

Matthew 23:37-24:31

**ARE ANY SIGNS OF HIS COMING IN THE  
CHURCH AGE?**

## 2 Parts

1. A sketch and analysis of various views held by modern dispensationalists
2. A proposed interpretation consistent with Matthew's argument

## 2 Categories of Views of Matthew 24:4-14

1. Historical-Futurists view portions of Matthew 24:4-14 as being fulfilled historically, during the present Church age and other parts as having fulfillment during the future 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.
2. Strict Futurists view all of Matthew 24:4-14 as being fulfilled in the future, during the 70<sup>th</sup> week

# Historical-Future Views



# Weaknesses of the Intercalation View

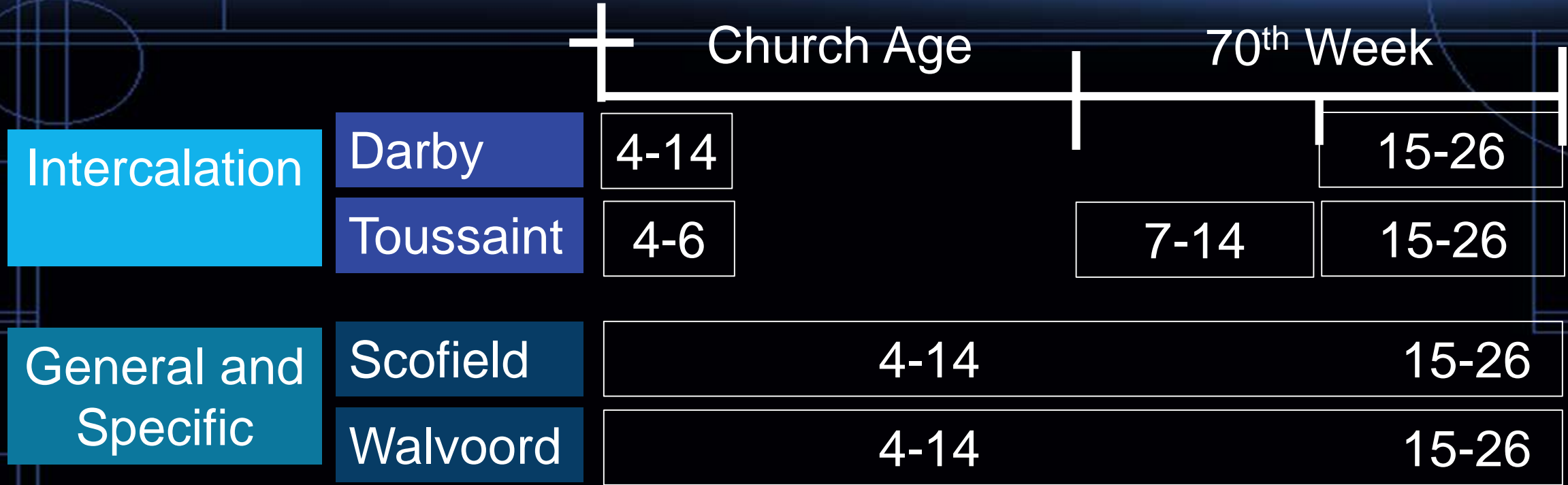
1. There were no false Christs between AD30 and 70
  - “We possess no *historical* record of any false Messiahs having appeared *previous to the destruction of Jerusalem.*” - Ice
2. The birth pangs are not adequately dealt with
3. An intercalation in fulfillment is contrary to the illustration of the fig tree

