

INTERPRETER PREPRINT: THE FIRST DAYS AND THE LAST DAYS

Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. *The First Days and the Last Days: A Verse-By-Verse Commentary on the Book of Moses and JS—Matthew in Light of the Temple*. Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2021. <https://interpreterfoundation.org/books/the-first-days-and-the-last-days/>.

This Interpreter preprint reproduces the Joseph Smith—Matthew commentary from *The First Days and the Last Days*. The full citation and a link to purchase information is given above. Physical and digital versions of the book (pdf and Kindle Replica) are available for sale now at Eborn Books, FAIR Bookstore, and Amazon. Check FAIR Bookstore and Eborn Books for special offers, including substantial discounts when both *The First Days and the Last Days* and *Enoch and the Gathering of Zion* are purchased together.

As a preview, we include an excerpt from the Preface below, followed by the title page and Table of Contents for the book as a whole.

Like a perfectly formed pair of bookends, the Book of Moses and Joseph Smith’s inspired translation of Matthew 24 (JS—Matthew) bracket within their pages the essential survival guide for our times. In the “first days,” Adam and Eve looked forward to Christ’s coming; in the “last days,” we look backward to Christ’s mortal life and forward to His return in glory. In the beginning, Enoch learned the ordinances and covenants that would allow his people to dwell in the presence of God; to the end, we will treasure the same ordinances and covenants. Through faith in Jesus Christ and faithfulness to these covenants we hope to stand someday in the holy place with perfect assurance.

This comprehensive phrase-by-phrase commentary on the Book of Moses and JS—Matthew is the result of decades of loving study of their wonderful words. In its pages you will find both everyday guidance and the answers to life’s most important questions. Importantly, this book is a witness that the doctrines and ordinances of the temple are deeply woven into the fabric of these supernal works of scripture, containing persuasive evidence of their authenticity and antiquity. Carefully selected images, coupled with detailed explanations, enrich the commentary. Rather than simply illustrating the text, they seek to enter into dialogue with it.

Since my childhood, I have loved the book of Genesis. In 2010, with the kind encouragement of John W. Welch and other friends, I felt impressed to write and publish a commentary on Moses 1–6:12, entitled *Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve*. In 2014, with the appearance of a companion volume *Enoch, Noah, and the*



James C. Christensen (1942–2017): *The Enoch Altarpiece (Left Wing, Right Wing)*, 2004

“For over a year, artist James C. Christensen painted under the guise of an obscure, 15th century Flemish painter, best known for, and named after, a multi-paneled masterpiece called ‘The Enoch Altarpiece.’ Also known as ‘Jehovah Teaches Enoch the Plan of Salvation,’ what remains of ‘The Enoch Altarpiece’ are the two sides that once flanked the (missing) center panel.”¹

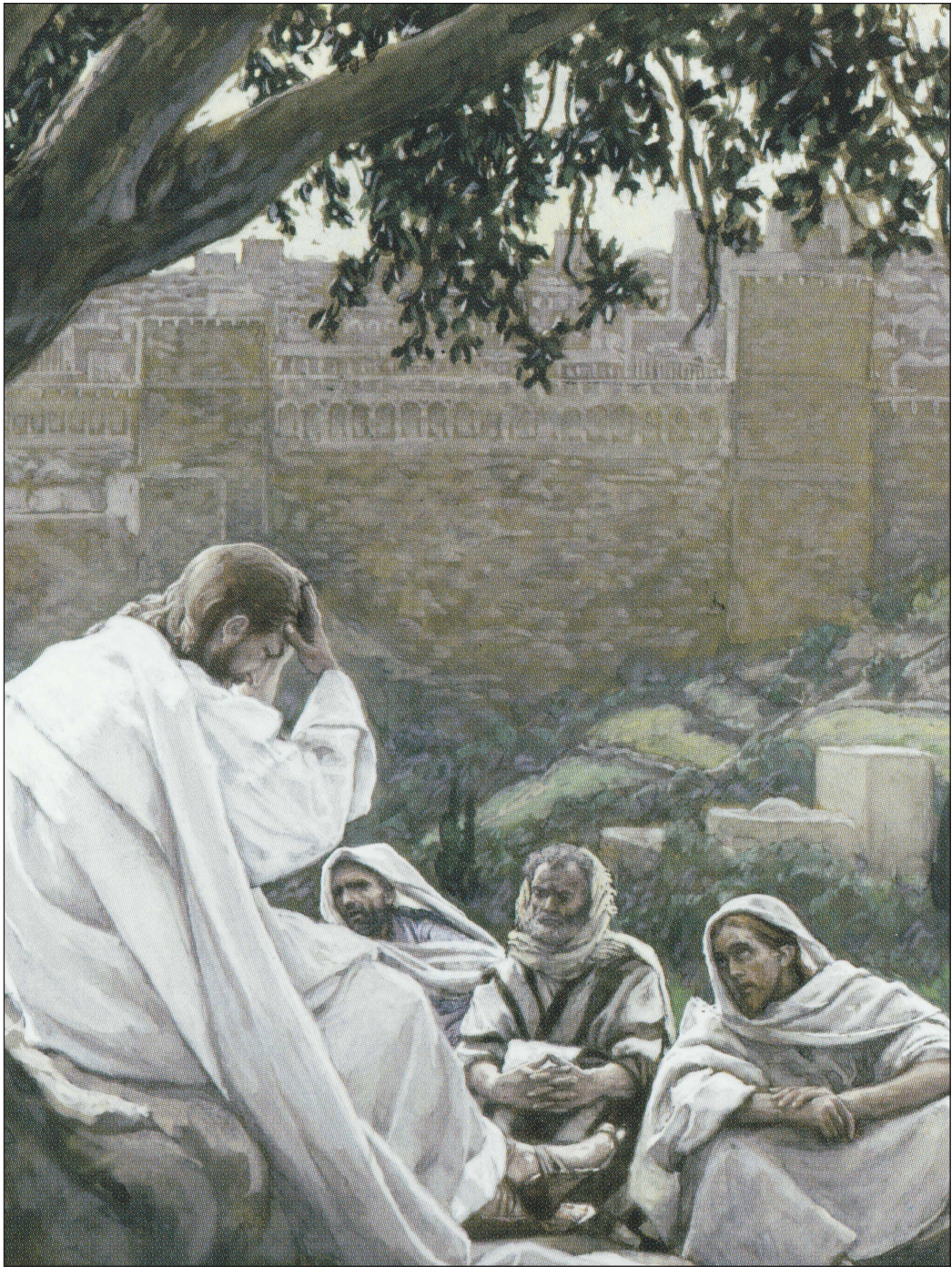
“The central panel showed Jehovah teaching Enoch as they walked near the City of Enoch. The angels on the wings of the altarpiece bless the scene, and the symbols at their feet describe the divine plan. At the feet of the angel in the left panel we see fruit with a serpent, a clear representation of the Garden of Eden and the Fall of man. On the right, the symbol at the angel’s feet is a skull with an Easter lily growing out of it, symbolizing the triumph of Christ over death and the Fall of man. The City of Enoch in the altarpiece was described as ‘a city of surpassing beauty radiating the light of truth and righteousness, the fruit of souls who were at one with God’s plan.’”² The idea of the missing center panel is a play on the fact that Enoch along with his entire city were taken from the earth to be preserved in God’s own bosom until they come back in a future day of righteousness. “No one is certain what happened to the missing center panel of ‘The Enoch Altarpiece,’ but the hope is,” says Christensen, with a smile, “it will one day return.”³

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- 1 James C. Christensen, “James C. Christensen on ‘The Enoch Altarpiece.’” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6wV_kD5SfE.
 - 2 James C. Christensen, *Passage by Faith: Exploring the Inspirational Art of James C. Christensen*. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2012, 100.
 - 3 Christensen, “Enoch Altarpiece.”

Tower of Babel, this commentary became a two-part series entitled *In God's Image and Likeness (IGIL1; IGIL2)*. These large books, totaling almost 1,700 pages, were intended to be somewhat encyclopedic in scope, pulling together many scattered sources from the ancient world, modern scholarship, and Latter-day Saint thought. The insights on priesthood and temple doctrines provided in these and related studies begged for a separate, simpler, and more discursive approach. Two related volumes were the result: *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* and *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*. Additional temple themes in scripture continued to emerge through collaboration with colleagues who participated in Stephen D. Ricks' series of *Temple on Mount Zion* conferences, held in honor of our friend Matthew B. Brown, whose writings continue to inspire.

The present work tries to squeeze the essential content of *IGIL1* and *IGIL2* into a book that is a fraction of their size, while also including many fascinating updates from continuing research over the last decade. I hope this effort will appeal to some who found the *IGIL* volumes to be too long, too digressive, too physically cumbersome, or too expensive. . . .

I hope readers will find both their understanding of scripture and their testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith strengthened by their study.



