

“This Generation” & “These Things”

A Re-examination of Matthew 24:34

This portion continues to present theological difficulty as attempts are made to explain its meaning. Yet, the primary reason for this predicament stems from how the Greek text is partially mis-translated in most English Versions. These conventional renderings open the door for taking statements in Matthew 24 in an other-than-literal manner. Accompanying this detour, some are emboldened to apply Jesus’ fig-tree analogy in an allegorical way (vv. 32-33). However, when the original grammar is correctly translated, *as A Few Versions Have Done*, new options come into view and point to conclusions which aren’t even on the radar of many Bible teachers. When this issue is rectified, most apparent complications simply vanish away.

The first step for interpreting any N.T. passage is to confirm a proper translation of the Greek script then determine what this rendition means in its historical setting. This requires accurate analysis which includes evaluating the grammar, word meanings, connective relationships, and language structure. After the precise message is identified, its greater context must be examined to detect whom and for what purpose this truth was made known. By taking *This Un-Complicated Approach*, one is well on their way to comprehending what God seeks to communicate. Bear in mind, those who don’t have this expertise need to rely on others who say they provide the pertinent data.

In the following exposition of Matthew 24:34, its underlying Greek text is broken down, contemplated, and solidified. Then, the adjacent context is explored to assess why Jesus made this declaration and how it relates to other events in the biblical record. During the study, Translations emphasizing accuracy along with other documentation will be cited to reinforce my conclusions about what this section teaches.

“Truly I say to you that this generation won’t pass away until all these things might happen.” (cf. Mark 13:30 & Luke 21:32)

So, who is Jesus referring to by His use of the phrase **“this generation”**? If this expression carries the same connotation conveyed earlier in this Gospel account, it’s easy to define. For, in Matthew 11:16, the Lord likens **“this generation”** (γενεαν ταυτην) to those who’ve acted like unwise children in their unfair reception and treatment of **“John the Baptist”**, and now Himself as **“the Son of Man”** (11:1-19). A casual reading of this portion indicates He uses this idiom to *characterize doubting members of His audience and their countrymen.*

Next, Matthew 12:38-42 records Jesus' response to "the scribes and Pharisees" when they ask to see a miracle from Him, "An evil and adulteress generation (γενεα) seeks a sign". In the lecture which follows, He asserts those who reject Him will face worse condemnation "in the judgement" than the Ninevites who ultimately repented at the preaching of Jonah. For, Christ states He's "greater" than this prophet. He further cautions "this generation" (γενεας ταυτης – used twice, vv. 41-42) by warning those who snub Him will be condemned "in the judgement" by the Queen of the South since she exerted great effort by travelling a long way to hear Solomon's "wisdom". Then, He states He's "greater" than King Solomon, so everyone should acknowledge His superior wisdom.

The Lord strengthens these analogies by equating the judgment which faces "this evil generation" (γενεα ταυτη τη πονηρα) who refuses to recognize Him with the horror experienced by a person who's in a multi-demon-possessed state (Matt. 12:43-45). In this entire discourse, it's evident Jesus uses the defining term "generation" four times to describe *those who currently reject His proclamations and actions, including "the scribes and Pharisees"*.

Finally, in Matthew 23:29-36 Jesus forecasts "this generation" (γενεαν ταυτην) will suffer the same fate their patriarchs faced since those ancestors had rejected and killed the prophets God sent them. While speaking to this crowd, He calls the "scribes and Pharisees . . . serpents" and a "brood of vipers", then affirms they too will "kill and crucify" emissaries "I am sending you". After rejecting these "prophets and wise men and scribes", He explains they'll be just as guilty as their forefathers for "righteous blood shed on earth". Of course, Christ became the foremost messenger they sought to eliminate.

When these three contexts are evaluated in their natural settings, they show the expression "this generation" refers to *skeptical contemporaries of Jesus who include many of the "scribes and Pharisees"*. Based on this narrative, it's reasonable to conclude Jesus referenced this same group in Matthew 24:34 where He once again used the phrase "this generation" (γενεα αυτη). Therefore, in this verse He's also addressing **Stiff-Necked People, Jews and Their Leaders, Who'll Face the Potential of "all these things" Happening**.

Now, what did Christ envision when He said, "this generation won't pass away"? This phrase incorporates the *negative adverbs* "ου" and "μη" which both signify the idea of "not". These're linked to the verb "pass away" (παρελθῃ) composed of the *preposition* "παρά", which conveys being *beside*, prefixed to the verb "ερχομαι", meaning *to come*. It regularly connotes *passing by* and, when speaking of the earth, connotes *passing off the scene* (Matt. 5:18-19; 8:28;

14:15; 24:35; 26:39, 42). This verb's subjunctive mode adds a *conditional sense* which is well represented by the words *may*, *might*, or *can*. So, the literal meaning of "οὐ μὴ παρελθῇ" is *may never never pass off the scene*. In essence, this phrase conveys the idea *there's absolutely no possibility* "this generation" *can pass away*, thus, it "won't pass away".

Then, the verse states this passing off the scene "won't" occur "until (εως) all these things might happen" (Matt. 24:34). This *adverb* basically means *until in reference to a point in place or time*; the immediate context confirms it refers to *time*. So, what does the phrase "all these things" (παντα ταυτα) correspond with? Appearing in the nominative form, these two words are the *subject* of this phrase and *represent* "all" the events listed which "might happen" before "this generation" passes away. These include Jesus' "presence" at His return and the "completion of the age" (Matt. 24:3, 27, 37-44).

