

Joseph Smith - Matthew 1

Introduction

Joseph Smith Matthew is an excerpt of the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of the Bible. This chapter and the Book of Moses are the portions of Joseph Smith's translation that have been canonized. They are the two sections of the JST that depart the most from text.

“Matthew 24 as it stands in the Bible poses great problems for many readers in that the events of the destruction of the temple are intertwined with those preceding the Second Coming. The Prophet's revisions altered the order of several of the verses, thus making it plain that the Savior clearly answered both of the questions posed by his disciples. Verses 5 through 20 of Joseph Smith—Matthew answer the question of when the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and what would happen to the Jews, while verses 21 through 55 answer the question as to what shall be the signs of his Second Coming and the end of the world. For Latter-day Saints, the events leading up to the Second Coming are of primary interest...

“Verses 1 to 20 in Joseph Smith—Matthew talk in some detail about the events leading up to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70: the coming of false prophets and Messiahs, iniquity among the Saints, and persecution and tribulation. In many ways what happened was a type of the Second Coming, and the graphic fulfillment of those prophesied events serves as a solemn reminder to us that we can expect fulfillment of the passages related to our dispensation. And Latter-day Saints need to know that many of those in A.D. 70 who were righteous were delivered from disaster. Jesus Christ admonished his followers in that day: ‘Stand in the holy place; whoso readeth let him understand. Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains’ (JS—M 1:12–13). Eusebius, an early Christian historian, writes of the Christians living in Jerusalem before the destruction: ‘The people of the church in Jerusalem were commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to those in the city who were worthy of it to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Perea which they called Pella. To it those who believed on Christ migrated from Jerusalem.’ (David Rolph Seely, “The Joseph Smith Translation: ‘Plain and Precious Things’ Restored,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 15–16)

JS-Matthew 1:1 For I say unto you, that ye shall not see me henceforth

During the last week of his mortal ministry, the Master set his eyes on the Temple. Fame and rumor were escalating. Anticipation was high that the miracle worker, Jesus of Nazareth, would be in Jerusalem for the Passover. The fever pitch was high and the Master took this opportunity to teach in His Temple.

Most frustrating to the Savior was the wickedness of the leadership of the Jews. They adorned the graves of the prophets but were themselves whited sepulchers. And so, after berating the Pharisees and scribes for their hypocrisy (Matt. 23), the Lord lamented the fate of Jerusalem:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Matt. 23:37-38)

Instead of protection, they would get destruction. Instead of being gathered, the Jews would be scattered. Instead of their house being eternally established, it would be decimated. The great Messianic prophecies of the deliverance of Jerusalem were not to be fulfilled in their dispensation. No one seemed to understand that the Messiah would be killed. The prophecies were not that clear. To them, it was unfathomable that He could be killed. In several other instances, He had told the twelve that he would be leaving them. They didn't understand him. They couldn't comprehend it. Certainly, they didn't want to believe it.

JS-Matthew 1:1 Then understood his disciples that he should come again on the earth

This is the first time the apostles understood there would be a Second Coming. Before the Day of Pentecost, the apostles were not privileged with a full endowment of the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2). As such, their minds were often slow to comprehend the words of the Master. They still expected what their culture had taught them—that the Messiah would come and deliver Jerusalem. Just prior to his Ascension, they asked again, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6) JS-Matthew is the answer to that important question. When will the Lord return to “restore again the kingdom of Israel?”

Bruce R. McConkie

In every devout and believing heart the burning questions are: When will he come? Will it be in my day, or the day of my children, or in some distant age? And will I be worthy to abide the day and to stand with him in glory when he appeareth? And so we find the disciples, alone with him on the Mount of Olives, pondering his pronouncement about the Second Coming. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 24)

JS-Matthew 1:2 Jesus went out, and departed from the temple

Joseph Smith Matthew clarifies that the Lord was teaching in three separate locations, 1) in the temple, 2) outside the temple, and 3) on the Mount of Olives. As he leaves the walls of Herod's temple, only He understands that He would never return. Having cleansed it at the beginning and at the end of his ministry, Jesus leaves for the last time. His prophetic mind was filled with the destruction that imminently awaited. How melancholy would we feel if we knew as we left the Temple that it would be our last visit? Even sadder, I suppose, if we knew that the Temple was soon to be destroyed!

JS-Matthew 1:2 Master, show us concerning the buildings of the temple

The Twelve were privileged to ask the Savior about the Temple. As a tourist might ask, the disciples ask their tour guide about the meaning of the different compartments of the temple. The answer is not the "tour guide" answer they were looking for. Jesus had bad news for them and bad news for the Temple.

JS-Matthew 1:3 there shall not be left here, upon this temple, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down

While we might imagine that Herod's temple was built with relatively small stones or bricks, this was not the case at all. These stones were huge. Josephus wrote, "Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their length was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve." (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, 11:3) That means that each stone measured 45 feet by 14 feet by 21.5 feet (see BD-"cubit"). Only an incredible destruction could have leveled such a magnificent structure!

Isaiah

Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire (Isa. 64:10-11).

Josephus

When Titus (the Roman general) perceived that his endeavors to spare a foreign temple [failed],... he gave order to set the gates on fire...

So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon... As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered any thing to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it.

[Those that came to save the temple] were every where slain, and every where beaten; and as for a great part of the people, they were weak and without arms, and had their throats cut wherever they were caught. Now round about the altar lay dead bodies heaped one upon another, as at the steps going up to it ran a great quantity of their blood, whither also the dead bodies that were slain above [on the altar] fell down...

WHILE the holy house was on fire, every thing was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those that were caught were slain; nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity, but children, and old men, and profane persons, and priests were all slain in the same manner... The flame was also carried a long way, and made an echo, together with the groans of those that were slain; and because this hill was high, and the works at the temple were very great, one would have thought the whole city had been on fire... for one would have thought that the hill itself, on which the temple stood, was seething hot, as full of fire on every part of it, that the blood was larger in quantity than the fire, and those that were slain more in number than those that slew them; for the ground did no where appear visible, for the dead bodies that lay on it; but the soldiers went over heaps of those bodies, as they ran upon such as fled from them. (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, 4:1-6; 5:1)

Ezra Taft Benson

“Herod the Great...undertook to reconstruct the temple. He spared no expense or labor to restore that building to the beauty and magnificence of the days of Solomon. The project took about forty-six years to complete, six years longer than the Salt Lake Temple in pioneer days. According to Josephus, a Jewish historian, some of the stones used in the foundation were prodigious in size, measuring approximately sixty feet in length. Can you imagine how improbable it must have seemed to Jesus' disciples that one stone would not be left on another? Yet, thirty-seven years later, when the Romans invaded Jerusalem, that prophecy was literally fulfilled. It is said that after Roman soldiers burned the temple, they dug up the foundation stones in the hopes of finding a treasure buried there.” (*Come unto Christ*, 109.)

Wilford Woodruff

“When Jesus Christ said there should not be left one stone upon another in the temple that should not be thrown down, the Jewish nation did not believe it, neither would they receive such testimony; but they looked at outward circumstances, and were ready to say, ‘Who can prevail against us? What nation like unto our nation? We have held the giving of the law, the oracles, and the Urim and Thummim; the lawgiver has never departed from between our feet; we have held the power of government from generation to generation; and what nation hath power now to prevail against us?’” (*History of the Church*, 6:24-25)

Bruce R. McConkie

“The prophetic announcement of the desolation and destruction of the temple was thus more than the death knell of a building, even of a sacred building that was the 'Father's house.' It was in fact a prediction of gloom and doom upon a nation. It was the announcement of the final end of a dispensation, the end of a kingdom, the end of the Lord's people as a distinct nation.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:637.)