	Sower	Wheat/Tares	Mustard Tree	Leaven	Treasure	Pearl	Dragnet	Matt. 24:4-14	Matt. 25
Darby	Testimony in present age	Removal of church	Profession	Christendom	Church	Church	Gospel net	Course of this age	Christendom
Kelly	Christendom	Rapture of church	Christian profession	Dogmas of Christendom	Church	Church	Spirit's work now	Jewish remnant	Christendom
Gaebelein	God's word in present age	tribulation saints/sinners	Professing Christendom	Apostate church	Israel	Israel	Everlasting gospel in tribulation period	Jewish remnant	Christendom
Scotfield	Present age	Christendom	Growth of mystery form of kingdom	Apostate church	Israel	Church	Humanity gathered by gospel	Course of this age-- Christendom	Sphere of profession
Ironside	Christendom	Mixture in Christendom	Christendom	False doctrine in Christendom	Israel	Church	Professing church	Course of this age	Christendom
Chafer	Christian history	Wheat is Body of Christ	Christendom	False doctrine in church	Israel	Church			
Walvoord	Conditions in present age	Entire period of mystery kingdom	Christendom	False doctrine in professing church, esp. in tribulation	Israel	Church	Tribulation judgments	Course of present age	Remnant of Israel
Ryrie	Profession in present age	Counterfeits in present age	Abnormal growth in present age	Evil doctrines in present age	Israel	Church	Removal of unbelievers	Tribulation period entirely	
Pentecost	Church witness	Tribulation Jews	Sphere of profession	Religious corruption in present age	Israel	Church	Tribulation Gentiles	Tribulation period entirely	Remnant of Israel
S. D. Toussaint	Intro. Possible Explain why X speaks in possible.	Saved & Lost in Christendom	Profession	"	Israel (Saved)	"	Ryrie		

Toussaint's handwritten note indicating 24:4-14 is in the "Tribulation Period Entirely"



# Historical-Future Views



# Weaknesses of the General and Specific View

1. It is a double interpretation
  - “Verses 4 to 14 have a double interpretation.” - Scofield
2. The birth pangs are not adequately dealt with
3. It is contrary to the illustration of the fig tree



# Historical-Future Views



Intercalation

Darby  
Toussaint

4-14  
4-6

7-14

15-26  
15-26

General and Specific

Scofield  
Walvoord

4-14	15-26
4-14	15-26

Chronological  
Historic and  
Future

Chafer  
Cooper  
Fruchten.

4-8		9-26		
4-5	6	7-8	9-14	15-26
4-6		7-8	9-14	15-26

# Weaknesses of the Chronological Historic-Future View

1. The wars in verse 6 and 7 are the same wars, not different wars, as proven by the explanatory *γὰρ*.
2. It is too speculative to argue that WWI and WWII fulfilled verse 7
3. The expression “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” is better connected to the second seal in Rev 6:4
  - “Here one must be very cautious and avoid dogmatism.” - Cooper

# Weaknesses of the Chronological Historic-Future View

4. The earthquake data from the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows a slight decrease in both frequency and intensity during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
5. It does not deal adequately with the birth pangs
6. It does not fit with the illustration of the fig tree. Those who saw WWI did not see all these things.

# Weaknesses of the Chronological Historic-Future View

7. 24:9 is not a good description of what will happen to Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation.

# Historical-Future Views



Intercalation	Darby	4-14				15-26
	Toussaint	4-6		7-14		15-26
General and Specific	Scofield	4-14		15-26		
	Walvoord	4-14		15-26		
Chronological Historic and Future	Chafer	4-8		9-26		
	Cooper	4-5	6	7-8	9-14	15-26
	Fruchten.	4-6		7-8	9-14	15-26

# Futurist Views



Chronological  
Future 1<sup>st</sup>  
Half

- Gaebelein
- Ryrie
- McClean
- Bigalke

# Weaknesses of the Chronological Futurist 1<sup>st</sup> Half View

1. Matt 24:9 is not a description of the martyrs under the altar under the fifth seal in Rev 6:9-11. The “you” in context are future Jewish believers, not believers in general.
2. The first half of the Tribulation does not end in verse 14 because verse 14 is the end of the birth pangs altogether, which is the end of the second half
3. The placement of the phrase “the beginning of birth pangs” is in the wrong verse in this view, and should be in verse 14. But verse 14 says “then the end will come,” indicating it is the end of the second half

