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?” Mark and Luke put it differently, “what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled” (Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:7). After this question, v4 says: “And [καὶ] Jesus answered and said unto them.” The use of “καὶ” shows clearly that what Jesus is about to say is directly linked with the questions asked by the disciples. Hence, v4 of chapter 24 is the answer of Jesus to the main questions brought to him by his disciples. Mathew 24:14, therefore is part of Jesus’ answers to the disciples’ questions: (i) “when shall these things [ταῦτα] be?” and (ii) “what is the sign of thy coming [παρουσίας] and of the end [συντελείας] of the world?”

The first question is related to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second, is divided into two parts – “what is the sign of you coming” and “what the sign of the end of the world is.”¹⁵ It seems, on the other hand, that “with the overthrow of Jerusalem the disciples associated the events of Christ’s personal coming in temporal glory to take the throne of universal empire, to punish the impenitent Jews, and to break from off the nation the Roman yoke.” Moreover, it appears that the disciples did not make a difference between, the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ ‘second coming – παρουσίας, and the end– συντελείας, of the world. However it will be appropriate to note that, “it is evident that Jesus draws a careful distinction in His Olivet discourse, based upon the very terminology that He and the disciples had used. The term ταῦτα ‘these things’ consistently refers to events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the terms παρουσίας ‘coming’ and συντελείας ‘end’ refer to events connected with the Second Advent of Christ.”¹⁶ Moreover, “the end of the world/age” and “Christ’ second coming” has been always related by Jesus in the Gospel of Mathew. “The harvest is the end [συντέλεια] of the world; and the reapers are the angels [Christ’ second coming].”¹⁷; “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire [Christ’ second coming]; so shall it be in the end [συντέλεια] of this world”¹⁸. “So shall it be at the end [συντελεία] of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just [Christ’ second coming].”¹⁹ Also, in Matthew 28:20 “συντέλεια” is used by Jesus while giving the great commission to the disciples, saying that he will be with the disciples until he comes again. Hence, it will not be out of place to see that for Jesus, his “παρουσίας” is related with “συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.” In other words, Christ’ coming in the context of the book of Matthew is synonymous of the end of the world.

The use of “παρουσίας” in Matthew. It is will appropriate to note that the term “παρουσίας” does not appear in the Synoptic but only in Matthew chapter 24. The usual meaning of the word “παρουσίας” in Greek is “a being present” or “presence of a person.”²⁰ Historically “the term Parousia was used in the first century Greco-Roman world to indicate the coming of the king. Therefore the Parousia of Mathew became a technical term to describe the coming of the Son of Man as in the writings of other New Testament writers, with eschatological events.”²¹

The use of “τέλος” in Matthew. In contrary “τέλος” which means “the fulfillment or the completion of

¹³ J. S. Kidder, “‘This Generation’ in Matthew 24:34,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 (1983): 203-209.

¹⁴ New King James Bible.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *the Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 25.

¹⁶ Ronald A. G. du Preez and Jiri Moskalo, ed., *The Cosmic Battle for Planet Earth: Essay in Honor of Norman R. Gulley* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2003), 311.

¹⁷ Mt. 13:39.

¹⁸ Mt 13:40

¹⁹ Mt. 13:49.

²⁰ Henry George Liddel, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 8th ed., rev.(1987), s.v “παρουσίας.”

²¹ Kim, Kio Kon, “The Signs of Parousia: A Diachronic and Comparative Study of the Apocalyptic Vocabulary of Matthew 24:27-31 (PhD Dissertation, Andrews University, Michigan, USA, 1994), 84.

anything”²² seems to have no relationship with Christ’s second coming in the book of Matthew. For instance in Mathew 10:22, Jesus says that “ὁδὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται” translated as “but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Here, “τέλος” is not referring to the second coming of Jesus, but to the end of trials or persecutions in the context of the disciples being sent by Jesus to propagate the Gospel.²³ In v6 of Matthew 24, Jesus says “for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” The word use to translate “the end” is “τὸ τέλος” which is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Another text can be mentioned, and, it is Matthew 26:58, “καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἔσω ἐκάθητο μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρέτων ἰδεῖν τὸ τέλος” translated as “and he sat with the servants, to see the end.” Here, “τέλος” is referring in this passage to the outcome or the result of Jesus’ trail.

“Καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλητῃ τῇ οἰκουμένην μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος.” This text is Matthew 24:14, which is translated as: “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.” It is a part of the answer to the questions raised by the disciples in verse 3. The use of “καὶ” shows that this passage is still part of the discourse in which the section started in verse 9²⁴. Jesus used τοῦτο in order to qualify the Gospel. The use of τοῦτο reveals that Jesus was talking about an event which was close to happen. In fact, in Greek, as in English, the word *touto* “this” in singular or *tauta* “these” in plural always points to things that are up close, in contrary, the word *ekeinos* “that” in singular or *ekeinoi* “those” in plural refers to something farther away, more distant. It implies that the disciples had in mind an event which was not far away from them. Mark and Luke record the disciple’s questions by using “these,” they wrote, “What shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?”²⁵ Therefore Jesus’s answer seems to have in mind in the immediate context the destruction of Jerusalem. Some scholars are on support of that interpretation, as the gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed [κηρυχθήσεται] among the nations at least in a symbolic sense as stated in Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:16.²⁶

Matthew seems to see a relationship between the preaching of the Gospel and “the end” of age. This relationship is illustrated by the use of “καὶ” which is an additional marker. Nevertheless, τότε shows the sequential aspect that relates the preaching and the coming of the end. In other words, the Gospel firstly must be preached to all the world, and secondly, the end will come.

The word use for “the end” is “τὸ τέλος.” And we have seen that, Mathew used systematically the word τέλος with no reference to the second coming of Jesus. On the other hand, Matthew used τέλος, referring to the end of trials or persecutions for the disciples in mission in 10:22 and the

outcome or the result of Jesus trail in 26:58, as it has been shown earlier in this study. The word used by Matthew in reference to the advent of Jesus is “παρουσίας” in relationship with “συντελείας” which is marking the end of the world. Therefore the direct implication of the usage of τέλος by Jesus shows that he was not referring at the first sight to end of the world, but to the destruction of Jerusalem. Moreover if *totou* instead of *ekeinos* shows that Jesus had in mind up close event, it will be appropriate to see that because of the existing relationship between the “preaching” and “the end of age,” then “the end” should also be understood as a up close event as well. White understood that use of destruction of the temple – the end of the Jewish nation, when she said “All these things must come to pass,” said Christ, “but the end [of the Jewish nation as a nation] is not yet.”²⁷

After what preceded, it is clearly recognized that the setting of the destruction of Jerusalem is the primary application or interpretation of “τὸ τέλος” in this text of Matthew 24:14.²⁸

Theological Themes

As it has been shown, the primary meaning of “the end” refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. However, it could be seen in larger context to refer to Christ’s second coming. As it has been suggested “Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events.”²⁹

As it has been studied, Mathew 24:14 falls under the Jesus’ Olivet Discourse. It starts from 23:2-39 (the prologue) and ends at 24:40-25:46 (the epilogue). From this text many themes have arose from that discourse. The previous four sessions of this paper conducted an analysis of the historical context of the text as well as an examination of the literary setting of the text. This part of the work will focus on an examination of the theological themes found in Jesus’ Olivet Discourse.

As the destruction of Jerusalem occurred, also the end of the age will be marked by the second coming of Jesus. “This is improperly restricted by some to the destruction of the temple, and the abolition of the service of the Law; for it ought to be understood as referring to the end and renovation of the world.”³⁰ It will not be out of place to see the various events described by Jesus to be eschatological events in a sense of his second coming. In the fall of Jerusalem the prophetic eyes of Christ saw also the destruction of the world, for both events have much in common. “The prophetic material found in this sixth discourse has reference not only to events near at hand (see, for example, verse 16) but also to those stretching far into the future.”³¹ What Jesus is describing between verse 4 and 9 can be seen also as the signs of time, to be fulfill before his coming. He mentions that, there are to be false Christ’s,

²² Henry George Liddel, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 8th ed., rev. (1987), s.v “τέλος.”

²³ Leon Morns, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC) (Grand Rapids: Emdmans, 1992), 256.

²⁴ The use of τότε in verse 9, which can be conjunctive or disjunctive, meaning “at that time,” “then” “next, afterward” shows clearly that a new section is starting.

²⁵ See Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:7.

²⁶ See Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary (NAC) (Nashville. Broadntaa, 1992), 356-357.

²⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 628.

²⁸ See Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 569-570.

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 628.

³⁰ John Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 3, *Matthew 24:9-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999), 88.