J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: *The Prophecy of the
Destruction of the Temple*, 1886-1894

THE **FIRST** & THE **LAST** **DAYS** **DAYS**

A VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY
ON THE BOOK OF MOSES AND JS–MATTHEW
IN LIGHT OF THE TEMPLE

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INTRODUCTION TO JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

In the April 2020 conference, President Russell M. Nelson boldly characterized the “future of the Church” as “preparing the world for the Savior’s Second Coming.”¹ Among other things, he said:

We are . . . building up to the climax of this last dispensation—when the Savior’s Second Coming becomes a reality. . . . It is our charge—it is our privilege—to help prepare the world for that day. . . .

Do whatever it takes to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ by increasing your understanding of the doctrine taught in his restored Church and by relentlessly seeking truth. Anchored in pure doctrine, you will be able to step forward with faith and dogged persistence and “cheerfully do all that lies in [your] power” to fulfill the purposes of the Lord (see Doctrine and Covenants 123:17).

One way to strengthen our faith and increasing our understanding is to study what Jesus Christ Himself said about the events preceding His coming. Nowhere in scripture are these events described more completely and more plainly than in Joseph Smith’s inspired translation of Matthew 24.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF JS—MATTHEW TO RELATED ACCOUNTS

The most obvious difference between Joseph Smith—Matthew and Matthew 24 is that the new translation has added about 50 percent more words to the text. But as the table below indicates,² there is much more of interest than the *quantity* of new material in the structure of the translation and its relationship to various scripture texts:

- Joseph Smith—Matthew makes a clear division between the events contemporary with the early disciples (vv. 1–21a) and those of the last days (vv. 21b–55), thus addressing long-standing uncertainties among Matthew scholars.
- To make the time frames of the events described more clear, Joseph Smith—Matthew *reorders* some of the verses. In some cases, similar phrases are *repeated*, indicating parallels between earlier and later events. Repeated verses or portions of verses are shown in the table by parentheses surrounding verse numbers. The verse numbers appear without parentheses in their primary context (past versus future).

1 Russell M. Nelson, “The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming.” *Ensign* 50, April 2020, 12–17. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/04/the-future-of-the-church-preparing-the-world-for-the-saviors-second-coming?lang=eng>, 13, 14, 17.

2 Adapted from David Rolph Seely. “The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5–36).” In *The Gospels*, edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. *Studies in Scripture*, 5:391–404. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 395, with a new column added for Doctrine and Covenants 45.

	Joseph Smith— Matthew	Matthew 24	Doctrine and Covenants 45	Joseph Smith— Matthew	Matthew 24	Doctrine and Covenants 45
Past	1	23:39		24–26	25–27	
			16a	27	28	24–25
	2	1	16b	28	(6a)	(26)
			17–19	29	7	33
	3	2	20	30	(12)	27
			21	31	14	28–30
	4–6	3–5		32	(15)	31–32
	7–9	9–11		33	29	42
	10	12	(27)	34	34	(21)
	11	13		35a	35	22
	12	15	(32)	35b		23
	13–18	16–21		36	30	39–41, 44, 47–55
	19	8		37a	31a	45, 46a
	20–21a	22		37b	31b	43, 46b
Future	21b–22	23–24		38–39	32–33	36–38
	23a	6a	26	40–54	36–51	
	23b	6b	34–35	55		

Table JS—Matthew–1. *Comparison of JS—Matthew, Matthew 24, and Doctrine and Covenants 45*

- Significant overlap exists between Doctrine and Covenants 45 and the two versions of Matthew 24, commending the idea that the three texts should be studied together. Note that much of what is contained in section 45 is either omitted or worded differently in the Matthew accounts. Other sections of the Doctrine and Covenants also contain significant overlaps in subject matter.³
- The Prophet changed the corresponding record in Mark to conform to the revised Matthew, “generally deleting verses in Mark that differed from Matthew and adding Matthew material not found in the King James text of Mark.”⁴
- By way of contrast, Joseph Smith’s translation of Luke “allows sharp differences to stand. Joseph Smith largely left Luke in the King James format, differing as it does in much wording from Matthew and Mark; Joseph Smith even added new verses to Luke’s report of the Olivet discourse that increase Luke’s individuality.”⁵

Taken together, Richard L. Anderson concluded that the Prophet’s sweeping changes are only loosely tied to the written record that stimulated the new information. . . . One may label this as “translation” only in the broadest sense, for his

3 For example, Doctrine and Covenants 29, 43, 116, 133. See Kent P. Jackson. “The Signs of the Times: ‘Be Not Troubled.’” In *The Doctrine and Covenants*, edited by Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson. *Studies in Scripture*, 1:186–200. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989.

4 Richard Lloyd Anderson. “Joseph Smith’s Insights into the Olivet Prophecy: Joseph Smith 1 and Matthew 24.” In *Pearl of Great Price Symposium: A Centennial Presentation* (November 22, 1975), 48–61. Provo, UT: Department of Ancient Scripture, Religious Instruction, Brigham Young University, 1976, 49.

5 Anderson, “Joseph Smith’s Insights,” 50.

consistent amplifications imply that the Prophet felt that expansion of a document was the best way to get at meaning. If unconventional as history, the procedure may be a doctrinal gain if distinguished from normal translation procedure, for paraphrase and restatement are probably the best way to communicate without ambiguity. The result may be the paradox of having less literally the words of Bible personalities while possessing more clearly the meaning that their words sought to convey.⁶

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Although the prophecies of Joseph Smith—Matthew generated great interest among the early Saints, they have been relatively neglected since. In 1975, Richard L. Anderson commented that Joseph Smith—Matthew, “of all the Pearl of Great Price sections, . . . is probably least commented on.”⁷ His observation is likely still true today, but it is to be earnestly hoped that this trend of neglect will not continue forever.

At the end of the chapter on the fall of Jerusalem in Hugh Nibley’s priesthood quorum study guide to the Book of Mormon, he posed an enigmatic question to his readers: “Explain the saying ‘Wo to the generation that understands the Book of Mormon!’”⁸ In response, he received inquiries asking whether he had written the question backward—in other words, that he meant instead to say “does *not* understand.” Later he explained:

It was a happy generation to which the abominations of the Nephites and Jaredites seemed utterly unreal.⁹

For our generation the story [of the Book of Mormon] rings painfully familiar. . . . The generations that *understand* the Book of Mormon must needs be in the same situation that the ancient Americans were in, and people in such a predicament are to be pitied.¹⁰

So might it be said for those who see and understand the signs of the times reported in Joseph Smith—Matthew: “Wo be unto that generation!” But even more piteous is the state of Saints who have had the complete outline for the last days right in front of them since 1831, but because of indifference remain blind and ignorant to it.

Note: In the commentary, references to Joseph Smith—Matthew will be abbreviated to JS—Matthew. “Matthew” will be used in mentions of the the King James translation. NT1 and NT2 refer to the original manuscripts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament. See the section entitled “History of Joseph Smith—Matthew” for more details.

6 Anderson, “Joseph Smith’s Insights,” 50.

7 Anderson, “Joseph Smith’s Insights,” 48.

8 Hugh W. Nibley. 1957. *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. 3rd ed. Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 6. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 119.

9 Unidentified source, cited in Boyd J. Petersen. “Something to Move Mountains: The Book of Mormon in Hugh Nibley’s Correspondence.” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 1–25. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1164&context=jbms>, 21.

10 Hugh Nibley to Parley H. Merrill, June 18, 1957, cited in Petersen, “Something,” 22, emphasis added.

JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

An extract from the Translation of the Bible as Revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet in 1831: Matthew 23:39 and Chapter 24.

JESUS PROPHECIES OF HIS GLORIOUS RETURN

1¹ “For I say unto you, that ye shall not see me henceforth and know that I am he of whom it is written by the prophets, until ye shall say: ‘Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him.’” Then understood his disciples that he should come again on the earth, after that he was glorified and crowned on the right hand of God.

- 1 The story opens on the heels of the narration of the seven woes that Jesus pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees. Anticipating His own demise, an event that would be spurred on by the hands of His own people, Jesus reminds His listeners that the shedding of the blood of the righteous has been the preoccupation of the wicked from the primeval times of Abel up to the more recent news of Zacharias—profanely slain in the very courtyard of the temple (Matthew 23:35). In closing, Jesus quotes Jeremiah’s lament: “Behold, *your* house is left unto you desolate!” (Matthew 23:38, emphasis added; cf. Jeremiah 22:5). No longer is the temple His *Father’s* house (Matthew 21:13)—as in the days of Jeremiah, the temple has been abandoned by God and left in the hands of its usurpers. The temple is now ripe for destruction.

After saying this much as preface to our chapter, Jesus broadens His message to include warnings not only for the little group that stands before Him but also for Jerusalem—and ultimately for all people, both Jews and Gentiles. As the scope of His intended audience widens, so also His words begin to penetrate the depths of time, illuminating the “end of the world” (JS—M 1:4). Though Jesus has given pointed instructions for His first-century disciples about how to survive the calamities that will soon befall them in light of impending persecutions and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem a few decades later, He devotes most of His discourse to describing what latter-day disciples will need to know to recognize and navigate the unprecedented events of the end times. Jesus outlines the great work of the final gathering of covenant Israel. Then, in language that frequently echoes the more limited catastrophes of the first century, He describes the all-encompassing signs that will shake the heavens and the earth in anticipation of His glorious Second Coming.