# Futurist Views



Chronological  
Future 1<sup>st</sup>  
Half

Gaebelein

Ryrie

McClellan

Bigalke

4-14

15-26

4-14

15-26

4-14

15-26

4-14

15-26

Chronological  
Future 1<sup>st</sup>  
and 2<sup>nd</sup> Half

Pentecost

Barbieri

Showers

Enns

4-8

9-26

4-8

9-26

4-8

9-26

4-8

9-26



- “There seems to be evidence to support the view that the first half of the week is described in verses 4-8. The parallelism between verses 4-8 and Revelation 6 seems to indicate that the first half of the tribulation is here described....There are indications that verses 9-26 describe the events of the last half of the week. The abomination of desolation (24:15) is clearly stated by Daniel (9:27) to appear in the middle of the week and continue to the end of the period. The word “then” in verse 9 seems to introduce the great persecutions against Israel that were promised them and were described in Revelation 12:12-17, where John reveals that this persecution will last for the last half of the tribulation period (Rev. 12:14).” - Pentecost

# Futurist Views



# The Argument of the Gospel of Matthew

- Matthew's argument is two-fold; Jesus is indeed the King even though Jesus' kingdom did not come (Matt 1-11). The reason the kingdom did not come is because the kingdom's arrival in history is contingent on Israel's repentance. When Israel rejected the King (Matt 12) the kingdom was postponed and the King began to prepare His disciples for an interadvent age (Matt 13-28). This was the informal rejection of the King. The formal rejection would take place later, leading to the crucifixion.

# The Five Discourses all Relate to the Kingdom

- The Discourse on Kingdom Righteousness (5-7)
- The Discourse on Kingdom Missions (10)
- The Discourse on Kingdom Postponement (13)
- The Discourse on Kingdom Greatness (18)
- The Discourse on Kingdom Coming (24-25)
- The discourse in Matt 24-25 describes the conditions in the world that will bring Israel to repentance, issuing in the return of the King and His judgments.

# The Context of the Discourse on Kingdom Coming (Matt 23:37-39)

- Jesus' scathing rebuke of the Pharisees (23:13-36)
- Jesus' lament over Israel's rejection (23:37)
- Jesus' proclamation of the temple's destruction (23:38)
- Jesus' pronouncement of departure until Ps 118:26 is uttered by Israel (23:39)

# The Disciples' Questions (24:1-3)

- The issue in the disciples' minds was Jesus' statement about the temple being destroyed (23:38)

# The Disciples' Questions (24:1-3)

- Two questions? Or three? Or four?!

# The Disciples' Questions (24:1-3)

- Two questions
  - Two interrogatives – “when” (ποτε) and “what” (τι)
  - When will these things happen?
  - What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?
  - TSKS construction



- Hart requires two questions to make his case because without it there is no chiasm
- “...Jesus answers these two questions in reverse order. This technique is called chiasm.” – John Hart
- Hart claims that the first question is about the beginning of the day of the Lord (70<sup>th</sup> week), but the first question is not about the beginning of the day of the Lord, but about when the temple buildings would be destroyed.

# The First Question

- The answer to the first question is not recorded by Matthew, but by Luke in 21:12-24
- “It should be obvious that in this section of Luke’s account we have the answer of Christ to the disciples’ question about the judgment of Jerusalem and the temple, for here He speaks especially of the events which will occupy the time from His departure to the destruction of the city in A.D. 70.” – Alva McClain

# The Second Question

- Zechariah 14:6-7, “In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.”

# The Second Question

- The disciples had a very definite meaning of *παρουσια* in mind. It referred to the day He would return to earth to end this present age and usher in the Messianic age. It certainly did not refer to a broader period of time such as “the day of the Lord” or the entire “70<sup>th</sup> week” as some suggest. Their question relates to a precise time that would signal His coming

# The Third Question

- The disciples asked about the *συντελειας*, the very end.
- Daniel was told that the very end day was the 1,335<sup>th</sup> day.
- This day is 75 days after the day of the Second Coming.

# What did the disciples really want to know?

- The meaning of the three question, and what the disciples' really wanted to know was, "What is the relationship *in time* between the destruction of the temple buildings and the sign of His coming and the end of the age?"

# Jesus' Answer (24:4-31)

- Matthew does not record Jesus' answer to the first question. Luke does in 21:12-24.