JS-Matthew 1:4 And Jesus left them, and went upon the Mount of Olives

Hugh Nibley

Somehow puzzlingly, the next verse in the King James says that they came to him when he was on the Mount of Olives. Well, they were just leaving the temple with this conversation. But here it says that they came to him when he was on the Mount of Olives, and they came to him (as it says here) privately. Each one wanted to know for himself. They are puzzled by it. What's really going to happen? Will you please tell us? Can you let us know? (*Ancient*

Documents and the Pearl of Great Price, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe, 3)

JS-Matthew 1:4 Tell us... concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and... of the end of the world

Whether the apostles knew it or not, they were asking two separate questions. They wanted to know about the destruction of the temple and the Jews. Those would come together in AD 70 at the hands of the Romans. They wanted to know about the end of the world and the destruction of the wicked. Those would come later. There would be about 2000 years between the two events. This crucial separation becomes clear in the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew. Otherwise, both Matthew and Luke's account (Luke 21:5-38) of this conversation mix all these events into one great prophecy. Of course, they can't be understood without separating them into two different events, two different time periods, two different dispensations.

"The extant Greek manuscripts, as their translation into the various versions of the Bible show, are not clear as to what prophesied events are part of which period. It is for this reason that many are confused and have even given up hope of ever being able to understand. Yet it is at this very point where the Prophet's inspired account is the most helpful." (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 2: The Pearl of Great Price* [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985], 291 - 292)

This is the single greatest contribution of JS-Matthew—to know that the Lord is answering two different questions about two different time periods.

Bruce R. McConkie

Apparently the disciples thought these two events would be closely related in time... the key to understanding the whole discourse is to know which statements of our Lord pertain to the day of the ancient apostles and which to those ages following their ministries. (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:640.)

JS-Matthew 1:5 Take heed that no man deceive you

This is the Lord's preface to his answer to the first question: "When will the temple and Jews be destroyed?" The next 15 verses (6-20) list the signs to precede the destruction awaiting their generation—the first Desolation of

Abomination—the destruction Roman conquest of Jerusalem circa AD 70.
(see Daniel 9:24-27)

JS-Matthew 1:6 many shall come in my name, saying—I am Christ—and shall deceive many

“Christian churches had scarcely been gathered and organized, when here and there men rose up who not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the apostles taught, attempted innovations, and fashioned religion according to their own notions...

“So long as the greater part of the personal disciples of the Saviour were alive, these innovators were not very successful and seem to have had no great number of followers. But gradually they acquired more influence; and before the decease of all those whom Christ had himself instructed, they laid the foundations of those sects which afterwards exceedingly disturbed the Christian community, and gave rise to so many controversies...

“The first place among them is by many given to Dositheus, a Samaritan... for he wished to be accounted the Messiah or that Prophet whom God had promised to the Jews...

“What I have said of Dositheus I would likewise say of Simon Magus. This impious man... declared open war against Christianity, [and]... set himself in opposition to Christ and claimed to be the supreme power of God...

“From Simon Magus, it is said, Meander, who was also a Samaritan, learned his doctrine... Meander [also]... foolishly arrogated to [himself] the character of the Saviour of mankind.” (John Lawrence von Mosheim, *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, [London: M'Corquodale and Co., 6th ed., 1868], 45-49)

B.H. Roberts

There were two distinct parties in the church at this time, between whom bitter contentions arose. Some "preached Christ even of envy and strife, and some of good will". "The one preach the Christ of contention, not sincerely", says St. Paul, "supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel" (Philippians 1:15, 16). "Beware of dogs", said he again to the same people; "beware of evil workers; beware of the concision" (Philippians 3:2). "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is

their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:18, 19). To the Colossians St. Paul found it necessary to say: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ... Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:8, 18). (*The Falling Away*, 20 - 21.)

JS-Matthew 1:7 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you

The persecution and martyrdom of the apostles was a "sign of the times" for that generation. All but John were killed prior to the Roman siege of Jerusalem.

Sterling W. Sill

According to tradition with one exception, the apostles that Jesus appointed to carry on his work, were all subjected to violent deaths. Peter, Philip, Simon, and Andrew were crucified; James and Paul were beheaded; Bartholomew was flayed alive; Thomas was run through with a lance; James the son of Alphaeus, was beaten to death; Thaddaeus was shot through with arrows; Barnabas was stoned; Matthew was slain with a battle axe in Ethiopia; and Mark was dragged to death in the streets of Alexandria. Then John, the sole survivor, was banished to the lonely isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Jesus had built his Church upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. When the foundation was destroyed, the building crumbled. (*Conference Report*, April 1963, Second Day—Morning Meeting 41 - 42)

JS-Matthew 1:9 many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many

Tad Callister

Christian historians and early Church leaders have acknowledged the multiplicity of heresies that confronted the Church. The attempts to prevent these heresies is reminiscent of the boy who plugged the hole in the dike with his finger. Unfortunately, as the heresies flourished, there were more holes than fingers...

Peter echoed... warnings of "false prophets" and "false teachers" and then added that "many shall follow their pernicious ways" (2 Peter 2:1-2). John wrote of ecclesiastical counterfeits who claimed "they are apostles, and are not, and [thou] hast found them liars" (Revelation 2:2).

The great tragedy was that many of the heresies and much of the corruption had arisen from within. John recognized that “even now are there many antichrists” (1 John 2:18)... Paul warned that “of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30), and spoke of “false brethren unawares brought in” (Galatians 2:4).

Iraeneus made reference to a multitude of heretical groups, and then named their leaders as Valentinus, Ptolemy, Colobasus, Marcus, Simon Magus, Minander, Carpocrates, Nicolaitanes, Tatian, and many others. (*The Inevitable Apostasy* [SLC: Deseret Book Co., 2006], 37-39)

Bruce R. McConkie

To the Meridian Saints it seemed as though the last days were upon them because the apostasy destined to occur between the first and second comings of the Lord had already commenced. (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 3: 382)

JS-Matthew 1:11 he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved

Bruce R. McConkie

By revelation, the meridian saints were led out of Jerusalem before the iron hand of Rome turned the city into rubble and its people into corpses and slaves. Thus it is in every age: the Lord gives his people the direction they need at the moment of their peril and danger. And surely in the days ahead there will be times when nothing but the wisdom of God, descending from heaven and flowing forth from prophetic lips, will be able to save his people. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 478)

JS-Matthew 1:12 the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet

Daniel was taken prisoner to Babylon when Jerusalem had been sacked and the temple destroyed. To him was given prophecies regarding future destructions on Jerusalem, called either “the abomination of desolation” or “the desolation of abomination” (DC 84:117; 88:85). Although not clear from Daniel’s prophecies (Dan 9:24-27; 12:1-13), the desolation is to occur twice. The First Desolation of Abomination occurred when the Romans sacked

Jerusalem in 70 AD. This destruction becomes a type for the Second Desolation of Abomination which will occur just prior to the coming of the Lord.

When the Savior trudged the path to Golgotha, he turned to the weeping women and warned, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck' (Lu 23:28:29). He was referencing the great destruction which was to come upon that generation.

JS-Matthew 1:13-20 is a warning to those who are caught in the desolation spoken of. The destruction would be so swift that they would hardly be able to run fast enough. **Bruce R. McConkie** stated, "But what of the saints who dwelt in Jerusalem in that gloomy day? They heeded Jesus' warning and fled in haste. Guided by revelation, as true saints always are, they fled to Pella in Perea and were spared." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:644-645)

For those who were less fortunate, a terrifying fate awaited. The Roman soldiers laid siege on the city, ambushing anyone who went out to gather food. Others who tried to escape were captured, tortured, and crucified. The soldiers would catch about 500 people a day and crucify them—until there were no more crosses left and no more room to put them up. (see Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, 11:1)

Others who deserted to their Arab neighbors would swallow all their gold as a means of transport while they made their escape. Hoping for help and amnesty, these unfortunate souls headed for Arabian and Syrian camps. But the Arabs and Syrians quickly learned that the Jews were coming to them with bellies full of gold. Josephus records, "So the multitude of the Arabians, with the Syrians, cut up those that came as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night about two thousand of these deserters were thus dissected." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, 13:4)

"Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the children also and the young men wandered about the market-places like shadows, all swelled with famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, 12:3)

Moses prophesied that if the Israelites were wicked, they would be cursed with a famine which would be so severe that some would eat their own children (Deut. 28:53). Josephus records the pathetic fulfillment of Moses' words. One woman, after cursing her suckling infant, "slew her son; and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed." Her neighbors came in response to the smell and found out what the woman had done. "Hereupon they were seized with a horror and amazement of mind, and stood astonished at the sight...After which, those men went out trembling, being never so much affrighted at anything as they were at this, and with some difficulty they left the rest of that meat to the mother." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, 13:4) Indeed, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck' (Lu 23:28:29).