- 1:1 *ye shall not see me henceforth and know that I am he of whom it is written by the prophets.* Matthew 23:39 reads more briefly, “Ye shall not see me henceforth.” The added phrase underscores that had the people not ignored or scorned the words of the biblical prophets, they would have known that Jesus was the central figure of whom these prophets had spoken anciently.

until ye shall say: ‘Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him.’ Matthew 23:39 reads more briefly, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” quoting the greeting traditionally given by the priests to festival pilgrims on their way to the temple (Psalm 118:26). Pointedly, Jesus Himself had been greeted by these words at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9). Again, the added phrase in JS—Matthew makes explicit what was left implicit in Matthew’s text: there will be no opportunity to welcome the Redeemer to Jerusalem again until the day He returns in His glory.

Then understood his disciples that he should come again on the earth. This addition to Matthew makes it clear that the Second Coming was a new idea to the disciples. Indeed, that is what will prompt the second part of their two-part question in JS—Matthew 1:4. In Doctrine and Covenants 45:16, the Savior declares that His coming will be “to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers.” Verses 17 and 19 of the same section also speak of the Resurrection and of the destruction, scattering, and restoration of Israel.

JESUS PROPHECIES THE DESTRUCTION OF HEROD'S TEMPLE

² And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him, for to hear him, saying: “Master, show us concerning the buildings of the temple, as thou hast said—“They shall be thrown down, and left unto you desolate.”

³ And Jesus said unto them: “See ye not all these things, and do ye not understand them? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here, upon this temple, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

THE DISCIPLES ARE WARNED; THEY ARE TO STAND IN THE HOLY PLACE

⁴ And Jesus left them, and went upon the Mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying: “Tell us when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and

1:2 **for to hear him.** Matthew 24:1 reads “for to shew him the buildings of the temple.” While one might read Matthew 24:1 merely as an indicator of the “disciples’ touristic enthusiasm” (“See what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” [Mark 13:1]), the JS—Matthew additions to the verse make it clear that the disciples were seeking to know whether Jesus really meant what He said about the temple: “Can He really mean that such a splendid complex is to be abandoned [and destroyed]? At any rate, their superficial admiration for the buildings forms a powerful foil to Jesus’ negative verdict on them” (RTFMATTHEW, 887). Doctrine and Covenants 45:18 notes that the “enemies” of the disciples had falsely predicted “that this house shall never fall.”

one stone upon another. “The Greek term for stone, *lithos*, often has to do with a quarried and cut stone, one that is shaped to fit in a certain place. All of the fitted stones that make up the temple and its grounds will be pounded ‘to powder’” (Luke 20:18; SKBLUKE, 937).

1:3 **and do ye not understand . . . ?** As earlier in v. 1, the added phrase highlights the fact that the disciples are slow to comprehend.

1:4 **Jesus left them, and went upon the Mount of Olives.** “While there is little direct verbal link with Ezekiel’s vision of the glory of God leaving the temple (Ezekiel 10:18–19; 11:22–23), the reader might be expected to remember that powerful imagery, especially when Jesus immediately goes and sits on the Mount of Olives, the ‘mountain east of the city’ where the Lord’s glory also stopped after going out over the east gate of the temple (Ezekiel 11:23)” (RTFMATTHEW, 887).

the disciples came unto him privately. “According to Mark 13:3, only four disciples, ‘Peter and James and John and Andrew,’ the first-called pairs of brothers, are present at Jesus’ sermon on the Mount of Olives. More generally, Matthew 24:3 mentions ‘disciples’ and, in a change to Mark 13, JST Mark 13:7 notes the presence of ‘disciples,’ implying more than the four men” (SKBLUKE, 938).

what is the sign of thy coming. “The term translated ‘sign’ (Greek *sēmeion*) here points to an apocalyptic expectation or portent, not to a proof” (SKBLUKE, 939). Signs that are sought as proofs are usually condemned (for example, Matthew 12:39, 16:4; JSWORDS, 2 July 1839, 413).

which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews. The disciples’ question had two parts. This added phrase makes it clear that Jesus’ answer to the first part of the question will refer to events in their lifetimes (vv. 5–21a). The answer to the second part of the question will address the events of the last days (vv. 21b–55).

or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world. Though the disciples had no way of knowing how far off the last days were to be, they did seem to understand that Jesus’ Second Coming signaled the beginning of the Millennium, not the ultimate end of things (RDDPGP, 304).

end of the world. “A familiar Jewish expression for the crisis which was expected to bring the

the Jews; and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?”⁵ And Jesus answered, and said unto them: “Take heed that no man deceive you; ⁶ for many shall come in my name, saying—‘I am Christ’—and shall deceive many; ⁷ then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name’s sake; ⁸ and then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another,

present world order to a close and to inaugurate the ‘age to come’” (RTFMATTHEW, 535). The idea is always closely associated with the Judgment. The wicked, being of a telestial nature, will be swept from the earth as part of a preliminary judgment at the beginning of the Millennium, while all those fit to abide at least a terrestrial glory will remain on the paradisiacal earth. See figure JS—Matthew–6.

- 1:5 ***Take heed that no man deceive you.*** Elder James E. Talmage observes that while the second part of the question addressed the *time* of Jesus’ return, His reply, surprisingly, “dealt not with dates, but with events; and the spirit of the subsequent discourse was that of warning against misapprehension, and admonition to ceaseless vigilance” (JETJESUS, 528). The disciples thought they needed a timetable so they wouldn’t “miss the boat”; Jesus knew the biggest danger was in their boarding the *wrong* boat.

- 1:6 ***many shall come in my name.*** “The plain sense of Jesus’ words points to those who claim to represent him but do not, to those who claim his authority but do not possess it. . . . Uttering ‘my name’ raises a host of connections to Jehovah in the Old Testament, particularly in light of the divine name that follows” (SBKLUKE, 939–940).

I am Christ. In other words, “I am the Messiah.” Thus, we are not speaking of impostors who would claim to be the person of Jesus, but rather of those who would feign that they had “come in [His] name” (v. 6) and had been appointed to His calling as the Anointed One. For example, a Jewish figure with a large following in the early second century who claimed the title “Messiah” was Bar Kokhba. In addition, v. 9 speaks of “many false prophets.” History records several examples of individuals who fit this mold (RTFMATTHEW, 902–3; HWNPGP, 318–19, 322; STLRABBINIC, 379, 381). The prophecy is directly confirmed in 1 John 2:18: “As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists.”

Verses 6–7 of Matthew 24, which discuss wars and earthquakes, were removed from their original position following v. 5 and placed as vv. 23 and 29 in JS—Matthew. This makes it clear that these verses concern events of the last days. V. 8 of Matthew 24 is also moved later in JS—Matthew (v. 19). However, this change in position does not affect its application to the first-century time frame.

- 1:7 ***deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you.*** The disciples would be afflicted by their countrymen, though sometimes family and fellow Christians became the persecutors (see SKBLUKE, 946). “A regional leader named Diotrophes opposed John, refusing to receive him or any other Church authorities, and excommunicating any who did (see 3 John). Paul came to death’s door, it seems, because ‘Alexander the coppersmith [a member] did [Paul] much evil’ by turning away any who might help Paul at his trial before Nero Caesar (see 2 Timothy 4:14).” Government opposition was also the cause of many problems. “Peter and John were both arrested numerous times and even beaten by the authorities. Stephen and James were martyred” (RDDPGP, 306). See also SKBLUKE, 947–948 and compare JST Mark 13:11.

for my name’s sake. “At first glance, the phrase simply ties to afflictions suffered because of loyalty to Jesus. But more is at play here. The mention of ‘name’ lifts up links to the name of God. Specifically, a person’s loyalty to God’s name in the Old Testament rests on covenant agreements that are made and renewed at the temple and in worship settings during prayer and other sacred activities (see Genesis 4:26; 12:8; 1 Kings 18:36–37; Malachi 1:11; Moses 6:3–4). In addition, Jesus’ name comes from heaven and thus bears special meaning to those who tie themselves to him and to his cause (see Luke 1:31; Matthew 1:21)” (SKBLUKE, 944).



Figure JS—Matthew—2. J. James Tissot, 1836–1902: *The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple*, 1886–94

JS—MATTHEW REVERSES THE MEANING OF “STAND IN THE HOLY PLACE”

Within Jesus’ discourse to the Apostles on the Mount of Olives, He gave one of the most controversial prophecies of the New Testament:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the holy place. (Matthew 24:15)

Comparing the verse in Matthew to its equivalent in JS—Matthew, we see that the Prophet has rendered this passage in a way that radically changes its meaning. Rather than describing how the “*abomination of desolation*” (= “the abomination that brings destruction”) will “stand in the holy place,” the JS—Matthew version enjoins the *disciples* to “stand in the holy place” when the “abomination of desolation” appears (JS—Matthew 1:12–13). In these and related verses in the Doctrine and Covenants, the sense of this phrase in the synoptic Gospels is turned upside down. In short, rather than describing how an *evil thing* would stand the holy place, thereby *profaning* it, modern scripture applies the phrase to ancient and modern disciples, admonishing *them* to stand in holy places and thereby be *saved*.