Other proceedings involve deception of false christs and prophets (vv. 5, 11, 23-27); onset of wars, famines and earthquakes (vv. 6-7); facing hatred and death (v. 9); apostasy and betrayal (vv. 10, 12); arrival of Daniel's abomination of desolation (v. 15, cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11); the worst tribulation in history (vv. 16-22); miraculous phenomena in the heavens when Christ is seen coming in glory (vv. 29-30); and God's elect being gathered from everywhere (v. 31). These incidents answer a question posed by His disciples after Christ described how the temple would be destroyed, "Tell us, when will these things be and what's the sign of Your presence and completion of the age?" (vv. 2-3)

Inaccurately Translated Terms

Other than who "this generation" refers to, the aspects of Matthew 24:34 already covered are widely accepted. However, my translation of the final phrase "until all these things might happen" (αν . . . γενηται) significantly varies from its usual rendering. For, these two Greek words are generally depicted in a manner which transmits a far different impression about what Jesus is saying. Since this discrepancy is major, I'll build a case for how these terms should be translated, then deliberate how these findings modify the portion's meaning.

The phrase "might happen" includes the verb of being "γίνομαι" which portrays the idea of *coming into existence*, *to materialize* or *transpire*.¹ Occurring in the subjunctive form, it conveys *conditional probability*.² This indicates "all" the events in this chapter *Could "happen" during their lifetime But Whether They Actually Will Occur is Contingent Upon Triggering Events*.

In addition, the *particle* "αν" compliments the idea conveyed by this subjunctive verb, but most Translations also ignore its impact. By itself, this element of N.T. Greek influences the movement of any action word it's joined with by making that action more 'conditional'.³ With "αν" amended to the subjunctive mode, *This Phrase Contains A Double Emphasis Regarding the Uncertainty of the Verb's Action*. Therefore, these two elements of grammar specify **"all these things" in this chapter Could Come About if Some Catalyst Set Them in Motion**. And, if this were to occur, the aorist tense of the verb "γενηται" designates this action would *fully* or *completely* take place, that is, all the events recorded in Matthew 24 would **"happen"**.

Having established how this verb/particle construction should be translated, it's crucial to consider the impact added by the *adverb* **"until"** (εως), for it *introduces a time factor* to the mix. By itself, the subjunctive verb "γενηται" doesn't portray time; in fact, this mode is often used to indicate that the action of a time-based event may or may not happen. However, when subjunctive verbs are united with terms signifying time, **Contingency is Expressed in Reference to When the Action Happens**, not if it will occur.

Similar *Constructions which Portray Conditionality Related to Time* are found in this chapter. For instance, Jesus states, **"whenever you might see** (οταν . . . ιδητε) **the abomination of desolation . . ."** (Matt. 24:15). The term "οταν" couples the adverb "οτε", meaning *when in the sense of time*, with the particle "αν" which, as discussed, adds *uncertainty*. So, the Lord isn't questioning whether Daniel's **"abomination of desolation"** will happen, He's simply saying *there's an uncertain time frame* for when it'll occur. This same adverb is used in the fig tree analogy with two subjunctive verbs to convey time-related conditions (v. 32). In springtime, **"whenever** (οταν) **already its branch might become** (γενηται) **soft and might produce** (εκφυη) **leaves, you know that summer is near."** Again, this construction doesn't pinpoint whether these actions will occur, it's just a matter of *when the process begins*.

Furthermore, a slew of portions containing grammatically identical constructions to the one in Matthew 24:34 combine the adverb "εως" and particle "αν" with subjunctive verbs. In Matthew 2:13, an angel told Joseph to go to Egypt and **"stay there until I might tell** (εως αν ειπω) **you."** Then, Matthew 5:18 mirrors the grammar under consideration as Jesus says, **"Truly I say to you, until** (εως) **heaven and earth might pass away** (αν παρελθη), **not one jot or tittle will pass away** (ου μη παρελθη) **from the law until all these things might happen"** (εως αν παντα γενηται). With comparable language, Jesus tells the disciples, **"Also,**

whenever they might persecute (οταν . . . διωκωσιν) you in this city, flee unto another; for truly I say to you, you'll never complete (ου μη τελεσητε) the cities of Israel until (εως) the Son of Man might come” (αν ελθη – Matt. 10:23). See the footnote for more examples.⁴

Translations Back This Rendering

Thankfully, a few Bible Versions have resolved to translate Matthew 24:34 more literally by *incorporating the conditionality provided* by the fusion of “αν” and “γενηται”. In 1862, Robert Young translated the verse’s last phrase ‘**till all these may come to pass**’ (YLT, cf. RYLT). Two years later, Benjamin Wilson rendered it ‘**till all these may be done**’ (Emphatic Diaglott N.T.). Then, in 1902, W. B. Godbey deciphered these words ‘**until all these things may be fulfilled**’ (TGNT). Also, in 2010, Jonathan Mitchell began publishing a Translation which offers multiple renditions including ‘**until all these things can happen**’ and ‘**may be come to be**’ (JMNT). These Versions preserve the inherent meaning of this construction and corroborate the correct idea: **The Events of Matthew 24 May or May Not Take Place During “this generation”**.