But those days of destruction were shortened and some Jews did survive. All told, 97,000 were taken captive, and an incredible 1,100,000 were killed. Such was the First Desolation of Abomination—but another awaits the Jewish nation.

Mark E. Petersen

"And what a desolation it was! As the Roman legions swept through the Holy Land only a few years later and wiped out Jerusalem, it was such a catastrophe that it fully reflected the Savior's prediction when he said. 'Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.' (Matthew 24:21.)

"As Josephus describes it in his writings, it is dreadful to contemplate, even after almost two thousand years." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 12)

JS-Matthew 1:13-17 let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains

The message of these verses seems to be the cry, "Run for your lives!" "Go hide in the mountains!" "Don't think you can take your time and still outrun the approaching destruction." Don't bother to pack your clothes, you won't have time. Don't bother to gather provisions, you won't have time. If you're pregnant, too bad for you; you won't be able to run fast enough. If it is wintertime and the escape routes are bogged down, you're in big trouble. If destruction comes on the Sabbath, rabbinical restrictions on Sabbath travel will prevent your escape. You're going to have to run fast and long, so good luck.

This warning is to all, but we would hope the saints would have a bit more time to prepare. The righteous and wise can observe the signs of the times to avoid being caught off guard. The meridian saints could see the persecution, the death of the apostles, the false prophets and the anti-Christ. In their day as in ours, paying attention to the signs of the times and giving heed to the living oracles would preserve them from destruction. What is the take home message? When the Prophet says, "Let's go," it's time to go!

JS-Matthew 1:18 great tribulation... such as was not before sent upon Israel... nor ever shall be sent again.

The Romans were not the first army to attack Jerusalem and destroy the Temple. The Babylonians had done the same thing about 650 years earlier. Nebuchadnezzar "burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And... brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about." (2 Kgs 25:9-10)

But it was worse in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans. Like the burning of the Temple of Solomon, the Temple of Herod was destroyed by fire, but also every huge stone was overturned looking for rumored hidden treasure. At the hands of the Romans, many people were crucified—a practice not yet invented in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, conditions within the walls of the city during the siege were much worse, many more starved to death, more were killed, fewer were spared and taken captive. Never had the situation been this bad. Never will it again.

The next Desolation of Abomination, we are told, will not be as bad. That is hardly reassuring, for Zechariah tells us "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." (Zech 14:2) This time the Jerusalem Temple (which is yet to be built) will not be destroyed. Conditions will be severe enough that temple worship will be suspended, for "the daily sacrifice shall be taken away" (Dan. 12:11), meaning the traditional morning and evening animal sacrifice would be stopped, but the Temple itself would survive. The outer court of the Temple, where the sacrifice is performed, will be violated by the Gentiles "for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Rev. 11:2) This last destruction will not be without end for the Savior will come in time to redeem his people, destroy their enemies, and grace the temple with his holy Presence.

Joseph Fielding Smith

The desolation which came upon the Jews of that generation in which Christ was crucified, was the most terrible punishment ever meted out to any of the children of Israel. Speaking of this time of tribulation the Savior said to his disciples: "All things which have befallen them are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them. And except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened." (P. of G. P., p. 44; Writings of Joseph Smith.) The sieges of Jerusalem under Cestus Gallus and later Vespasian and Titus (66 to 70 A.D.) were so horrifying that they cannot adequately be told in human language. The historian Josephus has given a vivid picture of this suffering. More than a million five hundred thousand Jews perished in this war, many of them fighting among themselves. Jerusalem was finally destroyed, the temple razed, and the inhabitants of Palestine who escaped death were scattered over the face of the whole earth in punishment for their wickedness and rejection of the Son of God who declared that he came to his own and they received him not. In this state of banishment and in their scattered condition the Jews continued to suffer at the hands of all peoples, especially by the Christians generation after generation to the present time. They cried out: "His blood be upon us, and on our children," and surely they have paid the price of their wickedness. (Church History and Modern Revelation, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 1: 179.)

JS-Matthew 1:19 all things which have befallen them are only the beginning of sorrows

Hugh Nibley

The fall of Jerusalem, the driving out of the Jews, was to go on in sustained misery for the next two thousand years. They had no citizenship, no rights anywhere. (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 7.)

As a people, the events of the first century were just the beginning—just the beginning of a remarkably long and arduous history of persecution for the Jews. See list below:

224 C.E. Italy Forced Conversion
325 C.E. Jerusalem Expulsion renewed by
Constantine

351 C.E Persia Book Burning
357 C.E. Italy Property Confiscation
379 C.E. Milan Synagogue Burning
415 C.E. Alexandria Expulsion
418 C.E. Minorca Forced Conversion
468 C.E. Babylon/Judea Expulsion
469 C.E. Iphahan Holocaust
470 C.E. Babylon/Judea Expulsion
489 C.E. Antioch Synagogue Burning
506 C.E. Daphne Synagogue Burning
519 C.E. Ravenna Synagogue Burning
554 C.E. Diocese of Clement (France) Expulsion
561 C.E. Diocese of Uzes (France) Expulsion or Conversion
582 C.E Merovingia Forced Conversion
612 C.E. Visigoth Spain Expulsion
624 C.E. Hejaz Expulsion
628 C.E. Byzantium Forced Conversion
629 C.E. Merovingia Forced Conversion
633 C.E. Toledo Forced Conversion
638 C.E. Toledo Stake Burnings
642 C.E. Visigothic Empire Expulsion
653 C.E. Toledo Expulsion
681 C.E. Spain Forced Conversion
693 C.E. Toledo Jews Enslaved
722 C.E. Byzantium Judaism Outlawed
855 C.E. Italy Expulsion
876 C.E. Sens Expulsion
897 C.E. Narbonne Land Confiscation
945 C.E. Venice Ban on Sea Travel
1009 C.E. Orleans Massacre
1012 C.E. Rouen, Limoges & Rome Massacre
1012 C.E. Mayence, Germany Expulsion
1021 C.E. Rome Jews Burned Alive
1063 C.E. Spain Massacre
1095 C.E. Lorraine Massacre
1096 C.E. Northern France & Germany 1/3 of Jewish Population Massacred as part of the First Crusade
1096 C.E. Hungary Massacre
1096 C.E. Ralisbon Massacre
1099 C.E. Jerusalem Jews Burned Alive