Though several Latter-day Saint scholars have offered interpretations and personal applications of the sense of these words as given in modern scripture, few have seriously explored how this change in meaning could be explained and defended. It is easy to see how, on the face of it, some readers might be (erroneously) led to conclude that Joseph Smith’s rendering of the verse in question was an obvious and embarrassing mistake based on his admittedly rudimentary acquaintance with the Greek text of the New Testament. However, there is plentiful evidence to support an alternative claim: namely, that in the scriptural word picture of the righteous standing in holy places, Joseph Smith’s interpretation—whether or not a consonant Greek reading is ever found—resonates with a potent metaphor from the heart of Judaism and early Christianity.

Examination of relevant passages in the Bible, in connection with the light shed by Jewish midrash and contemporary scholarship, shows that the idea behind Joseph Smith’s application of the concept of standing in the holy place in JS—Matthew (as well as the associated idea of not being “moved” in verses such as Doctrine and Covenants 45:32), far from being a modern invention, reverberates throughout the religious thought of earlier times. Indeed, as Jewish scholar Avivah Zornberg has argued, the Hebrew Bible teaches that standing in the holy place—“hold[ing one’s] ground,” as it were, in sacred circumstances—is a powerful symbol of the central purpose of existence. This purpose can be expressed as follows: “being—*kiyyum*: to rise up (*la-koom*), to be tall (*koma zokufa*) in the presence of God” (AGZBEGIN, 21).

For additional discussion, see JMBSTANDING, 71–72, 74.

and shall hate one another;⁹ and many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many;¹⁰ and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;¹¹ but he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved.

¹² “When you, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, then you shall stand

1:8 **and shall hate one another.** Present in NT1, this phrase was left out in NT2 and then restored in 1981.

1:10 **the love of many shall wax cold.** Iniquity is both the cause and result of a hardened heart. Thus, “the ‘cooling’ of love marks the end of effective discipleship” (RTFMATTHEW, 907. See also JMBFAITH, 77, 104–11). Such will also be the condition of many in the last days (v. 30).

1:11 **he that remaineth steadfast.** Matthew 24:13 reads “he that shall endure unto the end.” In Latter-day Saint scripture, to “endure to the end” means to complete the path that leads to eternal life or, in other words, to come to the point of readiness where a sure promise of calling and election may, in God’s time, be received (JMBFAITH, 71n54, 73–74, 82–90). However, Samuel T. Lachs bridges the King James and Joseph Smith translations by observing wordplay between a Hebrew term for “end” (*tāmam*) and a related term for “perfect, complete, wholehearted” (*tām*). Thus, we might read, “One who remains *tām* will be saved” (STLRABBINIC, 183; JMBFAITH, 71). Or, perhaps, “One who is ‘able to endure all things’ will be saved” (Articles of Faith 1:13; JMBFAITH, 111).

Draper, Brown, and Rhodes rightfully observe that the English term “*endurance* denotes holding firm, but it says nothing about the inward attitude of the person. Steadfastness adds this dimension, suggesting a firm, willful, and especially unwavering devotion” (RDDPGP, 307). Kenneth E. Bailey writes the following about the Greek term *hupomene*, meaning “patience,” “endurance,” and “steadfastness”:

Hupo has to do with “under” and *meno* means “to remain.” As a compound, this word describes “The affliction under which one remains steadfast.” If *makrothumia* [long-suffering] is the patience of the powerful, *hupomene* is the patience of the weak who unflinchingly endure suffering. . . . Jesus . . . is the supreme example of [this] virtue. (JMBFAITH, 71)

1:12 **the abomination of desolation.** The prophet Daniel (Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) is the source for Matthew’s description of the “abomination of desolation,” better translated as the “abomination that brings desolation.” In other words, the “abomination” (sacrilege) is the cause and “desolation” (devastation) is the effect. Thus, the battles that lead to the destruction of Jerusalem, as mentioned in Luke 21:20 and JS—Matthew 1:12, should be read as describing the prophesied “desolation” rather than the “abomination” that preceded it. As further evidence of the independence of the two terms, note S. Kent Brown’s observation that the Greek term for “desolation” (*erēmōsis*) “without qualifiers, also appears in Doctrine and Covenants 29:8; 45:19, 21; and 112:24” (SKBLLUKE, 950).

While there is wide agreement about the “desolation,” scholars disagree about the “abomination” Jesus described. See figure JS—Matthew–5 for one option. France argues that Matthew’s failure to “produce a clearer and more convincing account” of the “abomination” is evidence that Matthew wrote his Gospel before “the climax of the war with Rome” (RTFMATTHEW, 913).

the destruction of Jerusalem. S. Kent Brown mentions that much of the city will be literally “flattened” in the destruction because “the supporting timbers will collapse, bringing the charred roofs and walls of home and buildings to the ground” (Luke 19:44; SKBLLUKE, 883). Brown cites the Jewish historian Josephus (*Wars*, 7.1.1; also 6.9.4) to remark in support of the idea that the Romans will so deform Jerusalem after its capture “that future visitors will not believe that the city ‘had ever been inhabited’” (SKBLLUKE, 883).

you shall stand in the holy place. The Joseph Smith Translation (JST) reverses the meaning of this phrase. While Matthew describes how an *evil thing* (= “abomination”) would stand in the holy place, thereby *profaning* it, JS—Matthew applies the phrase to ancient and modern disciples, admonishing *them* to stand in holy places and thereby be *saved*. For a discussion of this change in meaning, see figure JS—Matthew–2.



Figure JS—Matthew—3. J. James Tissot, 1836–1902: *The Guards Falling Backwards*, 1886–94

THE TEMPLE GUARDS' FAILURE TO STAND IN A HOLY PLACE

While Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts highlight the perfidy of Judas as the one who identified his Master to the temple guards, the Gospel of John instead emphasizes Christ's own mastery of the situation. Perhaps this is why the kiss of Judas does not appear in John's narrative. Herman N. Ridderbos explains, "Judas' task of identifying Jesus had been taken out of his hands" (JMBSTANDING, 85). Instead, when Judas enters the scene, Jesus is shown in full control of the arresting party by His startling self-identification:

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. . . .

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. (John 18:4–6)

The King James translation of the Greek phrase *ego eimi* as "I am he" obscures an essential detail. In reality, Jesus has not said, "I am *he*," but rather "I AM," using a divine name that directly identifies Him as being Jehovah. Thus, asserts Raymond E. Brown, it is clear that the fall of the temple guards is no mere slapstick scene that might be "explained away or trivialized. To know or use the divine name, as Jesus does [in replying with 'I AM'], is an exercise of awesome power" (JMBSTANDING, 86).

In effect, in the Gospel of John the narrative takes the form of an eyewitness report of a solemn revelation to the band of arresting Jewish temple guards that they were standing, figuratively speaking, in a "Holy of Holies" made sacred by the presence of the embodied Jehovah, and that they, with full comprehension of the irony of their pernicious intent, were about to do harm to the very Master of the Lord's house, whose precincts they had been sworn to protect. As with the Israelites at Sinai who were unworthy and thus unable to stand in the holy place (see JMBSTANDING, 83–85), "those of the dark world fell back, repelled by the presence of the Light of the world" (WJHJOHN, 4–5).

To delve further into the symbolism of the scene, note that the Jews were generally prohibited from pronouncing the divine name Jehovah. As an exception, that name was solemnly pronounced by the high priest standing in the most holy place of the temple once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Upon hearing that name, according to the Mishnah, all the people were to fall on their faces. Was it any coincidence, then, that Jesus Christ, the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, boldly proclaimed His identity as the great "I AM" at the very place and on the very night He atoned for the sins of the world? Ironically, the temple guards who failed to fall on their faces at the sound of the divine name as prescribed in Jewish law were instead thrown on their backs in awestruck impotence.

For additional discussion, see JMBSTANDING, 85–87; MOESS 69.

in the holy place; whoso readeth let him understand.¹³ Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains;¹⁴ let him who is on the housetop flee, and not return to take anything out of his house;¹⁵ neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes;¹⁶ and wo unto them that are with child, and unto them that give suck in those days;¹⁷ therefore, pray ye the Lord that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.”

THE JEWS ARE WARNED OF GREAT TRIBULATION

¹⁸ “For then, in those days, shall be great tribulation on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom until this time; no, nor ever shall be sent again upon Israel.¹⁹ All things which have befallen them are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them.²⁰ And except those days should be shortened,

1:12 **holy place; whoso readeth let him understand.** When Jesus told His disciples to “stand in the holy place,” He was careful to qualify His instructions by saying, “Whoso readeth let him understand” (v. 12). This is because the “holy place” He had in mind was not the profaned temple of Jerusalem, but seemingly some place that was to be designated at the appointed time—perhaps in “the mountains” (v. 13; HWNPGP, 320–21; STLRABBINIC, 383), or maybe alternatively in the vicinity of Pella (in the lowlands of the Jordan River), as reported by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, III, 5.3) and Epiphanius (*Panarion*, XXIX, 7, 7–8; XXX, 2, 7), and as alluded to in the *Clementine Recognitions* (I, 37, 2; 39, 3 (Syriac); I, 39, 3 (Latin); see JBMOVE; SKBLUKE, 950). As another option, Julie M. Smith suggests the injunction for the disciples to seek the mountains may have been a symbolic reference to the temple as “the paradigmatic meeting place between humans and God” (JMSMARK, 687). In a contrast to Jesus’ instructions, Josephus reports that false prophets had told Jerusalemites that they would be delivered if they stood firm (FJWARS 6:5:2 [285–86], p. 898). For readers in the last days (as opposed to first-century Christians), the idea of “holy places” should be understood differently. See figure JS—Matthew–6.