After this *Grammar-Solidified-Translation* is recognized, those who embrace it can accept everything in Matthew 24 at face value. First, now “**this generation**” can refer to the audience who heard Christ preach, which includes principals of the Jewish Nation. Second, this rendering facilitates a literal interpretation of everything the Lord declared will transpire before the end of the age. Third, the phrase “**all these things might happen**” prompts the Bible student to anticipate circumstances that could become a provisional spark for the things in this chapter to occur. This last matter will be embarked upon shortly.

The Effect of Imprecise Renderings

First let’s evaluate how my depiction of this phrase differs from most contemporary and past Versions. Typical renditions are until ‘all these things be fulfilled’ (Tyndale, Great, KJV); ‘take place’ (Common, NASV, NKJV, ESV); ‘have happened’ or ‘happen’ (ACV, WPNT, NIV); and ‘be done’ (Geneva, Westley). All these Translations render the action of “γενηται” as *a statement of fact*, as if it’s an indicative mode verb. By doing so, **They Lose the Uncertainty Specified by Both its Subjunctive Mode Form and the Particle “αν”**. For, they project the idea “all” the “things” in Matthew 24 will take place during “**this generation**” *Instead of What The Construction Really Communicates – These Events May*

or *May Not Happen*. This is a big deal! For, how these words are translated has an immense impact on what the reader thinks Jesus meant.⁵

Consequently, those who rely on inaccurate renderings often conclude *Jesus Must be Referring to A Future 'generation'* – a group of people living when the Lord returns. For, they concede certain events in Matthew 24 still haven't occurred so, without proof, rationalize "**this generation**" can't refer to Jesus' peers. Others claim all the events of this chapter *Have Already Come to Pass in a Spiritual Manner*. Note how **Each Viewpoint Strays from Plain Statements in The Divine Record**.

In contrast, those who've acquired a working knowledge of Greek and are inclined to fend off the pressures of tradition can chart a course to navigate the meaning of this passage. Likewise, those who don't know the Original but unassumingly take the time to consult helps which point out this phrase's innate nuances won't be carried away by unfounded assumptions, flawed conclusions, or theological jams. Gems exist for anyone willing to search for them.⁶

Furthermore, based on the predominance of how Matthew 24:34 is incorrectly depicted, a huge assumption infiltrates Christendom: *Jesus' Fig Tree Analogy Alludes to The Re-Emergence of The Nation of Israel*. Advocates hypothesize this metaphor regards the present-day Jewish State established in 1948. Also, they *re-define the contextual meaning of "this generation"* as folks born after WW II who linger until the Lord returns.

As an outgrowth of this theory, I can't tell you how many believers I've met who're captivated by it, then seek to calculate the length of a 'generation' to predict when the Lord might come. The problem is, *The Text of Matthew 24 Doesn't Provide One Factual Reason to Adopt This Position*. This angle is simply a grasp-at-straws to support a pre-conceived theological scheme. The truth is, Jesus just uses the well-known concept of plant-growth spurred on by summer-heat to symbolize "**whenever**" His disciples see the signs listed in this chapter, they'll know the end of the age is "**near upon the doors**" (v. 33).

Yes, illustrations of "**figs**" and a "**fig tree**" are used several times in relation to the Jewish people. First Kings 4:25 states in the Promise Land "**Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree**". In this passage, the "**fig tree**" is said to represent "**safety**" as does the "**vine**", but there's no reason to claim it symbolizes the Nation of Israel. Later, God is said to restore "**the fig tree and the vine**" as part of a land flowing with milk and honey. But again, none of these citations liken the Jewish people to a "**fig tree**" (Joel 2:21-25; Micah 4:4;

Zech. 3:10). Then, in Judges 9:9-10 a "fig tree", among other trees, vines and shrubs, is used to symbolize someone ruling over Israel.

Also, two contexts portray good Jews as good "grapes" or "figs", and one of these compares disobedient Jews to "bad figs" (Jer. 24; Hosea 9:10). Finally, Revelation 6:13 compares falling "stars of heaven" during God's wrath with the force of figs dropping from their tree. After checking every relevant passage, **Not One Portion Equates a Fig Tree with The Nation of Israel** (cf. Matt. 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-26; 13:28-33; Luke 13:6-9; 21:29-33).

On the other hand, Romans 11:11-36 is a prime example of an O.T. type, for this context contains overwhelming evidence that proves *Paul's "olive tree" Visual Represents The Jewish People and/or Nation* (cf. Psalm 52:8; 128:3; Jer. 11:16-17; Hos. 14:6; Rev. 11:4). Furthermore, the words for "olive tree" (ελαία – Rom. 11:24) and "oil" (ελαιον) are built on the same Greek root which indicates this oil was *olive oil*. The emollient was used in the Jews' sacrificial system (Gen. 28:18; Lev. 2:4). It was also employed to promote healing (Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; James 5:14). But most notably, it was used to anoint kings including "Christ", *The Anointed One*, who in the future will rule over a Restored Nation (1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Kings 9:3; Heb. 1:9).⁷ Both terms can be found in the *Septuagint*, a Greek Translation of the Hebrew text, and the Greek N.T.

The Advantage of A Correct Translation

When an accurate rendition of Matthew 24:34 is identified, *Two Equal Possibilities Surface*. All the events mentioned in that chapter could happen or, it's just as likely, those events wouldn't take place since their occurrence is *Contingent on A Prerequisite Stimulus*. Therefore, **What Sort of Movement Could've Activated the Launch of These Events?** Since Scripture is the only inspired account, any legitimate ideas should be derived from its pages in historical proximity with Jesus' proclamation, "this generation won't pass away until all these things might happen."