1100 C.E. Kiev Pogrom
1140 C.E. Germany Massacres
1142-1212 C.E. North Africa Massacres
1146 C.E. Rhine Valley Massacre as part of the Second
Crusade
1147 C.E. Wurzburg Massacre
1147 C.E. Belitz (Germany) Jews Burned Alive
1147 C.E. Carenton, Ramenu & Sully
(France) Massacres
1171 C.E. Blois Stake Burnings
1181 C.E. France Expulsion/Property Confiscation
1181 C.E. England Property Confiscation
1188 C.E. London & York Mob Attacks
1189 C.E. England Mob Attacks against Jews following coronation of
Richard the Lionheart/ Property Confiscation.
1190 C.E. Norfolk Jews Burned Alive
1191 C.E. Bray (France) Jews Burned Alive
1195 C.E. France Property Confiscation
1209 C.E. Beziers Massacre
1215 C.E. Rome Jews Forced to Wear Badges
1215 C.E. Toulouse (France) Mass Arrests
1218 C.E. England Jews Forced to Wear Badges
1231 C.E. Rome Inquisition Established
1236 C.E. France Forced Conversion/Massacre
1239 C.E. London Massacre & Property
Confiscation
1240 C.E. France Talmud Confiscated
1240 C.E. England Book Burning
1240 C.E. Spain Forced Conversion
1242 C.E. Paris Talmud Burned
1244 C.E. Oxford Mob Attacks
1255 C.E. England Public Hangings
1261 C.E. Canterbury Mob Attacks
1262 C.E. London Mob Attacks
1264 C.E. London Mob Attacks
1267 C.E. Vienna Jews Forced to Wear Horned
Hats
1270 C.E. Weissenberg, Magdeburg, Armstadt, Coblenz, Singzig, and
Erfurt Jews Burned Alive
1278 C.E. Genoa (Spain) Mob Attacks
1283 C.E. Mayence & Bacharach Mob Attacks

1285 C.E. Munich Jews Burned Alive
1290 C.E. England Expulsion
1298 C.E. Franconia, Bavaria & Austria 100,000 Jews slaughtered
under command of German knight Rindfleisch
1306 C.E. France Expulsion by Philip the Fair (Same King who burned
the Templars)
1308 C.E. Strasbourg Jews Burned Alive
1320 C.E. Toulouse & Perpigon 120 Communities Massacred &
Talmud Burned
1321 C.E. Teruel Public Executions
1328 C.E. Estella 5,000 Jews Slaughtered
1348 C.E. France & Spain Jews Burned Alive
1348 C.E. Switzerland Expulsion
1349 C.E. Worms, Strasbourg, Oppenheim, 1

1349 C.E. Heilbronn (Germany) Expulsion
1349 C.E. Hungary Expulsion
1349 C.E. Saxony Expulsion
1354 C.E. Castile (Spain) 12,000 Jews Slaughtered
1360 C.E. Hungary Banned
1368 C.E. Toledo 8,000 Jews Slaughtered
1370 C.E. Belgium Expulsion
1370 C.E. Majorca., Penignon & Barcelona Mob
Attack
1377 C.E. Huesca (Spain) Jews Burned Alive
1380 C.E. Paris Mob Attack
1384 C.E. Nordlingen Mass Murder
1388 C.E. Strasbourg Expulsion
1389 C.E. Prague Mass Slaughter & Book Burning
1391 C.E. Castille, Toledo, Madrid, Seville
1394 C.E. Germany Expulsion
1394 C.E. France Expulsion
1399 C.E. Posen (Poland) Jews Burned Alive
1400 C.E. Prague Stake Burnings
1407 C.E. Cracow Mob Attack
1415 C.E. Rome Talmud Confiscated
1420 C.E. Austria Expelled by Albrecht V
1422 C.E. Austria Jews Burned Alive
1422 C.E. Austria Expulsion
1424 C.E. Fribourg & Zurich Expulsion
1426 C.E. Cologne Expulsion

1431 C.E. Southern Germany Jews Burned Alive
1432 C.E. Savory Expulsion
1438 C.E. Mainz Expulsion
1439 C.E. Augsburg Expulsion
1444 C.E. Netherlands Expulsion
1449 C.E. Toledo Public Torture &. Burnings
1453 C.E. Franconia Expulsion
1453 C.E. Breslau Expulsion
1453 C.E. Poland Citizenship revoked
1454 C.E. Wurzburg Expulsion
1456 C.E. Bavaria Expulsion
1463 C.E. Cracow Mob Attack
1473 C.E. Andalusia Mob Attack
1480 C.E. Venice Jews Burned Alive
1481 C.E. Seville Stake Burnings
1484 C.E. Ciudad Real, Guadalupe, Sarago

1485 C.E. Vincenza (Italy) Expulsion
1486 C.E. Toledo Jews Burned Alive
1488 C.E. Toledo Stake Burnings
1490 C.E. Toledo Public Executions
1491 C.E. Astorga Public Torture & Execution
1492 C.E. Sicily Expulsion
1492 C.E. Spain Choice between Expulsion or Conversion (When the Rivero family became Catholic)
1495 C.E. Lithuania Expulsion by Grand Duke Alexander
1497 C.E. Portugal Expulsion
1499 C.E. Germany Expulsion
1506 C.E. Lisbon Mob Attack
1510 C.E. Berlin Public Torture & Execution
1510 C.E. Brandenburg Expulsion
1510 C.E. Prussia Expulsion
1514 C.E. Strasbourg Expulsion
1519 C.E. Regensburg Expulsion
1539 C.E. Cracow & Portugal Stake Burnings
1540 C.E. Naples and Sardinia Expulsion
1542 C.E. Bohemia Expulsion
1550 C.E. Genoa and Venice Expulsion
1551 C.E. Bavaria Expulsion
1553 C.E. Rome Talmud burned
1555 C.E. Pesaro Expulsion

1556 C.E. Sokhachev (Poland) Public Torture & Execution
1559 C.E. Austria Expulsion
1561 C.E. Prague Expulsion
1567 C.E. Wurzburg Expulsion
1569 C.E. Italy and Papal States Expulsion
1571 C.E. Brandenburg Expulsion
1582 C.E. Hungary Banned a second time
1582 C.E. Netherlands Expulsion
1593 C.E. Brunswick Expulsion
1593 C.E. Brandenburg, Austria Expulsion
1593 C.E. Italy Banned a second time
1597 C.E. Cremona, Pavia & Lodi Expulsion
1614 C.E. Frankfort Expulsion
1615 C.E. Worms Expulsion
1619 C.E. Kiev Expulsion
1635 C.E. Vilna Mob Attack
1637 C.E. Cracow Public Torture & Execution
1647 C.E. Lisbon Jews Burned Alive
1648 C.E. Poland 1/3 of Jewry Slaughtered
1649 C.E. Ukraine Expulsion
1649 C.E. Hamburg Expulsion
1652 C.E. Lisbon Stake Burnings
1654 C.E. New Amsterdam Expelled by Peter Stuyvesant (order later retracted)
1654 C.E. Little Russia Expulsion
1656 C.E. Lithuania Expulsion
1660 C.E. Seville Jews Burned Alive
1663 C.E. Cracow Public Torture &. Execution
1664 C.E. Lemberg Mob Attack
1669 C.E. Oran (North Africa) Expulsion
1670 C.E. Vienna Expulsion
1671 C.E. Minsk Mob Attacks
1681 C.E. Vilna Mob Attacks
1682 C.E. Marseilles Expulsion
1682 C.E. Cracow Mob Attacks
1687 C.E. Posen Mob Attacks
1712 C.E. Sandomir Expulsion
1727 C.E. Russia Expulsion
1738 C.E. Wurtemberg Expulsion
1740 C.E. Liule Russia Expulsion
1744 C.E. Hungary Banned for the third time by Queen Maria Theresa.

"Henceforth, no Jew, no matter under what name, will be allowed to remain here without my written permission. I know of no other troublesome pest within the state than this race, which impoverishes the people by their fraud, usury and money-lending and commits all deeds which an honorable man despises. Subsequently, they have to be removed and excluded from here as much as possible."