1:13 **let them who are in Judea flee.** “The reference to ‘Judea’ suggests that the period envisaged is before the final siege of Jerusalem, when the wider province was being brought under Roman control, but when escape was still possible. . . . The urgency of flight is underlined by the vivid images of the person who hears the news while resting on the roof of the house and dare not go inside (the roof was reached by an outside staircase) to pack a travel bag, and the field worker whose outer garment, removed for work, must be left behind” (RTFMATTHEW, 914).

1:16 **wo unto them that are with child.** “Terrible, indeed, would that day be for women hampered by the conditions incident to approaching maternity, or the responsibility of caring for their suckling babes. All would do well to pray that their flight be not be forced upon them in winter time; nor on the Sabbath, lest regard for the restrictions as to Sabbath-day travel, or the usual closing of the city gates on that day, should diminish the chances of escape” (JETJESUS, 530–31).

1:18 **great tribulation on the Jews.** JS—Matthew expands vv. 18–19 in order to assure that the unprecedented scale of suffering is adequately described through heavy layers of superlatives. All the sorrows that have befallen Israel in the past “are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them” (v. 19). This statement is made unconditionally; there is no further opportunity given for reprieve. For three years, from 67 to 70 CE, the Roman forces under Vespasian battled and then laid siege to Jerusalem. “During that time, the Jews suffered from brutal infighting, starvation, and plague. By the time the siege ended, thousands had died” (RDDPGP, 310).

there should none of their flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened."

GATHERING AND DESTRUCTION IN THE LAST DAYS

²¹ "Behold, these things I have spoken unto you concerning the Jews; and again, after the tribulation of those days which shall come upon Jerusalem, if any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there,' believe him not; ²² for in those days there shall also rise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and

1:20 *for the elect's sake, according to the covenant.* The "elect" are again referred to in vv. 23, 28. The presence of the "elect" in Jerusalem, like the "righteous" in Sodom (Genesis 18:22–32), "would alleviate the punishment the city deserves" (RTFMATTHEW, 916). The phrase "according to the covenant," mirrored in v. 22, is added in JS—Matthew, reminding the reader of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their posterity would be preserved as a people (RDDPGP, 311). Correcting the erroneous view that righteousness always prevents suffering, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "It is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments while the wicked suffer, or all flesh is subject to suffer[ing] and 'the righteous shall hardly escape' [see Doctrine and Covenants 63:34]. Still many of the Saints will escape. . . . Yet many of the righteous shall fall prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God" (JSWORDS, 15).

those days shall be shortened. "The horror was in fact 'cut short' by the Roman capture of the city after five months, bringing physical relief to those who had survived the famine in the city" (RTFMATTHEW, 915). The use of the passive voice, which omits the agent of the action ("shall be shortened"), is often used in scripture to indicate that the hand of God was at work.

In S. Kent Brown's description of ensuing tribulation of Jerusalem, he emphasizes the Savior's pathos: "He desperately seeks to bring peace and salvation to his people but, painfully, through tears, knows that their representatives already conspire against him. . . . The verb "come near" (Luke 19:41) and the nouns "day" and "time" (Luke 19:42–44) all frame citizens' opportunities, at this critical and promising moment. . . . Painfully, and maliciously by week's end, the framework of promise will be bent and gnarled to show a wave-like landscape of missed opportunities and wrong decisions, of clear choices and bungled judgments" (SKBLUKE, 884–85).

According to the unique report of Luke (21:24), those who are left in Jerusalem "shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." Explaining the phrase, "the times of the Gentiles," S. Kent Brown writes: "In a word, most Jews of Jesus' era reject his message, thus propelling the Apostles toward the Gentiles. After the Gentiles receive the gospel, it will go to the Jews (see 1 Nephi 10:14; also Doctrine and Covenants 19:27; 20:9; 21:12; 45:25, 30). Importantly this situation will be true of 'the latter day' (3 Nephi 16:7; see 3 Nephi 16:4–15)" (SKBLUKE 953).

1:21 *after the tribulation . . . which shall come upon Jerusalem.* This phrase, added in JS—Matthew, serves as a hinge point in the chapter. The added words make it clear that the events related previously belong to the first century. Everything described from here on out will take place in the last days. Compare JST Luke 21:24.

1:22 *false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders.* As in the time of the disciples (v. 6), false Messiahs and prophets will arise in the last days. The Israelites had already been warned about deceivers who would exhibit "great signs and wonders" as false proof of their calling from the time of Moses onward (Deuteronomy 13:2–3). Significantly, Draper, Brown, and Rhodes cite Elder Bruce R. McConkie for the teaching that a false prophet "need not be an individual but could instead be a form of worship, a false philosophy or ethical system, or a false church" (RDDPGP, 313–14).

wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant.²³ Behold, I speak these things unto you for the elect's sake; and you also shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all I have told you must come to pass; but the end is not yet.

²⁴ “Behold, I have told you before; ²⁵ wherefore, if they shall say unto you: ‘Behold, he is in the desert’; go not forth: ‘Behold, he is in the secret chambers’; believe it not; ²⁶ for as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

²⁷ “And now I show unto you a parable. Behold, ‘wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together’; so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth.

1:22 **deceive the very elect.** The term “very elect” refers to covenant Israel. Like the five wise virgins, those who “have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide” and who treasure God’s word will be able to recognize deception (Doctrine and Covenants 45:57; JS—Matthew 1:37). This is one of many reasons why President Russell M. Nelson stated that “in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost” (RMNREV, 96).

1:23 **wars, rumors of wars.** These words predict a future of universal military conflict. The bloody consequences of war will be inescapable, signaled in every direction both by the frightening “noise of battle near at hand and the news of battles far away” (*New English Bible*).

1:25 **in the desert . . . in the secret chambers.** In other words, you will not find the Son of Man by looking for Him, whether you are looking outside or inside. In support of this clear contrast, Samuel T. Lachs conjectures that the Aramaic term for “in the open” was misread as “desert” (STLRABBINIC, 321).

1:26 **as the light of the morning.** JS—Matthew changes “lightning” to “light of the morning.” In Jewish tradition, “the Messiah is often described as coming on a cloud together with flashing lightning which illumines the entire world” (STLRABBINIC, 121). However, Joseph Smith described the scene as follows: “As . . . 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 Thessalonians 5:1–8]. Shall the wicked understand? Oh, no. They [will] attribute it to a natural cause” (JSWORDS, 181). In v. 36, this coming is called “the sign of the Son of Man.” S. Kent Brown comments (SKBLUKE, 959, 960):

On this occasion [the Savior] comes . . . descending from heaven. Concretely, He will arrive at several spots near one another, including the Mount of Olives (see Zechariah 1:4; Doctrine and Covenants 45:48; 133:20), Mount Zion (see Doctrine and Covenants 133:18), and Jerusalem itself (see Doctrine and Covenants 133:21). . . .

More concretely for His Apostles, Jesus affirms personally to them in his first-person account that, when He comes again, “if ye have slept in peace blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me” from their sleep in the grave. More than this, in that day “your redemption shall be perfected,” bringing a glorious climax to their quest for eternal life (Doctrine and Covenants 45:46).

1:27 **wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.** The Greek word used can be understood as referring to “eagles,” but the mention of a “carcass” and similar sayings in biblical sources (e.g., Job 39:29) and nonbiblical sources suggest that a vulture is meant (eagles eat live prey rather than carrion). See RTFMATTHEW, 897, 918; STLRABBINIC, 321.

so likewise shall mine elect be gathered. Since no application is given for the mini-parable in Matthew, a variety of proposals have been entertained. However, JS—Matthew straightforwardly



Figure JS—Matthew—4. William Blake, 1757–1827: Sketch for “War Unchained by an Angel,” ca. 1780–84

“WARS, AND RUMORS OF WARS”

This sketch, a study for a lost work exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1784, was itself lost until recent times. Speaking as if he were standing before this scene, John Bright (1811–89), a Quaker, addressed the English House of Commons in fruitless opposition to the Crimean War. “As the war continued, Bright [had become] deeply distressed by the loss of life: 22,000 British soldiers died, but only 4,000 in action; the rest died from malnutrition, exposure, and disease” (Nicholas Elliott). In his famous speech delivered on February 23, 1855, Bright said, “The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and lowly.” Bright’s “oratory was so powerful that the House fell into complete silence. This, however, was not a view shared by his constituents in Manchester and he lost his seat at the ensuing election” (Bill Cash).