After Christ's resurrection this is exactly what transpired. *Circumstances Occurred Which Could've Led to the Lord's Return and Establishment of The Prophesied Kingdom*. In early Acts, Peter and the Eleven direct a message to their fellow Jews which included the need to "repent" for their part in killing the Messiah (Acts 2:23, 38; 3:15, 19; 5:30-31). Though in reality, this execution wasn't counterproductive to the Father's purpose. For, this act "fulfilled" the "things" God "announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets for His Christ to suffer" and was consistent with His "predetermined plan and

foreknowledge" (2:23; 3:18; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-20). His strategy also accomplished the "perfect", "once-for-all" sacrifice which paid for Israel's sin and provided the New Covenant "righteousness" needed to initiate Jesus' earthly reign (Isa. 33:5-6; Jer. 31:33-34; 33:14-16; Rom. 3:25-26; Heb. 9:26-28; 10:10-14).

With this in mind, Peter exhorts, "Therefore, repent and turn unto the outcome for your sins to be blotted out, in order that seasons of refreshing might come from the face of the Lord and He might send the previously hand-picked Christ to you, Jesus" (Acts 3:19-20). Just like in Matthew 24:34, this portion contains the particle "αὐ", depicting *conditionality*, alongside the subjunctive verbs, "might come" (ἐλθωσιν) and "might send" (ἀποστείλῃ). Accordingly, **The Contingent Action which Could've Spurred God to Send Christ and Commence The "seasons of refreshing" is If Those Who Heard Would "repent and turn"**.

Let's pause here, for in this Acts passage it's significant to note the NASV, NIV, ESV, and NKJV correctly translate both subjunctive verbs united with "αὐ" – 'may come' and 'may send'. However, these same Versions render the similar construction in Matthew 24:34 in a totally different manner which contributes to the need for articles such as this.⁸

Moving along, Peter continues his discourse, "whom indeed it's necessary for heaven to receive until the times associated with the restoration of all things which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from the age" (Acts 3:21). First, this statement stipulates God could send Christ back for the "kingdom" to "come" and His "will" to "be done on earth as it is in heaven" only after the sin question was dealt with (Matt. 6:10). Thus, Christ "entered . . . heaven itself" for His sacrificial blood "to be made manifest in the presence of God on our behalf" (Heb. 9:24). This is why "it was necessary" (δεῖ) or was required "for heaven to receive" Him before "righteousness" could be procured and provide for the redemption necessary to institute the prophesied Kingdom (Rom. 3:24-26; 2 Cor. 3:9; 5:21).

Second, this verse defines "seasons of refreshing" as "the times associated with the restoration (ἀποκαταστασεως) of all things" (Acts 3:20-21).⁹ Although this three-term noun (ἀπο + κατα + στασις) is only found here, its verb form occurs in Acts 1:6 when the disciples ask Christ "if, at this time, You're restoring (ἀποκαθιστανεις) the kingdom to Israel?" It's interesting that Jesus didn't directly answer their inquiry, for He Knew This "restoration" Was Premised on Whether The Jews Accepted Him as Their Deliverer.

This verb’s also used in Matthew 17:11 when Christ said, “**Indeed, Elijah comes and will restore** (αποκαταστησει) **all things**”. He spoke this in reference to “**John the Baptist**” whose job was to preach “**Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is near**” (Matt. 3:1-3; 17:12-13; Mark 9:12-13). Further verification of this term’s meaning is seen where a withered hand and faulty eyesight is “**restored**” or *reinstated* (Matt. 12:13; Mark 3:5; 8:25; Luke 6:10).

Now, Peter defines this “**restoration of all things**” as that which “**God spoke through . . . Moses . . . also all the prophets, from Samual and those in succession, as many as spoke and announced these days**” (Acts 3:21-24; cf. Deut. 30:1-10; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 11 – 12; 59:20-21; 60:20-21; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22 – 37:28; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 27; Hosea 3:4-5; Joel 2:27-32; Amos 9:11-15; Oba. 17-21; Micah 4:2-7; Zeph. 3:8-20; Zech. 2:413; 8:1-8; 14:9-16).

Consequently, ***Acts Chapter Three Delineates The Needed Contingency to initiate the prophesied Kingdom – national repentance and Christ’s return.*** Many, including myself, are convinced **Israel’s Acceptance or Rejection of Jesus as the Messiah is *The Underlying Impetus Our Lord Had in Mind* when He said, “this generation won’t pass away until all these things might happen” (Matt. 24:34, emphasis mine).**

Their Choice

Indubitably, the Jews rejected their Christ, so the New-Covenant Kingdom wasn’t restored. Acts explains thousands of Israelis accompanied by a multitude of gentile proselytes believed Jesus was the Messiah, but most of the leaders didn’t convert. **Their Rejection Appears to be The Pivotal Act Which Kept National Restoration from Happening** (Rom. 11:11-15; 25-29).