# The Chronological First and Second Half View

- “In 24:4-8 Jesus describes the signs in the first half of the Tribulation. These are not signs for the church, since the church will be raptured prior to the Tribulation. These signs parallel Revelation 6....In the second half of the Tribulation (vv. 9-14) the suffering will intensify. “Then” (v. 9) marks a transition, referring to the occasion when the Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel and persecutes the nation (Dan. 9:27)....Matthew 24:15-26 amplifies the period discussed in 24:9-14. In 24:9-14 Jesus foretold many signs; now He singles out one sign—the Abomination of Desolation (v. 15).” - Enns



# The First Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:4-8)

1. The linguistic connection throughout the passage of the verb “mislead” (Gk. *πλαναω*), which means “be deceived.” Jesus uses this verb in verses 4, 5, 11 and 24 to reveal the key characteristic of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The key characteristic is deception.
2. The linguistic connection throughout the passage of “false Christs.” Jesus refers to false Christs in verses 5, 23 and 24.

## The First Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:4-8)

3. The wars in verse 6 and 7 are better explained by the second seal in Rev 6:3-4 than they are by WWI and II.
4. In 24:6 it is “not yet the end,” but by verse 14 it is “the end.” Therefore the entire 70<sup>th</sup> week must be included in 24:4-14.

# The First Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:4-8)

5. The verse 7 famines and earthquakes are better explained by the third and sixth seals of Rev 6 than present famines and earthquakes.
6. Verse 8 says that everything in verses 4-8 are the “beginning of birth pangs” This fits the analogy of pregnancy only when placed within the 70<sup>th</sup> week, not before the week.
  - “...the involuntary and uncontrollable nature of birth pangs, as well as their intensification leading ultimately to a time of deliverance, well pictured the concept of a time of divine judgment that must run its course until the promise of new life could be experienced.” - Price

# The Second Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:9-14)

1. In verse 9, the word “Then” (τοτε) signifies a transition to things that will take place after “the beginning of birth pangs” (v 8).
2. Verse 9 describes perfectly what happens to the believing remnant of Israel at the midpoint. The “you” in verse 9, who are delivered over to tribulation and killed and hated by all nations because of Jesus’ name refers to the believing Jewish remnant.
  - “This then, is the judgment associated with the fifth seal—that petition of God by the martyred saints seals the fate of those who put them to death.” - Garland

# The Second Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:9-14)

3. Verse 10 describes the betrayal among the Jewish people when the nations turn against the remnant. This will take place in the second half.
4. Verse 11 describes false prophets prophesied to come among Israel in the second half, parallel to Zech 13:2-6
  - “It will come about in that day,” declares the Lord of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. <sup>3</sup>“And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the Lord’; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies.” – Zech 13:2-3