On Christmas Day, 1832, John Bright’s contemporary, Joseph Smith, was troubled with night visions of war, “in which,” according to Jedediah M. Grant,

he saw the American continent drenched in blood, and he saw nation rising up against nation. He also saw the father shed the blood of the son, and the son the blood of the father; the mother put to death the daughter, and the daughter the mother; and natural affection forsook the hearts of the wicked; for he saw that the Spirit of God should be withdrawn from the inhabitants of the earth, in consequence of which there should be blood upon the face of the whole earth, except among the people of the Most High. The Prophet gazed upon the scene his vision presented, until his heart sickened, and he besought the Lord to close it up again.

The Prophet never recorded the vision in its fulness, though he did write a brief summary in section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants (JMBIGIL2, 106).

²⁸ “And they shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. ²⁹ Behold I speak for mine elect’s sake; for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ³⁰ And again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of men shall wax cold; but he that shall not be overcome, the same shall be saved. ³¹ And again, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked.”

SECOND ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION; SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING

³² “And again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled. ³³ And immediately after the tribulation of those days,

‘the sun shall be darkened,
and the moon shall not give her light,
and the stars shall fall from heaven,
and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.’

1:27 interprets the enigmatic proverb as imagery for the worldwide gathering of Israel. Nibley explains: [The vulture imagery] puzzles so many people because it sounds so unpleasant to compare the elect gathering in the church to a carcass. . . . But the purpose of every image . . . is to emphasize one particular point. In verse 47 [it] says that the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Does that mean he is going to come to rob people, . . . that he is going to be dishonest? Of course not. It means he will . . . [take] you by surprise when you are not expecting it. . . .

What happens where there is a carcass in the desert . . . ? The . . . vultures [come] . . . from all directions. All of a sudden they appear out of nowhere. It’s quite miraculous to see. How do they know? . . . 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 (HWNPGP, 323).

The themes of vv. 36–37 (= Matthew 24:30–31) parallel those of vv. 26–27, making it clear that the swift, sure assembly of the vultures is also a symbolic description of how the “angels . . . shall gather the remainder of [the] elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” In contrast to the Prophet’s explanation of the parable of the mustard seed in which the birds in the branches of the mature mustard tree were said to represent angels sent to *assist with the gathering* (JSWORDS, 10), it seems that the “vultures” in this case represent those who are *being* gathered. In other words, like the “vultures,” the “elect” will swiftly assemble “from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,” to the “carcass,” or “corpse” (Latin *corpus*), which is evidently meant to represent the body of the Church (Colossians 1:18; JETJESUS, 532), or the gathering places of the Saints. There they can be nourished by receiving the gospel and the fulness of the ordinances of the priesthood (JSWORDS, 212–13). The Prophet’s interpretation connects the themes of vv. 26–27 and vv. 36–37 in a remarkably coherent manner. For more on the scattering and gathering in the context of Jesus’ discourse, see Doctrine and Covenants 45:24–25.

1:29 **nation shall rise against nation.** “Throughout apocalyptic literature universal fighting is considered to be a sign that the end is approaching. ‘When you see the kingdoms fighting against one another, look and expect the foot of the Messiah’ (*Genesis Rabbah* 42:4)” (STLRABBINIC, 379; see figure JS—Matthew–4). More generally, in Matthew, the signs in JS—Matthew 1:28–29 are associated in Jewish tradition with “the beginning of the sorrows,” understood as the “suffering pangs of the Messiah” that precede His coming. “The biblical material abounds with passages describing the troubles, woes, breakdown of family, and the general moral decline which



Figure JS—Matthew—5. J. James Tissot, 1836–1902: *The Raising of the Cross*, 1886–94

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION IS TO BE REPEATED IN THE LAST DAYS

Because the “abomination” that Daniel referred to involved a disruption of temple sacrifices (Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), most scholars accept that the “abomination” that Jesus prophesied would occur in the lifetime of the disciples had something to do with the desecration of Herod’s temple. The problem is that, as Richard T. France admits, none of the possibilities adduced for a specific event of temple desecration in the first century CE “quite fits what [the verse in Matthew] says” (RTFMATTHEW, 913. See also STL RABBINIC, 382–83).

As a distinctly different possibility, Peter G. Bolt has argued that Jesus’ reference to the “abomination” that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem was more likely a prophecy of the violent and ultimately fatal profanation of the temple of His own body—which He previously had said could be destroyed and raised up in three days (Matthew 26:61; Mark 14:58; John 2:19). Bolt asserts that in quoting the prophet Daniel, the Savior was using “apocalyptic language preparing the disciples for [His own] coming death. This fits with the rest of [the] story, for [there could be no] greater act of sacrilege than the destruction of God’s Son in such a horrendous way” (PGBCROSS, 101). Had not Jesus referred to Himself earlier in Matthew 12:6 as “one greater than the temple”? (emphasis added). Note also Craig S. Keener’s view that Daniel 9:26 “associates the [‘abomination that maketh desolate’] with the cutting off of an anointed ruler, close to the time of Jesus” (CSKMATTHEW, 575; see also JBPIMMINENT, 147–49).

Going further, the Latter-day Saint view, based on an unambiguous statement in JS—Matthew 1:32, is that an “abomination of desolation” will similarly occur “*in the last days*.” If one were to accept Bolt’s argument that the first “abomination” had to do with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, could one also identify a similar event corresponding to an end-time fulfillment of this prophecy? As it turns out, a scriptural analogue to the shedding of the innocent blood of Jesus Christ is found in the Jerusalem ministry of the two witnesses described in Revelation 11:2–12 (see also Doctrine and Covenants 77:15). Using temple language, the passage describes the witnesses as “the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4). The length of their ministry, like that of the Savior, is described as corresponding to the prophet Daniel’s apocalyptic period of 1,260 days. Underlining how these latter-day figures also replicate the death of Jesus Christ, John explicitly highlights the fact that they will be martyred in the place “where also our Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8). Having carefully scrutinized the evidence, Gregory Beale concludes that these “two witnesses are identified with *the Witness*” (GKBREVEL, 567):

The pattern of the narrative of the witnesses’ career in 11:2–12 is intended as a replica of Christ’s career: proclamation and signs result in satanic opposition, persecution (John 15:20), and violent death in the city where Christ was crucified, the world looks on its victim and rejoices (John 16:20); then the witnesses are raised and vindicated by ascension in a cloud.

For additional discussion, see JMBSTANDING, 95–100; RDDREV, 394–416.

³⁴ “Verily, I say unto you, this generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all I have told you shall be fulfilled. ³⁵ Although, the days will come, that heaven and earth shall pass away; yet my words shall not pass away, but all shall be fulfilled.

1:29 will precede the coming great age and time of the redemption (Daniel 12:1; Hosea 13:13; Joel 2:10ff.; Micah 7:1–6; Zechariah 14:6ff.; 2 Timothy 3:1–7). These are augmented in the apocryphal literature as well as in rabbinic sources” (STLRABBINIC, 380; see also p. 381).

famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes. Throughout scripture, these signs are interpreted as evidence of divine displeasure. Doctrine and Covenants 45:33 adds that despite these signs, “men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another.” This is more evidence that “again, because [of] iniquity . . . , the love of men shall wax cold” (JS—Matthew 1:30).

pestilences. In Luke 21:11, “the meaning of the term “pestilences” Greek *loimos* “has to do with diseases and plagues and is repeated in Doctrine and Covenants 45:25” (SKBLUKE, 941). See also Doctrine and Covenants 29:18–19 and the commentary below on v. 32.

1:31 **this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world.** Matthew 24:14 has been moved to this later position in JS—Matthew to make it clear that the complete fulfillment of this prophecy will be accomplished in the last days, not in the lifetime of the early disciples. Doctrine and Covenants 45:28–30 adds the following about the Restoration of the gospel that is here prophesied:

And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel;

But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.

And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. See v. 4.

1:32 **again shall the abomination of desolation.** On a second “abomination” that will occur in the last days, see figure JS—Matthew–5. With respect to latter-day “desolations,” Doctrine and Covenants 45:31 mentions “an overflowing scourge” and “a desolating sickness [that] shall cover the land.” “But,” it continues in v. 32, “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.”

1:33 **the sun shall be darkened . . . shall be shaken.** These lines are near quotations of the Septuagint version of Isaiah’s judgments in Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4. See also Ezekiel 32:7–8; Amos 8:9; Joel 2:10, 30–31; 3:15; Luke 21:24–25; Revelation 6:12–13; Doctrine and Covenants 29:13–14; 34:7–9; 88:87; 133:49; and JSWORDS, Before 8 August 1839 (1), 11; 6 April 1843, 180. Doctrine and Covenants 45:42 reads “and the moon be turned into blood.”

Further hints of “nature out of control . . . exist in Jesus’ first person account: ‘the whole earth shall be in commotion’ and ‘there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations’ and ‘the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro’ and the earth’s inhabitants ‘shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth . . . in the earth beneath’ (Doctrine and Covenants 45:26, 33, 48, 40; also 2 Nephi 6:15; 8:6). In related language, scripture pleads for people to repent in the aftermath or midst of alarming natural phenomena (see Revelation 9:20–21; 1 Nephi 19:11; Doctrine and Covenants 53:25; 88:87–91)” (SKBLUKE, 957).