Remember, “**the scribes and Pharisees**” are twice identified as part of “**this generation**” who were actively rejecting Christ (Matt. 12:38-39; 23:29, 36). This refusal culminated when, in a craze, they resisted the message of those indwelt by the “**Holy Spirit**”, rejected Stephen’s message, “**stoned**” him, and scared most of the believers out of Jerusalem (Acts 7:54 – 8:3). This is the last recorded incident which implies Israel had an opportunity to accept Christ and bring about His return in glory (Acts 3:19-21; 5:29-32; 7:51-56).¹⁰

Following this denial, *God Suspended National Relations with Israel* in leu of His un-prophesied program, “**the body of Christ**” (Rom. 11:25-36; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:12; Col. 1:18). At that point, His “**mystery**” or *secret* “**administration**” began to be “**made known**” to regulate the “**new man**” of

this "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10, 14-18; 3:1-10, 4:24; Col. 3:10). This "revelation" was "predestined before the world began" and "hidden from the ages (and "generations") in God" until these Jewish leaders rejected Christ (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:2-3, 9; Col. 1:26). Then, the "mystery" was progressively "revealed to His holy apostles and prophets", of whom the Lord appointed Paul to be the sole author who details this now-known truth (1 Cor. 9:16-17; Gal. 2:6-9; Eph. 3:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:4-11; Titus 1:1-3).

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

The aspect of this "mystery" revelation pertaining to the subject at hand is Israel's "transgression" (παράπτωμα) which centers around their "rejection" (αποβολή) of the Messiah. For, this denial resulted in "salvation" going "to the gentiles", caused their Nation to be in a "partial hardening", and provoked God to temporarily suspend His distinct connection with the Covenant People (Rom. 11:11-15, 25-32).¹¹ Many, including myself, think **This "transgression" of rejecting Christ** aligns with what Jesus meant when He warned not to commit "blasphemy associated with (or "against") the Holy Spirit"; for, those who do "won't be forgiven . . . in this age or the one to come" (Matt. 12:31-32).

Keep in mind, the Spirit wasn't active in converts during the Gospel period while the Lord ministered on earth. This is why, at that time, Peter and the other disciples made so many mistakes. Therefore, the "blasphemy" Jesus spoke of couldn't have taken place before Pentecost since *The Timeframe for this Deed Requires the Presence of The Holy Spirit*. Furthermore, Jesus stated, "all" other "sins and blasphemies will be forgiven the sons of men", including those targeted at Himself, "the Son of Man" (Mark 3:28; Luke 12:10).

In accord with these assertions, the portion of Acts 2 – 7 demonstrates those openly rejecting the messages of Peter and others committed "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" since these ministers were "filled with the Spirit" (2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:55). Apparently, not enough Jews and/or their leaders repented but rejected "salvation" in Christ, thus inhibiting the possibility for Him to return as "King of the Jews" (Matt. 24:29-31; John 12:12-19; 19:19-22; Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:19-20; 5:29-32; 7:2-60). As a repercussion, those who committed this sin won't spend eternity in the promised Kingdom but, rather, the lake of fire. Moreover, **This "rejection" Was The Reason "all the things" in Matthew 24 Didn't "happen" During Their "generation"**.

Also synchronizing with this view, when Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they don't know what they're doing", God must have answered His plea (Luke 23:34). Because, in early Acts, those responsible for crucifying Him were afforded a period of opportunity for the Father to "send . . . Christ" for "the restoration of all things" set forth in prophecy (Matt. 17:22-23; 26:28; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; 22:20; Acts 2:23-36; 3:13-21; 5:30-31; 7:51-60).

On the other hand, after Stephen prayed "Lord, don't stand this sin against them" there's no indication Israel still had a chance to repent. On the contrary, the martyr exclaimed, "Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you're always resisting the Holy Spirit; and you, like your fathers" (Acts 7:51, emphasis mine). In response, those controlling the audience cursed, swore and stoned him even though he twice expressed seeing "Jesus having stood and continuing to stand (perfect tense) at the right hand of God" (vv. 55-59). All other contexts describe Christ sitting at God's right hand. *Is it Unreasonable that His Standing Posture Represented Readiness to Return If Israel Repented?* Even so, He couldn't come back since these leaders lacked remorse.

A Legitimate Kingdom Offer

Not only does The Book of Acts corroborate why Jesus' "generation" didn't see the events He said "might happen", *it's the earliest span of time a bonified offer for Christ's return could've been made*. As deliberated, the Lord first had to die and be raised to secure the "righteousness" needed for the New Covenant to come into effect. Then, in His absence and empowered by the Spirit, the disciples carried the Kingdom gospel to the Nation of Israel. Since they rejected this message by committing "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit", *Voluminous Prophecies About Christ's Return to Rule from Jerusalem were Delayed*. And God initiated His un-propheesied program, the Body of Christ, the Church.¹²

Final Thoughts

Inspiration in The Autographs

I'm going to get simple and practical. The basis of most false biblical analysis in books and on the internet is a result of the failure of our Christian educational system. I checked doctrinal statements of several schools regarding their perspective on 'inspiration' of Scripture, and many have abandoned the view God's Word is inspired in its 'autographs', that is, the 'original languages'. For examples of schools which still affirm inerrancy in the Hebrew and Greek

manuscripts as well as that every issue of faith should be established by *This Foundational Standard*, see the footnote.¹³

Yet, what school is developing teachers who can competently examine and instruct from the Originals? From my perspective, those who possess a working knowledge of N.T. Greek are few and far in between. On top of that, **today many justify their need NOT to know The Original Languages God used to reveal His Word**, for they claim an understanding of every topic can be attained by using Translations. Related to this stance and paralleling a decline in comprehending Greek, during my lifetime there's been a notable increase in those who promote the *King James Version* as an inspired text.

In this line of thinking, some contend the *Textus Receptus* is inspired, Erasmus' Critical Greek Edition used to translate the KJV. Those taking this position usually assert the Version authorized by England's King James I is fully reliable or infallible, as if God guided its translators. But any competent Greek student realizes this isn't true.