- 1744 C.E. Livonia Expulsion
- 1745 C.E. Moravia Expulsion by order of the King (to halt mob attacks on Jews)
- 1753 C.E. Kovad (Lithuania) Expulsion
- 1757 C.E. Kamenetz Talmud Burning
- 1761 C.E. Bordeaux Expulsion
- 1768 C.E. Kiev 3,000 Jews Slaughtered
- 1772 C.E. Russia Expulsion to the Pale of Settlement
- 1775 C.E. Warsaw Expulsion
- 1789 C.E. Alsace Expulsion
- 1790 C.E. Morocco Expulsion, villages destroyed
- 1801 C.E. Bucharest Mob Attack
- 1804 C.E. Russian Villages Expulsion
- 1808 C.E. Russian Countryside Expulsion
- 1814 C.E. Norway Rescinds ban on Jews
- 1815 C.E. Lubeck & Bremen Expulsion
- 1815 C.E. Franconia, Swabia & Bavaria Expulsion
- 1820 C.E. Breme Expulsion
- 1843 C.E. Austria & Prussia Expulsion
- 1850 C.E. New York City 500 People, Led by Police, Attacked & Wrecked, Jewish Synagogue
- 1862 C.E. United States Expelled by Ulysses S. Grant (order later retracted)
- 1866 C.E. Galatz (Romania) Expulsion
- 1871 C.E. Odena Mob Attack
- 1882 C.E. Russia Laws banishing Jews relaxed under Alexander II. Following his assassination by a Jewish plot, expulsion of 1772 restored.
- 1887 C.E. Slovakia Mob Attacks
- 1897 C.E. Kantakuzenka (Russia) Mob Attacks
- 1898 C.E. Rennes (France) Mob Attack
- 1899 C.E. Nicholayev Mob Attack
- 1900 C.E. Konitz (Prussia) Mob Attack
- 1902 C.E. Poland Widespread Pogroms
- 1904 C.E. Manchuria, Kiev & Volhynia Widespread Pogroms
- 1905 C.E. Zhitomir (Yolhynia) Mob Attacks

1919 C.E. Bavaria Expulsion
1915 C.E. Georgia (U.S.A.) Leo Frank Lynched
1919 C.E. Mongolia Pogrom
1919 C.E. Prague Wide Spread Pogroms
1920 C.E. Munich & Breslau Mob Attacks
1922 C.E. Boston, MA Lawrence Lowell, President of Harvard, calls for Quota
Restrictions on Jewish Admission
1926 C.E. Uzbekistan Pogrom
1928 C.E. Hungary Widespread Anti-Semitic Riots on University Campuses
1929 C.E. Lemberg (Poland) Mob Attacks
1930 C.E. Berlin Mob Attack
1933 C.E. Bucharest Mob Attacks
1933 C.E. Europe Immigrant Jews banned from
citizenship.
1935 C.E. Germany Loss of citizenship, imprisonment in slave labor
camps.
1948 C.E. Libya Pogrom
1969 C.E. Iraq Executions

(<http://whatreallyhappened.com/WRHARTICLES/HistoryPersecution.htm>)

See also

(<http://www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/HistoryJewishPersecution>) and

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Jews)

JS-Matthew 1:20 except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake

Complete annihilation of the Jewish people was prevented by the Lord, that a remnant might be preserved. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were given promises that their seed would bless the whole earth. That can't happen if their descendants are all wiped out. Amidst great destruction, when the hand of God is seemingly invisible, He shortens the day of destruction that a remnant might survive. This is particularly true of the Roman destruction of AD 70. Some had to survive. Jeremiah's prophecies of the gathering must come to pass. Ezekiel's prophecies of the Jerusalem Temple must come to pass. Isaiah's prophecies of Millennial deliverance must come to pass. And Zenos' prophetic allegory must be fulfilled (Jacob 5).

JS-Matthew 1:21 after the tribulation of those days which shall come upon Jerusalem

Here is the big transition point. Christ leaves off his treatise on the destruction of the Temple and shifts to the second question regarding “the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked” (JS-Matt. 1:4). Long after the destruction of the 1st century, history will repeat itself with more false Christs, more false prophets, and more love waxing cold. These are the last days. The tribulations of the 1st Century are a type for the destructions prior to the Second Coming. Now the signs of times for the dispensation of the fullness of times are given.

JS-Matthew 1:22 in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets

M. Russell Ballard

Some Latter-day Saints may not be aware of it, but there are “false prophets” rising within and without the Church. They believe they have had revelations, that they know something the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles don’t know. We need to be very careful of such people. Members who are ever approached by anyone claiming special authority or revelation from God outside the sustained priesthood authority should turn and run from them as fast as they can. The Savior said that in the last days even the very elect could be pulled away from the truth by such false prophets.

A few groups have drifted away from the gospel under the direction of those who claim to have received special instruction through personal revelation, and some have declared themselves to be prophets. I know of one group that is led by a bright, capable, articulate young man who claims to have received a revelation that he is the prophet and that he was called of God to establish the true Church. Sadly, there are those who have chosen to follow such individuals, who in turn lead them directly away from the principles of truth and righteousness. Perhaps that is why it is so interesting to me that when the Master was asked about the sign of His Second Coming and the end of the world, He first responded by warning His listeners to beware of false prophets.

Keep your eyes riveted on the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We will not lead you astray. We cannot. Let me tell you why. Every week that I am in town, I attend a meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve on the fourth floor of the Salt Lake Temple. If you could see the process by which decision and direction comes from that meeting, you would have a deep sense of confidence and comfort that the will of the Lord is being taught by the leaders of the Church.

So keep your eyes riveted on the leadership of the Church. While individuals may falter, the body of general Church leadership will remain steadfast and true. If someone tells you that they have received revelation that the First Presidency and the Twelve have not received, run away from them. ("When Shall These Things Be?" *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 57)

JS-Matthew 1:22 if possible, they shall deceive the very elect

It is not possible to deceive the Lord's truly elect, but Satan will try if he can and will seduce many which at first appear to be "the very elect."

Joseph Smith

When we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb's book for life we have perfect love, and then it is impossible for false Christs to deceive us. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 9)

Orson Pratt

If it were possible, these popular and learned impostors would deceive the very elect; but this is impossible, for the elect enjoy the gifts which will detect with the most unerring certainty every imposition, however plausible and popular it may be. (*Orson Pratt's Works* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1945], 100)

Ezra Taft Benson

There is a conspiracy of evil. The source of it all is Satan and his hosts. He has a great power over men to "lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken" to the voice of the Lord (Moses 4:4). His evil influence may be manifest through governments; through false educational, political, economic, religious, and social philosophies; through secret societies and organizations; and through myriads of other forms. His power and influence are so great that, if possible, he would deceive the very elect (see Matthew 24:24). As the second coming of the Lord approaches, Satan's work will intensify through numerous insidious deceptions. (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 404)

Harold B. Lee

The Prophet Joseph Smith, in his inspired version of that same scripture, added these significant words: "who are the elect, according to the covenant" This is what has been said, in effect, in this conference: Unless every member of this Church gains for himself an unshakable testimony of the divinity of this Church, he will be among those who will be deceived in this day when the

"elect according to the covenant" are going to be tried and tested. Only those will survive who have gained for themselves that testimony. (*Conference Report*, October 1950, Third Day—Morning Meeting 129)

JS-Matthew 1:23 wars and rumors of wars... but the end is not yet

When a Sunday School class is asked to name some of the signs of the times, one of the first signs mentioned is "wars and rumors of wars." Yet, conflict after conflict passes by and yet the Lord has not come. Didn't the saints in the days of World War I conclude, "certainly, this must be the end of the world"? And what of the saints of World War II, didn't they wonder if theirs was the final conflict? Well, the prophets of their day were not deceived. They understood that war was to be poured out on all nations beginning with the conflict of the American Civil War, 'the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place (South Carolina)...And thus with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn...until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations.' (DC 87:2, 6) The Lord has made it clear that when we see these things—even world wars—we are to conclude that 'the end is not yet,' for these are but 'the beginning of sorrows.' (v. 8)

Elder Francis M. Lyman

It is important that those who have received authority from heaven should be like watch-men upon the walls of Zion, and speak forth to the multitude when God commands, and say, be not troubled, for the end is not yet. Be not troubled because there are wars and rumors of wars in the earth, for these things must be; but let us attend to our labor and let us pray that this cup of trouble and war may pass. (*Conference Report*, April 1898, Afternoon Session)

Charles W. Penrose

The end is not yet, and the work has yet to be done and there is more for us to do, that we may be indeed assistants in the salvation of mankind in these troublous times that have come upon the world (World War I). Our boys who go forth to the front representing us, go out in that spirit, as saviors who have come out of Mount Zion, bearing with them the spirit of Zion, setting a good example to their comrades, taking a course which will show that we are a people that observe the laws of health and of strength and of virility of manhood, living clean lives, setting a good example to the world, and they are objects of the admiration of others who do not practice such good things. (*Conference Report*, April 1918, First Day—Morning Session 18)

JS-Matthew 1:25-26 as the light of the morning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west... so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be

None of the imposters who claim to be Christ come again to the earth can match this dramatic entrance. The scriptures plainly describe this public display of power and might. None of the Messiah wannabes can pull off this heavenly sign.