1:35 **heaven and earth shall pass away.** “The use of ‘heaven and earth’ for permanence is common and often applied to the Law: e.g., . . . ‘everything has its end, the heavens and earth have their end; only one thing is excepted which has no end, and that is the Law [= God’s words]’ (*Genesis Rabbah* 10:1)” (STLRABBINIC, 88).

all shall be fulfilled. JS—Matthew adds this phrase, underscoring the theme that every “jot” and “tittle” of what God has declared will stand (see Matthew 5:18; Alma 34:13; 3 Nephi 1:25; 12:18). Not one word, nor one letter, nor yet even one part of a letter of the prophecy will fail.

³⁶ “And, as I said before, after the tribulation of those days, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”

THE LORD’S WARNING TO THE ELECT: THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

³⁷ “And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³⁸ “Now learn a parable of the fig tree—When its branches are yet tender, and it begins to put forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh at hand; ³⁹ so likewise, mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even

1:36 *the sign of the Son of Man.* See v. 26. Doctrine and Covenants 45:39–41, 44, 47–55 greatly expands on the themes of this verse.

then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. France sees this phrase as being modeled on Zechariah 12:10: “They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn” (compare Zechariah 13:6; Doctrine and Covenants 45:52). He argues that in Zechariah the mourners are “the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” and that for this and other reasons the phrase should read, “All the tribes of the *land* mourn” (versus “*earth* mourn”), thus referring to Israel alone (RTFMATTHEW, 924–25).

1:37 *they shall gather . . . his elect.* See v. 27.

with the great sound of a trumpet. “The instrument mentioned here (Greek *salpinx*) has three primary roles: to sound command during battle, to announce the arrival of dignitaries, and to signal the beginning and ending of periods of celebration. . . . In Joseph Smith—Matthew the trumpets seem to symbolize, first, missionary work—the Lord’s telling His people, ‘Declare my gospel as with the voice of a trump’ (Doctrine and Covenants 24:12)—and, second, those events that finish His latter-day work and make preparation for the Second Coming (Doctrine and Covenants 77:12)” (RDDPGP, 318). See, e.g., Isaiah 27:13; 1 Corinthians 25:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:10; 4:1; 8:13; 9:14; Mosiah 26:25; Alma 29:1; Mormon 9:13; and numerous verses in the Doctrine and Covenants.

1:38 *a parable of the fig tree.* Instead of declaring specific time frames, the Lord usually reveals signs to the Saints and expects them to learn through active watchfulness (RDDPGP, 318–19). “Importantly, the parable will become meaningful ‘when the light shall begin to break forth,’ likely a reference to the restoration of the gospel (Doctrine and Covenants 45:36)” (SKBLUE, 961–62).

The fig tree is an apt image for the parable for three reasons: (1) it enables wordplay on Hebrew terms for “end” (*qez*) and “summer fruit” (*qayiz*; compare Amos 7:2); (2) the fig tree “puts out its leaves first, long before the vines”; and (3) the dry fig tree is a sign of desolation and judgment, “while the budding of the fig tree is a sign of God’s blessing” (STLRABBINIC, 386–87). “The sprouting of fresh leaves on [the tree’s] lifeless appearing branches . . . comes to symbolize the return of life to the earth and, even more, the coming of celestial life to the believer. Hence, by drawing attention to the fig tree, Jesus emphasizes the positive outcomes for His followers even though they will pass through daunting times” (SKBLUE, 962).

at the doors;⁴⁰ but of that day, and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only.⁴¹ But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man;⁴² for it shall be with them, as it was in the days which were before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage;⁴³ and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.⁴⁴ Then shall be fulfilled that which is written, that in the last days, two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left;⁴⁵ two shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

1:40 ***But of that day, and hour, no one knoweth.*** Nibley comments:

How about the timing of this thing? He says there are no clocks. There are no stopwatches, but there are indicators. In economics you have market indicators. You can't be specific, . . . but there are indicators of which way the market will go. . . . But don't try to time it because that's dangerous, as he tells us later here. If you say "I know exactly when He is going to come," then we can enjoy ourselves until ten minutes before, and then we will be ready. If we know the General is coming to inspect, we can clean up the barracks and make everything perfect before he comes. It's the surprise inspection that catches you as you really are. That's what the Lord is going to do. It says here he is going to come as a thief in the night and catch you the way you really are (HWNPGP, 325).

1:43 ***And knew not until the flood came.*** Noah's preaching, like the Savior's teaching in the temple, was spoken "openly to the world . . . and in secret [he] said nothing" (John 18:20). The problem was not that their messages went unheard but rather that no one took them seriously. The situation is reminiscent of Søren Kierkegaard's parable of the "happy conflagration":

It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theater. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was just a jest and applauded. He repeated his warning, they shouted even louder. So I think the world will come to an end amid general applause from all the wits, who believe that it is all a joke (SKPARABLES, 3).

1:44 ***two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken.*** Scholars have debated the validity of the common Christian assumption that the one taken from each pair was caught up to meet the Lord in what some call the "Rapture." As it turns out, this interpretation is borne out by additional Latter-day Saint scripture such as Doctrine and Covenants 27:18: "Be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye may be also" (RDDPGP, 321).

Samuel T. Lachs sees the "Roman practice of impressing people into governmental service (*angaria*)" as background for this unfamiliar imagery (STLRABBINIC, 321; see also p. 105). At any moment a Roman soldier might appear at your door and demand that you leave your own business to become a baggage carrier for him. Likewise, the Lord may, at the time you least expect it, require you to completely abandon your temporal pursuits and immerse yourself in whatever heavenly affairs need immediate attention as the Lord prepares His sudden descent in the clouds.

Of course, the important direction that readers are meant to understand is not that they should excitedly anticipate their future role in the new age—they do not know what that role will be, nor do they have the liberty to choose it—but rather that they must always live in view of the fact that they *cannot* know exactly when the current order of things will come to a halt and the day of preparation will be past. "For after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed" (Alma 34:33). Nibley asks:

How do you prepare for this? Do you hide in a cave? Do you build yourself a shelter? The Lord says it's not going to do you any good at all. That is not the way you [should] prepare this time. . . . As it is written, "Two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left." There are no survival schemes. . . . They are side by side, the two women. [Sudden disappearances

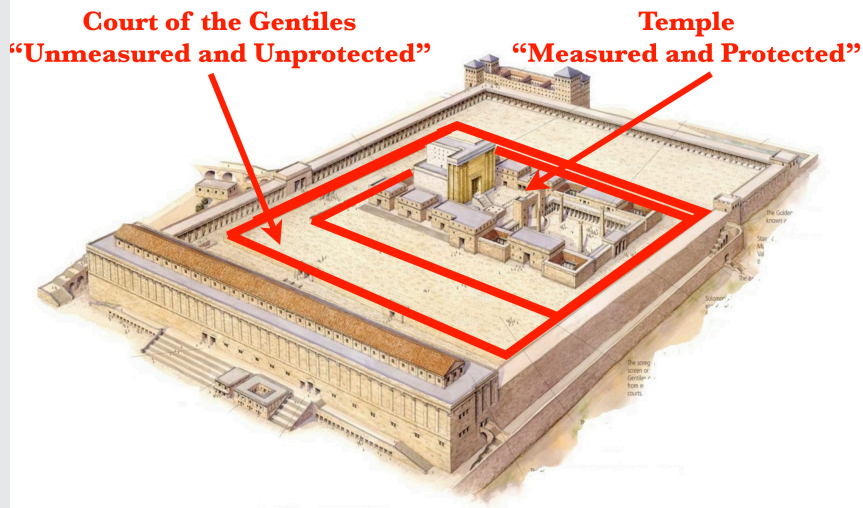


Figure JS—Matthew—6. *The Measurements of the Holy Place in Revelation 11*

THE SYMBOLISM OF “HOLY PLACES” IN THE LAST DAYS

When Jesus told His disciples to “stand in the holy place,” He was careful to qualify His instructions by saying, “Whoso readeth let him understand” (JS—Matthew 1:12). This is because the “holy place” He had in mind was not the profaned temple of Jerusalem, but seemingly some place that was to be designated at the appointed time—perhaps in “the mountains” (v. 13) or, alternatively, in the vicinity of Pella (in the lowlands of the Jordan River), as reported by Eusebius and Epiphanius (see JBMOVE). As another option, Julie M. Smith suggests the injunction for the disciples to seek the mountains may have been a symbolic reference to the temple as “the paradigmatic meeting place between humans and God” (JMSMARK, 687).

With respect to “stand[ing] in holy places” in the *last* days (Doctrine and Covenants 45:32), the book of Revelation provides a symbolic description of a figurative place of safety that will be meaningful to Latter-day Saints. Revelation 11 opens with the angel’s instruction to John to “measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein” (v. 1). By way of contrast, John is told not to measure the areas lying outside the temple complex proper—in other words, the outer courtyard. In the context of the rest of the chapter, the meaning of the angel’s instructions is clear: only those who are standing within the scope of John’s measure—in other words, within the temple—will receive God’s protection.