In this article alone, evidence shows the KJV incorrectly translates Matthew 24:34 and Acts 3:19-20. In addition, throughout many years of teaching and writing, I've expounded on countless passages where this Version inadequately represents the sense of the Greek text. It's not my purpose to contradict KJV readings, but when believers ask why their rendition is different than how I translate a portion, I share what the Greek text says and direct them to other experts whose Translations provide better renderings. Unfortunately, the conviction of revering the KJV shows how far many have wandered from literal Bible study.

Regarding Matthew 24:34, what you need to know is *Young, Godbey, Mitchell* and the *Diaglott* accurately render it, and most of them used the same *Textus Receptus*. Furthermore, *All Greek Editions Including the Textus Receptus Agree in This Verse*. So, the real issue isn't the Greek Text from which this or many other portions are translated, but **How Accurately the Greek Language is Represented**. To become familiar with major Greek Editions, I've deliberately spent considerable time studying and teaching from all of them. Guess what? Their minor differences haven't caused any issues in my theology. So, I know those who claim the *King James* is the most accurate Translation or uses the best language to depict the Original are influenced by ignorance, manipulative power, or laziness because they haven't done the hard work of learning Greek.

Today, a significant clash exists between those who prefer the *Textus Receptus* vs. those using a *Westcott & Hort* inclined Text. For, many who hold these views accuse the other of relying on a '*Corrupt Text*' which enflames unwarranted division in the Body of Christ. And this, when neither persuasion can produce iron-clad proof to back up their point of view. So, once more, **Variations in Greek Editions Aren't a Contributing Factor to Doctrinal Disputes**. This is because no present or absent phrase or verse changes the overall truth detailing what we're to believe or how we're to act.

Consequently, the fact that not even one original N.T. manuscript exists should turn our focus to the overwhelming similarity in the many thousands of partial documents at our disposal. Don't forget, when First Corinthians was penned, God had Paul write it in Greek to a Greek proficient audience "in order that", through the "Spirit", they "might know the things having been freely given to us by God" (2:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Concluding this thought, I firmly believe every definitive theological issue should be based on elements from the original language. **If this fading standard was readopted, many unfounded opinions and figurative perspectives like those on Matthew 24:32-34 wouldn't have gained a foothold but, rather, been easily debunked.** And if more Christians had the opportunity to learn from teachers who've mastered Greek and/or search sources which shed light on its meaning, they would gain a greater and more balanced understanding of the Word. In turn, more saints would have self-confidence to share what they believe. For, without a doubt, everyone I know who's studied or been exposed to the Greek text has greatly benefited.

Nonetheless, not everyone can study Greek. Some aren't cut out to learn this unspoken language. Others are busy raising a family, working long hours, or are advanced in age. Then, the sad reality exists that some who want to learn have no one capable of teaching them. In these circumstances, Christians should take responsibility to dedicate their two eyes to study English texts, Greek Interlinears and other language helps, then not just make them say what we've been taught. Believers who employ this approach, especially those who probe more literal Translations, will see wonderful and practical truths to apply in their own lives and pass on to others. You may be surprised! What you discover could be more '**right on**' than a lot of lessons from so-called pastors or Greek scholars.

Neglecting This Approach

Regrettably, **'It Is What It Is'**, and the current trend continues in full force. **A License to Frivolously Interpret the Bible is Epidemic**. So, when someone who has a front row seat to the Original suggests a passage is being altered to conform with current beliefs, frequently their contributions are disregarded, and often without dialogue. This is mostly why doctrinal polarization exists – the lifeblood of groupism – with little hope for a cure.

For, sorry to say, *Theology is Commonly Developed and Defended the Way Evolutionists Reason*, **'This assumption combined with that theory plus another opinion** (from a book, teacher, or group) **equals truth'**. This speculative methodology shouldn't be followed but, incredibly, it's rampant. At the same time, philosophy-centered thinking is tolerated and encouraged which produces a helter-skelter atmosphere of relativism. Think, my friends! **These Practices Quash Need For the Literal Language Standard and Most Dissent while Dominant Powers seek to Establish Human-Based Unity by Any Means Necessary.**

So, ask yourself, **'Where do I stand in this?'** **'Do I rub shoulders with those who seek to interpret passages to support their stance?'** **'Do I explain away the clear meaning of texts to protect my own convictions?'** **'Am I willing to attribute a symbolic sense just to augment my views?'** Or, conversely, **'Is My Habit to Search For the Literal Meaning of Passages and, If Need Be, Adjust My Beliefs?'** I hope each person reading this relates to the last question since it leads to the road of an exciting and productive life.

For, the Lord uses His Word with unlimited potential to transform tuned-in Body members from flesh-control into Spirit-led warriors. In this encounter, any believer can be invigorated by a heavenly fervor like no other. For, those who **"walk in relation to the Spirit . . . won't complete the desire of the flesh"** (Gal. 5:16). And if we **"choose to be filled in the Spirit"**, we won't **"be conformed with this age"** but tap into a heightened reality of being **"transformed by the renewal of the mind"** (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:18). This path opens a way to touch the destiny for which we were saved – to move forward in becoming **"conformed ones to the image of His Son"** and **"the body of His glory"** (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:20-21).

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New Testament quotes are original translations by the author from the Greek texts.

Old Testament quotes are from the NASV unless otherwise indicated.

Rarely studied Bible Versions cited can be accessed at studybible.info.