Joseph Smith

“How are we to see it? As the lighting up of the morning or the dawning of the morning cometh from the east and shineth unto the west, so also is the coming of the Son of Man. The dawning of the morning makes its appearance in the east and moves along gradually. So also will the coming of the Son of Man be. It will be small at its first appearance and gradually become larger until every eye shall see it. Shall the Saints understand it? Oh yes. Paul says so [1 Thes. 5:4-5]. Shall the wicked understand? Oh no. They [will] attribute it to a natural cause. They will probably suppose it is two great comets coming in contact with each other. It will be small at first and will grow larger and larger until it will be all in a blaze, so that every eye shall see it.” (*Joseph Smith’s Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson, 112-113)

JS-Matthew 1:27 wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together

Eagles are sometimes scavengers, but the image might make more sense if it read, “wherever the carcass is, there will the *vultures* be gathered together.” Vultures know when the time is close. They circle in the heavens waiting for the great feast. The problem with the analogy is that it makes Christ the carcass and the saints the vultures. That is an unpalatable comparison so the translators use the word “eagles,” but the idea is the same—that the saints will be waiting for the Second Coming like vultures circling around a dying animal. When the time is right, they gather quickly to the carcass. With the same excitement and anticipation, the saints will gather when the Lord comes.

Hugh Nibley

What do you mean, wheresoever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together? That isn't a pleasant image. So we have to be told here: "so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth."

What happens when there is a carcass in the desert, or anywhere else? The eagles come, or the vultures, or the buzzards (whatever they are going to be) from all directions. All of a sudden they appear out of nowhere. It's quite miraculous to see. How do they know? How can they see? Their eyesight is absolutely fabulous. From miles away you see the specks coming, and where the carcass is they gather in a mysterious way from all directions (in a way that can't be explained). This is the way the Saints are going to be gathered in the last days. (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 9.)

JS-Matthew 1:29 famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places

Regarding pestilences (plague-like sicknesses) and earthquakes, the D&C records, 'And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me...' (DC 45:31-33). Concerning famines to come in the latter days, consider the following:

Gordon B. Hinckley

As we have been counseled for more than 60 years, let us have some food set aside that would sustain us for a time in case of need. But let us not panic nor go to extremes...I cannot forget the great lesson of Pharaoh's dream of the fat and lean kine and of the full and withered stalks of corn.

I cannot dismiss from my mind the grim warnings of the Lord as set forth in the 24th chapter of Matthew. I am familiar, as are you, with the declarations of modern revelation that the time will come when the earth will be cleansed and there will be indescribable distress, with weeping and mourning and lamentation (see DC 112:24).

Now I do not wish to be an alarmist. I do not wish to be a prophet of doom. I am optimistic. I do not believe the time is here when an all-consuming calamity will overtake us. I earnestly pray that it may not. There is so much of the Lord's work yet to be done. We, and our children after us, must do it. (*Conference Report, Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 73-74)

Joseph Smith

The rainbow is not to be seen. It is a sign of the commencement of famine, pestilence, and so forth, and that the coming of the Messiah is not far distant...

I have asked of the Lord concerning His coming; and while asking the Lord, He gave a sign and said, "In the days of Noah I set a bow in the heavens as a sign and token that in any year that the bow should be seen the Lord would not come; but there should be seed time and harvest during that year: but whenever you see the bow withdrawn, it shall be a token that there shall be famine, pestilence, and great distress among the nations." (*Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson, 112-113)

Glen L. Pace

We know the prophecies of the future. We know the final outcome. We know the world collectively will not repent and consequently the last days will be filled with much pain and suffering. Therefore, we could throw up our hands and do nothing but pray for the end to come so the millennial reign could begin. To do so would forfeit our right to participate in the grand event we are all awaiting. We must all become players in the winding-up scene, not spectators. We must do all we can to prevent calamities, and then do everything possible to assist and comfort the victims of tragedies that do occur. ("A Thousand Times," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 8)

JS-Matthew 1:30 and again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of men shall wax cold

The signs repeat themselves prior to the Second Coming:

'*and again*, after the tribulation of those days...if any man shall say unto you Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not;
...*and again*, because iniquity shall abound, the love of men shall wax cold;
...*And again*, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached
...*And again* shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled.' (JS-Matt 1:21, 30-32, emphasis added)

Sometimes it seems that the love of men has waxed so cold and that the world has become so wicked, that the Lord must come immediately. It is common to say the world is more wicked now than it ever has been. Those statements are probably not fair because the wicked are still here. Right now, the world is not as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah, or it would be burned with fire and brimstone; the world is not as wicked as in the days of Noah for

even at the Second Coming many more than eight souls will be saved; the world is not as wicked as in the days of the dying Nephite nation, for the Spirit has not ceased striving with the children of men (Mormon 2:15; 3:15; 5:15-16).

On the other hand, every day we see more wickedness. Every day we see the love of men waxing colder and colder. Every day we see the signs of the Second Coming being fulfilled.

M. Russell Ballard

...“because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

Think about what that means. Today we are living in a society in which many men and women see no real purpose in marriage. Common-law relationships, in which people live together without legally and lawfully making a formal commitment to one another through marriage, are escalating at an ever-increasing rate. In the United States, the birth rate of children to unwed mothers is at an all-time high, as is the divorce rate.

In a recent article titled “Redeeming Our Time,” William J. Bennett, former U.S. secretary of education, notes: “During the same thirty-year period [1960–1990], there was a 560 percent increase in violent crime; more than a 400 percent increase in illegitimate births; a quadrupling in divorces; a tripling of the percentage of children living in single-parent homes; more than a 200 percent increase in the teen-age suicide rate; and a drop of 75 points in the average SAT scores of high school students.

“Today, 30 percent of all births ... are illegitimate. By the end of the decade, according to the most reliable projections, 40 percent of all American births ... will occur out of wedlock” (Imprimis, Nov. 1995, 3).

With so little of long-lasting, fully committed love in the world today, one would think you could turn to entertainment media to find a better, happier, more satisfying model for living. After all, history indicates there have always been storytellers and dramatists who have encouraged their audiences with stories of a better world where maidens are fair, princes are charming, and everyone always lives happily ever after. Unfortunately, current entertainment forms tend to portray life even uglier, and harsher than it really is. Movie critic Michael Medved laments the demise of larger-than-life heroes on film and television programs, claiming that we are now living in an age of smaller-than-life antiheroes. Sadly, one doesn't have to look far to find all manner of violence, ugliness and illicit sexuality coming over the public airwaves. At the

same time, wholesome, clean, uplifting, inspiring programs are [page 58] few and far between. Hollywood and the television industry must be held accountable for their influence on the social landscape, and I believe that influence is considerable.