Of course, scripture is not speaking here of the measurements of a literal physical structure, but rather of the measurement or judgment of the community of disciples who have been called to form the living temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19–22; 1 Peter 2:5), each individual in his or her differing degree of righteousness (Doctrine and Covenants 88:28–31). Spiritually speaking, the worshippers standing in the holy place are those who have kept their covenants (Psalm 24:3–4). These are they who, according to Revelation 14:1, will stand with the Lamb “on . . . mount Zion.” By way of contrast, all those standing in the outer courtyard, being unmeasured and unprotected, will be, in the words of the book of Revelation, “given unto the Gentiles” to be “tread under foot” (Revelation 11:2) with the rest of the wicked in Jerusalem. Ultimately, as we read in Doctrine and Covenants 101:24, “every corruptible thing . . . that dwells upon all the face of the earth . . . shall be consumed.” By “every corruptible thing,” the verse seems to mean every being that is of a *terrestrial* nature. Only those who can withstand at least a *terrestrial* (paradisial) glory will remain on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ (Articles of Faith 1:10). In that day, only those who remain in the holy place unmoved will be able to “*stand still*, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 123:17; emphasis added).

In summary, where are the “holy places” in which we are to stand? Of course, the frequently heard prophetic suggestions that such “holy places” include temples, stakes, chapels, and homes seem wholly appropriate. However, it should be remembered that what makes these places holy—and secure—are the covenants kept by those standing within. According to midrash, Sodom itself could have been a place of safety had there been a sacred circle of as few as ten righteous individuals in the city to “pray on behalf of all of them” (JMBSTANDING, 93).

For additional discussion of this symbolism, see JMBSTANDING, 90–93; RDDREV, 388–94.

THE LORD’S WARNING TO ALL: THE PARABLE OF THE SERVANTS

⁴⁶ “And what I say unto one, I say unto all men; watch, therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord doth come. ⁴⁷ But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up, but would have been ready. ⁴⁸ Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

⁴⁹ “Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁵⁰ Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing; and verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods. ⁵¹ But if that evil servant shall say in his

1:44 happen] that way in war time, too. . . . So what can you do about it? Don’t prepare ahead of time and say, “I’m perfectly safe. I’ve got a plan that will make me perfectly safe.” No, two can be together in the same situation. One is taken and the other is [not], and there is no way they can calculate which one it will be [or when it will happen]. (HWNPGP, 326)

The only safe solution is to be watchful and to live faithfully as if the Lord were coming at any moment. Those who heed prophetic counsel and take “the Holy Spirit for their guide” will prepare what few “needful thing[s]” must be “prepare[d]” to meet the exigencies of their particular situation, and then, with assurance, they will leave the rest to God (Doctrine and Covenants 45:57; 88:119). This is what it means to “stand in holy places” in the last days (see figure JS—Matthew–6).

1:46 ***I say unto all men.*** This addition made to JS—Matthew makes it clear that the final warnings of the chapter are directed not only to Jesus’ disciples, nor merely to His countryfolk, but rather to all people. On the other hand, in Luke 12:41, Peter specifically asked Jesus in response to the parable of vv. 36–40, “Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?” Jesus gave a different answer in the JST: “I speak unto those whom the Lord shall make rulers over his household” (NT2, 77).

1:47 ***if the good man of the house had known.*** This brief parable reiterates the previous themes about the importance of perpetual readiness and watchfulness, especially for those who are stewards over the Lord’s affairs, stressing particularly here that the Son of Man will come when He is least expected. In the Book of Mormon, on the eve of the day that unbelievers had vowed to put the believers to death, rejoicing in what seemed to be a sure knowledge that “the time [was already] past” for Christ’s coming, the voice of the Lord came to Nephi, saying, “Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night the sign shall be given, and on the morrow come I into the world” (3 Nephi 1:6, 9, 12–13).

1:49 ***a faithful and wise servant.*** This second parable, whose protagonist is also the steward of the Lord’s house, differs with the previous parable in its emphasis on the *consequences* of being negligent in the performance of duty.

to give them meat in due season. The description evokes the idea of the utter dependence of all members of the household on the steward for their survival. The phrasing parallels Psalm 145:15 (“The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season”), going so far as to suggest that the steward of the Lord’s household occupies a position of responsibility comparable to God Himself. Because the servants assigned to the steward’s care were given no money in payment for their toil, all they received for their needs came directly from him.

1:50 ***he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*** The reward of faithfulness in one’s responsibilities to the Lord is evidently *more extensive* responsibilities (Matthew 25:14–30). As with Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 39:4–5; 41:37–46), the servant’s wise stewardship over his household duties is

heart: ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’⁵² and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,⁵³ 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,⁵⁴ and shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁵⁵ And thus cometh the end of the wicked, according to the prophecy of Moses, saying: ‘They shall be cut off from among the people’; but the end of the earth is not yet, but by and by.”

1:50 rewarded by making him overseer of everything the Lord owns. Draper, Brown, and Rhodes summarize the lesson of this illustration: “The Lord has promised, ‘All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ’ (Doctrine and Covenants 121:29). There are no second-class citizens among the gods, but all become heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ over all things (see Romans 8:17)” (RDDPGP, 321).

1:54 **cut him asunder.** Because the servant sinned knowingly, his consequences are severe. He is literally cut in two, in the manner of a sacrificial animal (RTFMATTHEW, 945).

1:55 **the end of the wicked, according to the prophecy of Moses.** On the “end” (= “destruction”) of the wicked, see v. 4. On the prophecy of Moses, see Deuteronomy 18:16–19; Acts 3:22–23; JS—H 1:40.

HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

BY March 1831, Joseph Smith and his scribes had completed a translation of the Old Testament through Genesis 24:41. Recently, the Saints had been the subject of “many false reports, lies, and fo[o]lish stories” that were “circulated in every direction, to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith.” “To the joy of the Saints,”¹ Joseph Smith received the revelation that is now known as Doctrine and Covenants 45.² The revelation not only provided needed encouragement and direction but also, unexpectedly, directed the Prophet to begin a new phase of his work of Bible translation. Following a long series of verses describing Jesus’ instructions to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, the Lord said in Doctrine and Covenants 45:60–61:

And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter [i.e., Matthew 24], until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known;

Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it, that ye may be prepared for the things to come.

It would have been no surprise to anyone who knew Joseph Smith well that he immediately turned his attention from the translation of the Old Testament to the New as he had been instructed to do. As Richard L. Bushman has observed, the Prophet “spoke as if the revelations coming by his voice commanded him along with everyone else.”³ “Judging by his actions, Joseph believed in the revelations more than anyone. From the beginning, he was his own best follower. Having the word of God at his back gave him enormous confidence.”⁴ Joseph Smith began with chapter 1 of the Gospel of Matthew and reached chapter 24 a few months later.

Joseph Smith—Matthew manuscripts. There are two primary manuscripts for the Joseph Smith translation of Matthew: New Testament Manuscript 1 (NT1) and New Testament Manuscript 2 (NT2). Sidney Rigdon was the scribe for NT1, which began with Matthew 1:1 on March 8, 1831, and ended with Matthew 26:71 on an unknown date. Afterward, John Whitmer created NT2 by copying NT1. From that point on, NT2 was used for the work of translation and revision. The historical record indicates that Joseph Smith “edited the material three times before he was

1 “History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” p. 104. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/110>.

2 “Revelation, circa 7 March 1831 [D&C 45],” p. 75. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-circa-7-march-1831-dc-45/5>.

3 Richard Lyman Bushman. “Joseph Smith and the Creation of the Sacred.” In *Joseph Smith Jr: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens, 93–106. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 98.

4 Richard Lyman Bushman. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling: A Cultural Biography of Mormonism’s Founder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005, 173.

satisfied with it.”⁵

Publication history. Widespread interest in this portion of the translation is indicated by reports from the 1830s and 1840s of stand-alone copies of JST Matthew 24 circulating among both members and nonmembers of the Church. In addition, the importance of the subject is evidenced by several revelations that describe the events of the last days, including Doctrine and Covenants 29 (1830); 1, 43, 45, and 133 (1831); and 116 (1838).⁶

An imperfectly edited single broadside sheet of about 8 by 12 inches containing the translation of Matthew 24 was printed and distributed sometime in the 1830s.⁷ Franklin D. Richards used the broadside in the preparation of the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price in 1851. While Elder Richards’ edition was primarily based on the NT1 manuscript, in his edition Orson Pratt relied almost entirely on the 1867 Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) publication of the “Inspired Version,” which primarily followed NT2 and introduced some other changes. Elder James E. Talmage changed the title of the translation to “Writings of Joseph Smith I,” a name that remained until 1978, when it was renamed “Joseph Smith—Matthew.” No changes to Joseph Smith—Matthew were made in the 2013 Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures.

5 Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes. *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005, 300.

6 David Rolph Seely. “The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5–36).” In *The Gospels*, edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. *Studies in Scripture*, 5:391–404. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 393.

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