1 – “γίνομαι” exists “in late Greek for ‘γίγνομαι’” and means “*to become . . . to be . . . of events, to occur, happen.*” The Abridgment of *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1871, pages 141-2.

2 – *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, H.E. Dana & Julius R. Mantey, The Macmillan Company, 40th printing 1957, pages 166, 170.

A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament, A.T. Robertson & W. Hersey Davis, Baker Book House, 10th Edition 1977, pages 306, 309-10.

3 – “αν” is “a conditional particle” paired with words of action or being and “expresses that which *certainly will happen, if something else happens first*”. The Abridgment of *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1871, page 46.

4 – The following are additional passages in Matthew which combine the particle “αν”, adverb “εως”, and at least one subjunctive verb. After each extract, I’ve provided a translation for the phrase of interest and cite other Translations that accurately render the portion. Passages which contain this construction along with “ου μη” and an associated subjunctive verb, like in Matthew 24:34, are highlighted in brown type. Two verses containing this combination were just quoted in the main article. Matthew **5:26**, “**until you might return**” (εως αν αποδως – YLT, RYLT, JMNT, cf. Luke 12:59); **10:11**, “**until you might go forth**” (εως αν εξελθητε – YLT, TGNT, RYLT); **12:20**, “**until he might put forth**” – (εως αν εκβαλη – YLT, TGNT, RYLT, JMNT); **16:28**, “**until they might see**” (εως αν ιδωσιν – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, JMNT, cf. Luke 9:27); **22:44**, “**until I might place**” (εως αν θω – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, RYLT); & **23:39**, “**until you might say**” (εως αν ειπητε – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, RYLT, cf. Luke 13:35). All these Versions can be seen on studybible.info.

5 – In addition to how these Translations render Matthew 24:34, other Versions replicate the final verb of this verse as if it’s a *future tense* or translate its *subjunctive mode* with ‘should’. The following Versions are found on studybible.info.

Examples utilizing the *future tense* are: ‘shall have taken place’ (DBY, BLB, Anderson); ‘shall happen’ (Rotherham, Thompson); ‘shall be fulfilled’ (Webster); or ‘shall take place’ (Etheridge). Like the renderings just discussed, these future tense depictions *infer the things Jesus delineates in the prior verses will happen* during the “**generation**” He’s addressing. Since future tenses occurring in the indicative mode also portray statements of fact, these renderings produce similar interpretations and conclusions as the renditions of Matthew 24:34 in today’s commonly used Translations.

Examples employing the *subjunctive mode* are: ‘should be occurring’, ‘should happen’ or ‘should be’ (CLV, MLV & Julia Smith). The English word ‘should’ partially represents what the subjunctive mode conveys, however, it can be understood as meaning “**all these things**” will *probably* happen during the

lifetime of “**this generation**”. Although this rendering leaves open the possibility “**these things**” may not happen, it infers Jesus is giving His expert advice that they probably will. But they didn’t happen, so expressing the mode with this word suggests Jesus could be wrong which contradicts all revelation which speaks to His righteousness and sinlessness. Therefore, translating a subjunctive with ‘should’ often falls short of expressing the absolute contingency this mode carries and can result in the same theological dilemmas caused by other renderings that portray this phrase in an indicative mode sense.

6 – The following reference works provide commentary on “γεννηται” and “αν”.

Companion Bible, E. W. Bullinger, Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1909-1922, reprinted 1974, p. 1366 on Matthew 24:34: “**till**. Here with Greek ‘αν’, and the Subjunctive Mood, marking the uncertainty, which was conditional on the repentance of the nation. Note the four ‘tills’ (**Matthew 10:23; 16:28; 23:39; 24:34**), and compare what is certain with what is uncertain.” These notes can be found at studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bul/matthew-24.html.

A Dispensational Theology, Charles F. Baker, Grace Bible College Publications, Second Edition 1972, p. 528: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not (*may not*, the Greek particle, αν, indicates a condition must be fulfilled) pass away, till all be fulfilled (Luke 21:29-32). Thus, the Kingdom Church which Christ was building, and to which He gave Peter the keys, was to be realized after the second coming when the kingdom would again be nigh at hand. The fulfillment was doubtless conditioned upon Israel’s acceptance of their Messiah. Because Israel rejected, this Kingdom Church has been put in abeyance and its future establishment will be preceded by the signs of Christ’s second coming.”

7 – The definition for “Christ” (χριστος) includes “anointed one” in The Abridgment of *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1871, page 790.

8 – Three Translations cited earlier appropriately render the particle “αν” combined with a subjunctive verb in Matthew 24:34 (YLT – ‘**may** come to pass’ [cf. RYLT]; Diaglott – ‘**may** be done’; TGNT – ‘**may** be fulfilled’) which also correctly translate Acts 3:19-20, ‘**may** come’ and ‘**may** send’. Many other Versions correctly render Acts 3:19-20 but not the similar construction in Matthew 24:34: Wesley, Worsley, Thompson, Living Oracles, Etheridge, Murdock, ABU, Anderson, Noyes, DBY, ERV, ASV, Rotherham, Twentieth Century, WNT, Worrell, Moffat, Riverside, MNT, Williams, BBE, LITV, AUV, ACV, Common, WEB, NHEB, RKJNT, CAB, WPNT, ISV, LEB, BLB, BSB, MSB, MLV, and VIN. See all these at studybible.info.

9 – This noun means: “complete restoration, restitution, reestablishment . . . recovery from sickness”. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, Harper & Brothers, New York, Unabridged 7th Edition, 1889, page 183.