³¹ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 846.

v5; wars and rumors, v6; political disturbances, famines, and earthquakes, v7; persecution of Christians by pagans, v9 treachery and apostasy amongst Christians themselves, v10-11; the gospel to be preached in all the world, v14.³² For “the discourse concerns the past, the present, and the future; and what has happened will continue to happen and indeed it will be worsen.”³³

Jesus gave these signs to the disciples not to satisfy their curiosity but to prepare them for the tribulation ahead of them. These signs described in chapter 24 are still relevant to the post-modern world. “This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth’s history.”³⁴ As one sees the fulfillment of these signs, one should have in mind that Christ’s return is on the verge to happen. This is the reason why Jesus invited the disciple to “take heed that no man deceive you” (v.4) for each person should be watchful and read the time in which the world is. As Ryle will say, the “Lord bids us look for the rising of ‘false prophets,’ the ‘abounding of iniquity,’ and the ‘waxing cold of the love of many.’”³⁵ Though the Gospel will be preached, “but the full gathering of the nations shall never take place until Christ comes.”³⁶

Perhaps, this work will not be completed unless it addresses at least two major themes that spring out from the text (Mt 24:14). It has been said in the introduction that this text is one of the most important text in the New Testament, for this passage of Jesus mentions three of the major themes of the New Testament, i.e., the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the return of Christ. In the next few lines only the Gospel and Christ second coming will be addressed.

The Gospel: The word “Gospel” comes from the Greek word which means “good news.” This word sometimes stands for the record of the life of our Lord (Mk 1:1), embracing all His teachings, as in Acts 20:24. But the word “gospel” now has a peculiar use, and describes primarily the message which Christianity announces. It is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins and sonship with God restored through Christ. It means remission of sins and reconciliation with God. The gospel is not only a message of salvation, but also the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works in the heart of a person (Rom 1:16). This Gospel is to be propagated to all the world. It must be preached first and the coming of the Lord shall be a reality. Jesus himself, before his ascension gave the great commission to the disciples and said in Matthew 28:19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”³⁷ By preaching many will believe and get converted, though some may reject the Gospel. After Jesus’

³² Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, International Critical Commentary (ICC) (London: Morrison and Gibb Ltd, 1912), 253.

³³ Dale C. Allison, Jr. “Matthew,” *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (OBC), ed. John Barton, John Muddiman (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2001), 877.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 628.

³⁵ Ryle J.C., “Matthew,” *Expository on the Gospel: for Family and Private Use* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860), 315.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 315.

³⁷ Matthew 28:19.

departure the disciples “went forth, and preached everywhere,” (Mt 16:20) and the Lord was with them. Paul admonishes the young Timothy by telling him to “preach the word [Gospel]; be instant in season, out of season” (1 Tim 4:2). The work of propagating the Gospel is still relevant to Christians today. As the disciples have the mandate to make other disciples and as they preach, Christ will appear in the sky.

Christ’s second coming. Christ’s second coming has been always in center of the preaching of the Gospel. In fact it is the blessed hope. It appears also in the OT. The “day of the Lord” was to be a dark day for the wicked, but a day of joy for those who love His appearing (Isa 35:4). When Christ shall come he will put an end to this world to create a new one. The Bible clearly states that his second coming is certain. John 14:3, records his promise to come again, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Jesus promises to come again (John 14:3, 28). He announces His glory (Mat 24:30) and pledges not to be the unrighteous judge who ignores those who cry to Him day and night (Lk 18:6-8). The endurance of those who trust Him to the end will not be in vain (Mat 10:22).³⁸ Though he [Jesus] seems to tarry, it will be appropriate to consider that “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”³⁹

Summary and Conclusion

The paper dealt with the word “the end” – “τὸ τέλος.” The aim was to understand the right meaning of “the end” in Matthew 24:14. After critically and methodically analyzing the broader and immediate context of the text, it has been shown that, chapter 24:14 falls under Jesus’ Olivet Discourse. The use of “παρουσίας” in the book of Matthew did show that, it has been always used in connection with the second coming of Jesus which marks the end of the world. On the other hand, “τὸ τέλος,” in the same book has never been used in connection with Christ’s second coming, but in the various context in connection referring to the end of trials or persecutions for the disciples in mission in 10:22 and to the outcome or the result of Jesus’ trial in 26:58. Moreover, the use of τοῦτο in relation with the Gospel in 24:14 and in Mark and Luke in connection with “the end” has been a fact that Jesus was talking about an event which was not far away, but up close. Therefore, it will be appropriate to conclude that the primary meaning and interpretation of τὸ τέλος is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem.

However, it is also possible, as we saw the events described in chapter 24 and 25 of Matthew, to give a secondary meaning to “the end” as referring to the second coming of Jesus, since it has commonalities with the destruction of Jerusalem. “When He [Jesus] referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration in that day when the Lord shall

³⁸ Richard P. Lehm, “The Second Coming of Jesus,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed., Raoul Dederen (Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Ass., 2000), 898.

³⁹ 2 Peter 3:9.

rise out of His place to punish the world for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”⁴⁰

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