I believe the entertainment industry cannot portray on film people gunned down in cold blood, in living color, and not have it affect the attitudes and thoughts of some of the people who see it. I believe human sexuality cannot be continually portrayed as just another physical appetite that has to be satisfied—whenever and with whomever the urge strikes—without diminishing respect for God and His commandments. And I believe that the desensitizing effect of such media abuses on the hearts and souls of those who are exposed to them results in a partial fulfillment of the Savior’s statement that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

In order to keep the light and love of Christ burning in our hearts, we have to be careful in our choices of what we will watch and what we will read. (“When Shall These Things Be?” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 57–58)

Theodore M. Burton

True love is based on personal unselfishness, but our modern world does not seem to understand this. Modern man has lost his capacity to love. Jesus warned us that one of the principal characteristics of the last days would be that love among the people would gradually die. Jesus said, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (JS—M 1:10; see also Matt. 24:12). My thesis is that the iniquity of which he spoke is based on personal selfishness. That is the reason why love among the people is dying. (“The Need for Love,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 72)

JS-Matthew 1:31 this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come

What is one of the single most important signs of the times? That the gospel is preached to all nations. The Lord says once that happens, then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. To what degree must the gospel be preached? It must be preached such that the nation has received a witness. This is different than prophecies which state that every ear will hear the gospel, ‘that every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language’ (DC 90:11, see also DC 88:104). This degree of missionary work will take place during the Millennium and not before. For our purposes, we must watch and see when all the nations of the earth have

received a witness, for 'after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people. For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes...And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunders, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds' (DC 88:88-90).

At the time of this writing, there are great areas of the earth that have not yet received a witness: most of the African continent, India, and China. The reason we have not yet inundated those nations with missionaries has a lot less to do with politics—it has a lot more to do with the number of missionaries available to preach. Until the Church can produce the number of worthy missionaries to fill these nations, then the end cannot come.

Gordon B. Hinckley

"Looking to the future, the challenges we see facing the Church are immense. The Lord himself has declared that this work will roll forth to fill the whole earth, in preparation for the coming of the Savior to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Much has been done, but much more remains to be done. All of the work of the past is but prelude to the work of the future. In lands where the gospel has been taught for a century and more, the numbers of the Saints are still relatively small. And in the earth's most populated nations the doors are presently closed. But somehow, under the power of the Almighty, they will in his time be opened, for this gospel 'shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations' before the end shall come. ("Matt. 24:14 Matthew 24:14.) There must be much more dedication, devotion, consecration. There must be a great expansion and a great acceleration." (*Be Thou an Example*, 116.)

Joseph Smith

"...so shall it be in the end of the world; that is, as the servants of God go forth warning the nations, both priests and people, and as they harden their hearts and reject the light of truth, these first being delivered over to the buffetings of Satan, and the law and the testimony being closed up, as it was in the case of the Jews, they are left in darkness, and delivered over unto the day of burning; thus being bound up by their creeds, and their bands being made strong by their priests, are prepared for the fulfillment of the saying of the Savior—'The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 100-101)

JS-Matthew 1:32 again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled

See commentary for verse 12.

One of the most obvious signs still to be fulfilled is the events to take place in Jerusalem. The Jews have already returned as prophesied, but a great destruction will occur prior to the Second Coming. The event will be like when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem in 589 BC (2 Kgs. 25:9-10). It will also be like when the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem in 70 AD. An army composed of “all nations” shall encompass Jerusalem. Zechariah saw the whole thing:

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. (Zech. 14:2-3)

JS-Matthew 1:33 the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall

Not uncommonly, someone will declare that this prophecy has been fulfilled. They usually reference solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, and meteor showers. While this prophecy probably will have multiple fulfillments, we can't help but think that a very dramatic and unequivocal sign still awaits us. Think of what happened in the New World at the Savior's birth—36 hours of daylight. What happened at his death—three days of utter darkness. Should we think that this sign would be any less dramatic?

No other sign of the times is as frequently mentioned as this one. The scriptures speak of many signs in the heaven and on the earth, but this particular sign is different. That the sun should be darkened, the moon turned to blood, and the stars fall from the heavens is a sign that is repeated over and over in the scriptures (see Ezek. 32:7, Joel 2:31; 3:15, Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24-25, Lu. 21:25, Acts 2:20, Rev. 6:12; 8:12, DC 29:14; 34:9; 45:42; 88:87; 133:49). How many other signs or doctrines are repeated in 14 different places? Certainly, the fulfillment of this scripture will be as dramatic as anything we have ever seen, for when it occurs, ‘the earth shall tremble and reel to and fro as a drunken man’ (DC 88:87).

Joseph Fielding Smith

“Eventually the sun is to be turned into darkness and the moon as blood and then shall come the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Some of these signs have been given; some are yet to come. The sun has not yet been darkened. We are informed that this will be one of the last acts just preceding the coming of the Lord.” (*Conference Report, April 1966, First Day—Morning Meeting 13*)

JS-Matthew 1:34 the generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all... shall be fulfilled

The Matthew version of this prophecy is much less clear. Joseph Smith Translation helps us to understand that the events discussed in verses 22-33 herein are events that will take place within one generation of the Second Coming.

Joseph Fielding Smith

The question is how long is a generation? I don't know and I am not concerned about it. This is the thing that concerns me—the increased calamities, the destruction, the turmoil, the trouble that exists in the world, the fearfulness of nations, their trembling, their hearts failing them. (*Take Heed to Yourselves* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966], 21)

Bruce R. McConkie

As succeeding events occur in the world, there is no question his faithful saints gain a clearer knowledge of when to expect his glorious return. Some of the saints in the meridian of time seem to have thought he would return in their day. Surely many of the Latter-day Saints in the dawning days of this dispensation expected him to come in their lifetimes. We today, as we see the unfolding of his work in all the world, are in the best position of any people up to now to envision correctly the approximate time of his coming. Our children should surpass us in understanding. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 33)

JS-Matthew 1:35 Although, the days will come, that heaven and earth shall pass away

To “pass away” means “to die.” Heaven and earth will *die*. They will be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth. How can you have a *new* heaven and a *new* earth if the *old* heaven and the *old* earth don't pass away first? (Rev. 21:1; Ether 13:9) “For all old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new, even the heaven and the earth” (DC 29:23).

The new heaven and new earth will not accompany the Second Coming. They come after the Millennium and the short season (DC 29:22-23).

JS-Matthew 1:36 then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven

The sign spoken of is not some new manifestation—not a crucifix flying through the heavens—it is the same sign we have already mentioned. It is the sign of the S-o-n coming as if he were the s-u-n, “for as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west... so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” (JS-Matt. 1:26; see also Acts 1:9-11)

Joseph Smith

“...then will appear one grand sign of the Son of Man in heaven. But what will the world do? They will say it is a planet, a comet, etc. But the Son of Man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, which will be as the light of the morning cometh out of the east.” (*Teachings*, pp. 286-287)

JS-Matthew 1:37 the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him

As far back as 1831, the Lord declared that the angels are ready and waiting for the call to come and gather the wheat from the tares so the tares can be burned:

For all flesh is corrupted before me;...
Which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned; (D&C 38:11-12)

Wilford Woodruff

The angels of God are waiting to fulfill the great commandment given forty-five years ago, to go forth and reap down the earth because of the wickedness of men. How do you think eternity feels today? Why there is more wickedness, a thousand times over, in the United States now, than when that revelation was given. The whole earth is ripe in iniquity; and these inspired men, these Elders of Israel, have been commanded of the Almighty to go forth and warn the world, that their garments may be clear of the blood of all men.