10 – Just like Matthew 24:34, the Jew’s rejection of Christ is the same event which helps throw light on other passages that combine the particle “αν”, adverb “εως”, and a subjunctive verb in conjunction with “ου μη” and another subjunctive. For, Jesus said, “**until heaven and earth might pass away, not one jot or tittle will pass away from the law until all these things might happen**”. But it turned out He did “**destroy**” or *deactivate* the “**law**” as it relates to the Church since the “**kingdom of the heavens**” wasn’t established (Matt. 5:17-19, emphasis mine, cf. Rom. 7:6; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:13-15 – YLT, TGNT, RYLT, JMNT). Then, when He sent the twelve to the “**house of Israel . . . saying the kingdom of the**

heavens is near", since Christ didn't return, their time ran out before they could complete "the cities of Israel until the Son of Man might come" (Matt. 10:5-7, 23, emphasis mine – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, RYLT, JMNT).

Next, Matthew 16:28 states, "Truly I say to you that certain ones exist standing here who won't taste of death until they might see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." But they didn't see Him come since He was rejected in Acts (emphasis mine – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, RYLT, JMNT). And, speaking to "Jerusalem" about its National hope, Christ says, "Behold, your house is left desolate, for I say to you, you won't see Me from now until you might say 'Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord.'" Instead, the Nation as a whole rejected Him, so those people didn't see Him again (Matt. 23:37-39; Psalm 118:26, emphasis mine – Diaglott, YLT, TGNT, RYLT).

It's noteworthy that many refuse to translate constructions like these in a conditional manner since the particle "αυ" splits two subjunctive verbs. However, there's no actual linguistic proof for this stance. I believe this view has been proliferated since early Translations left out the conditional sense in portions like these. Please note, Versions cited in support of my renderings in this article were published by individuals. Past and present Translation committees could've included individuals who recognized the force of the subjunctive mode and particle "αυ". If translators with this understanding existed, their assessments didn't make it into the final draft as majority opinion ruled or those in charge were reluctant to deviate from traditional renderings. Now, I recognize some folks comprehend the Greek language better than others and/or are more courageous to publish what they know. I believe these are the reasons why individual authors have composed Versions the most faithful to the Original.

11 – The concept of "hardening" (πωρωσις) in Rom. 11:25 follows the development of this idea since chapter 9. Its verb is used earlier, "what Israel diligently seeks, this it didn't attain, but the election attained it, also the rest were hardened" (επωρωθησαν – 11:7). This indicates those who weren't God's elect or "vessels of mercy" were, instead, "vessels of wrath" and ultimately hardened to the gospel (9:21-23). The verb's passive voice specifies they were "hardened" by a force outside themselves, which other places include their will entrapped by the Devil (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26). Also, just prior to saying all people are either created as a "valuable vessel" or "unvaluable vessel", Paul concludes "consequently therefore, He shows mercy to who He desires, also He hardens (σκληρυνει) who He desires" (Rom. 9:18). The two different verbs used in these chapters to depict *hardening* appear to be synonyms that portray the same concept.

Then, in Romans 11:22, Paul exclaims, "Therefore, behold the kindness and severity of God, indeed upon those having fallen (in unbelief) severity, also upon you the kindness of God". Since a few verses later Paul says, "a hardening has partially happened to Israel", the greater context supports the idea not enough Jews believed Jesus was the Christ because only God's elect "remnant" could and, therefore, would believe based on His "kindness". And the rest were hardened which represents His "severity" (9:27-29; 11:3-5; cf. 2:4-5). In conclusion, during the time of early Acts, it was never possible for Christ to return and establish the prophesied Kingdom since God was in control of who and how many believed based on His elective purpose (9:11-18). Consequently, at that time He wasn't caught off guard when an insufficient number in Israel failed to accept their Messiah but, rather, these events were part of His eternal plan which included instigating the Body of Christ by revealing the "predestined" and now "made known . . . administration of the mystery" (1 Cor. 2:6-8; 11:25; 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-9).

12 – Many assert the Lord offered this Kingdom to Israel during His earthly ministry and that the Jews had already rejected it. However, the Gospel Accounts are void of support for the view Jesus changed His course from favoring Israel to initiate the Body of Christ. Usually, the presence of the word

“church” (ἐκκλησία) is cited to support this theory. But contexts in the Gospel Accounts and early Acts which contain the term show this *assembly* is a *Jewish congregation* associated with “the kingdom of the heavens” (see Acts 7:38). Furthermore, “ἐκκλησία” is also used almost 100 times in the Septuagint, and most often refers to the people of Israel. So, the Jews were very familiar with this term defining their group. Within this congregation, Peter had divine authority to “bind” and “loose”, for instance, when he issued death sentences to Ananias and Saphira. Also, unrepentant sinners were considered like a “gentile”, all assembly members were “having all things in common” as they waited for the Lord’s return, and Saul was determined to eliminate all converts who believed Jesus was the Messiah (Matthew 16:18-19; 18:15-17, Acts 2:43-47; 5:11; 7:58 – 8:3).

13 – *Westminster Seminary*: “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them.”

Dallas Theological Seminary: “We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic—as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible in the originals is therefore without error.”

Liberty University: “We affirm that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, though written by men, was supernaturally inspired by God so that all its words are the written true revelation of God; it is therefore inerrant in the originals and authoritative in all matters. It is to be understood by all through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, its meaning determined by the historical, grammatical, and literary use of the author’s language, comparing Scripture with Scripture.”