I tell you that God will not disappoint Zion or Babylon, the heavens or the earth, in regard to the judgment which he has promised in these last days, but

every one of them will have its fulfillment upon the heads of the children of men; and when they are fully ripened in iniquity the nations of the earth will be swept away as with the besom of destruction. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 18: 128)

JS-Matthew 1:38 parable of the figtree

As far back as December 1830, the Lord declared that summer is nigh:

...learn the parable of the fig tree, for even now already summer is nigh. (D&C 35:16)

Joseph Fielding Smith

Surely the signs of the times point to the fact that the great and dreadful day is near, even at our doors. The fig tree, figuratively, is putting forth her leaves. The turmoil, trouble, the war and the bloodshed that we have seen, and which we still see, all point to the fact that this day for the coming of the Son of God is near. (*Conference Report*, April 1948, Third Day—Morning Meeting 132)

Neal A. Maxwell

The "summer" Jesus cited is now upon us, and you and I must not complain of the heat. Nor, indeed, should we let that heat, as Alma counseled, wither our individual tree of testimony. If we neglect to nourish the tree, "when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it," it can prove fatal. (Alma 32:38.) (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], 123)

JS-Matthew 1:40 of that day, and hour, no one knoweth

Every time this concept is taught in the scriptures, the Lord says that no one will know the *day and hour* of his coming (Matt. 24:36; 25:13; Mark 13:32; DC 39:21; 49:7; 51:17). The scriptures don't say no one will know the *time*, or no one will know the *year*; they say no one will know the *day and hour* of his coming. Well, I don't really want to know the *day* of the Lord's coming! The *year and month* are good enough for me!

Obviously, we are to remain in a state of constant readiness. If we knew exactly the hour of reckoning, we might delay our repentance. So the message is "be ready."

But what if we really want to know? This scripture defines what *can't* be known more than what *can* be known. We should not try to define the hour nor the day, but as we get closer, the Lord's timetable will become increasingly more obvious. While no one will know the day nor the hour, the faithful may know the year, the month, and maybe even the week. In the parable of the ten virgins, they did not know the hour when the Bridegroom was to come, but they knew that it was time to go forth and meet Him. (Matt 25:1-13) So will it be with the elect at his coming. The key is to listen to the Brethren and not a self-appointed scriptural guru.

Orson Pratt

"There may be men that will know within a year—that will have revelation to say within one or two years when the Lord shall appear. I do not know that there is anything against this.

"But the great question is, brethren and sisters, Are we ready?—are we perfect enough for this day? Are we honest enough? and are we filled with integrity enough to be ready for the Saviour and his holy angels? Is there a sufficiency of union? Have we that firmness in our minds that we can stand in their presence—that we can look them in the eye and say that all is right?" (*Journal of Discourses*, 8: 49 - 50.)

George Q. Cannon

"It was said yesterday that no man knoweth the day nor the hour. This is true. But I will tell you what men can know. They can know that such and such a time is not the time. Men can prophesy that 1891 is not the year...There are several revelations which speak plainly upon this point...There are a great many events to take place that have not yet occurred; and the Savior will not come until they do take place. Be assured of this, and be not concerned in your minds and agitated on these matters, because it is easy to understand that there are many things yet to be fulfilled before that grand and glorious event will come." (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, vol. 2, Oct 5th 1890)

Neal A. Maxwell

"How quickly and easily the few are misled! Such members may know superficially of the doctrines of the kingdom, but their root system is shallow. Though able to provide doctrinal recitation, they seem not to know either the implications or interconnections of those doctrines.

“For instance, instead of wisely noticing the warning leaves on the fig tree, a few proceed to fixate on the specific timing of Jesus' second coming. Yet the Savior clearly stated, ‘But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only’ (Matthew 24:36).

“Clearly, since even the angels in heaven—an otherwise reasonably well-informed group—do not know, we should be wary of mortals obsessed with calendaring. So often modern gnostics who in one exotic way or another pretend to be ‘in the know’ are, in fact, spiritually ‘out of touch’! Meanwhile, mature members will take time both to smell the flowers and also watch the leaves on the fig tree to see when ‘summer is nigh’ (Matthew 24:32-33).”
(*Lord, Increase Our Faith*, 94.)

JS-Matthew 24:41 as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be

Sterling W. Sill

“Apparently Noah's day was quite a day; some of its chief characteristics were the people's lack of preparation and their disbelief in God. As in our own day, the antediluvians thought that the heavens were sealed and that God would never again reveal himself. It must have sounded a little bit ridiculous to them when on a warm cloudless day Noah prophesied that a flood would come and destroy their entire society if they did not repent, but we are in a similar situation. And even though the combined sins of Sodom Babylon, and ancient Rome all glare at us from our own newspaper headlines, yet we are far from changing our ways. Instead, many people of our day are contending for a type of behavior that condones alcoholism, immorality, and a wide variety of deviations from God's laws.” (*Conference Report*, April 1966, First Day—Morning Meeting 21)

JS-Matthew 24:44 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left

Bruce R. McConkie

“These words can be used in a dual way. They can be applied to the destruction of the wicked in the day of burning, when only the righteous abide the day, or they can be applied to the gathering of the remainder of the elect by the angels, when they are caught up to meet their Lord, with those who are unworthy of such a quickening being left on earth. Luke makes this latter application to words of the same meaning and then explains: ‘This he [Jesus] spake, signifying the gathering of his saints; and of angels descending and

gathering the remainder unto them; the one from the bed, the other from the grinding, and the other from the field, whithersoever he listeth. For verily there shall be new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And there shall be no unclean thing; for the earth becoming old, even as a garment, having waxed in corruption, wherefore it vanisheth away, and the footstool remaineth sanctified, cleansed from all sin.' (JST Luke 17:38-40.)”
(*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, 686.)

JS-Matthew 24:46-48 The Lord to come as a thief in the night only to the wicked

‘...the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
...But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: We are not of the night, nor of darkness.
Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.’ (1 Thess. 5:2-6)

Bruce R. McConkie

“It is true that no man knoweth the day nor the hour of his return — ‘no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only’ (Matt. 24:36), as he himself expressed it — but those who treasure up his word will not be deceived as to the time of that glorious day, nor as to the events to precede and to attend it. (Jos. Smith 1:37.) The righteous will be able to read the signs of the times. To those in darkness he will come suddenly, unexpectedly, ‘as a thief in the night,’ but to ‘the children of light’ who ‘are not of the night, nor of darkness,’ as Paul expressed it, that day will not overtake them ‘as a thief.’ They will recognize the signs as certainly as a woman in travail foreknows the approximate time of her child's birth. (1 Thess. 5:1-6.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 688.)

JS-Matthew 24:50 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing

“Do we allow ourselves a mistaken luxury, thinking there is plenty of time to put our lives in order? Do we rationalize that there is still so much to do before the Savior's Second Coming that we feel no need to rush? After all, the Gospel must be preached to all nations, the gathering must continue, the ten tribes must return, temples must yet be built in Jerusalem and Jackson County, and a host of other things must be fulfilled. It certainly sounds as if

there is plenty of time. Perhaps we have even heard a modern prophet say Jesus would not likely come in his lifetime, the lifetime of his children, and maybe not even in the lifetime of his grandchildren. So why worry? Alas, this is the point of the parable.

‘... if that evil servant shall say in his heart: My lord delayeth his coming ... 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, And shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And thus cometh the end of the wicked ...’ (JS-M 1:51-55).

“Thank the Lord for this marvelous prophecy, for this latter-day voice of warning! We must not delay our preparation. We must be less concerned about *when* the Lord will come, and more about being prepared to go.” (George A. Horton, Jr. *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, ed. by H. Donl Peterson and Charles D. Tate, Jr., 210.)

JS-Matthew 24:51-52 if that evil servant...shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken

Elder Erastus Snow

“Now, it is not impossible, nor yet improbable, that there will be some among the Latter-day Saints who are called of God and appointed to this work, and who are set over their fellow servants to give them meat in due season, who will be found negligent, who will have forgotten their high and holy calling, who will have laid off their armor of righteousness, who will have become slothful and weary in well doing, and who will have taken to eating and drinking with the drunken and smiting their fellow-servants; but as surely as any such are found among the servants of God, they will be overtaken when the day of the Lord cometh, and their portion will be appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers. But we hope better things of the Elders of Israel, of Presidents of Stakes, of Bishops, of High Counselors, of High Priests, of Seventies, of Priests, Teachers and Deacons, and of all the Latter-day Saints; for we have all been made partakers of this Priesthood, and the blessings of the Lord, directly or indirectly, have been conferred upon us.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 25: 30 - 32.)