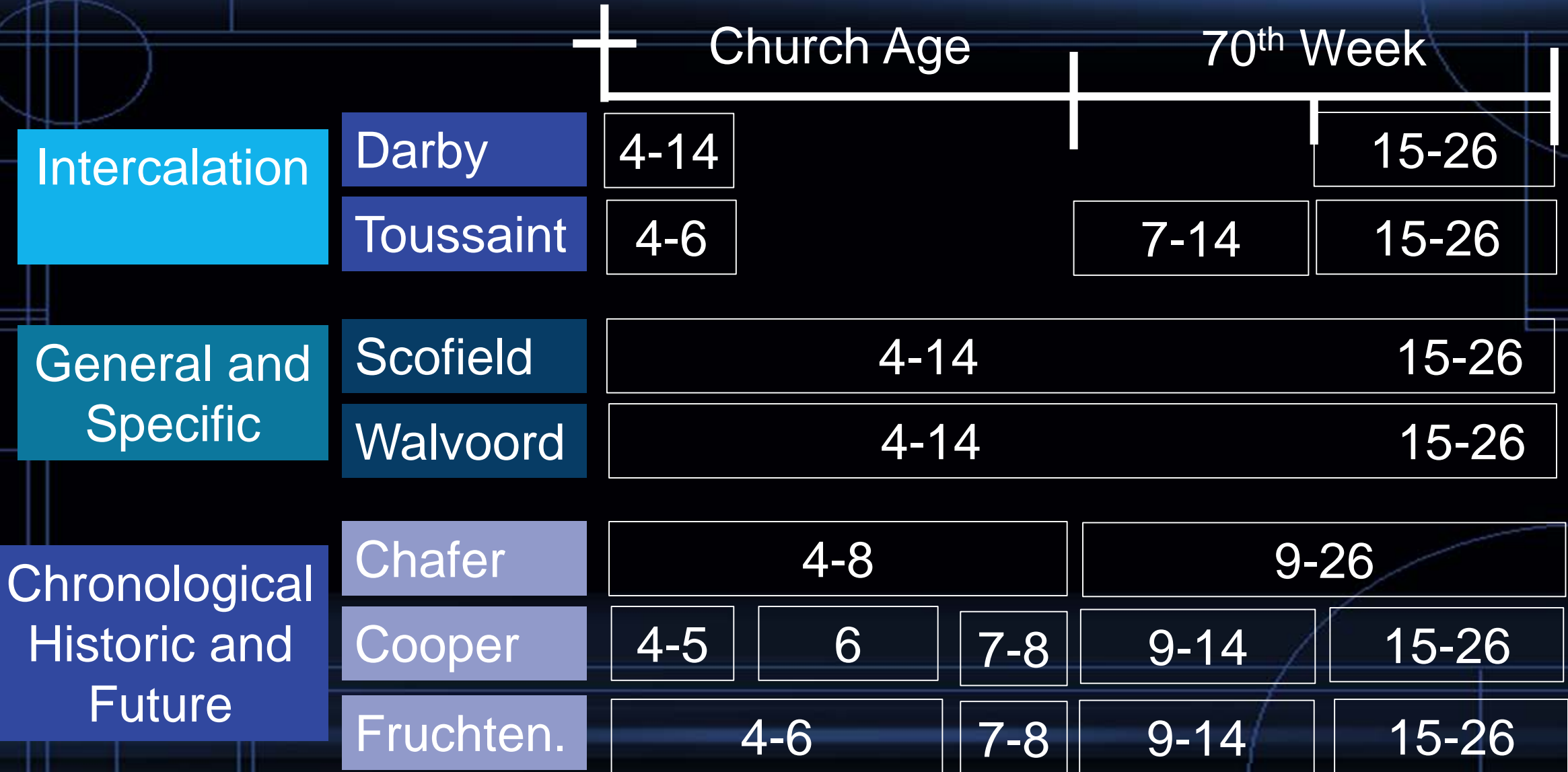
## The Second Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:9-14)

5. Verse 12 describes the period as one of lawlessness, reminding us that the anti-Christ is a man of lawlessness during the second half (cf Dan 7:25; 2 Thess 2:3)
6. Verses 13 and 14 speak of events right before the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, events that will immediately precede the sign of His coming. These are in the second half.

# The Midpoint of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (24:15)

- 24:15 is the midpoint and it is the verse that gives the overall structure of 24:4-31 as the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. The abomination of desolation is the event that will indicate to Jewish believers in the land that they must flee because of the coming hatred and destruction coming as described in 24:9.

# Historical-Future Views





# Futurist Views



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# Summary

- The second part of the paper emphasizes that the overall argument of Matthew must be kept in mind throughout. All of the discourses relate to the kingdom in some way and the Olivet Discourse relates to the events immediately preceding the coming of the King in His kingdom. Jesus was lamenting the fact that generation rejected. He pronounced judgment on the temple and announced He would not return until the nation welcomed Him back.

# Summary

- The disciples asked about the timing of the destruction of the temple buildings in relation to the sign of His coming and the end of the age. Jesus' answer was that the temple buildings would be destroyed in the near time frame (recorded by Luke) and the sign of His coming and end of the age would occur in the far time frame.

# Summary

- The far time frame is held together by the linguistic connection of “deception” and false Christs” throughout the whole passage. The illustration of the fig tree and the statement that the generation that sees all these things will not pass away until all these things take place puts all the events in a compact time frame, which is the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. The descriptions of false Christs, deception, wars, famines and earthquakes are more certainly linked to the events of the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week in Revelation 6 than they are to events during Church History.

# Summary

- Therefore, the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week is described in Matthew 24:4-8. These are the beginning of birth pangs. The word “then” in 24:9 transitions to the second half when the nations of the world will hate the Jewish remnant and deliver them to tribulation and death. This will cause division in the nation and false prophets will abound leading many to be deceived. An increase in lawlessness under the policies of the anti-Christ will cause the love of most to grow cold, but the one who endures to the end will be rescued.

# Summary

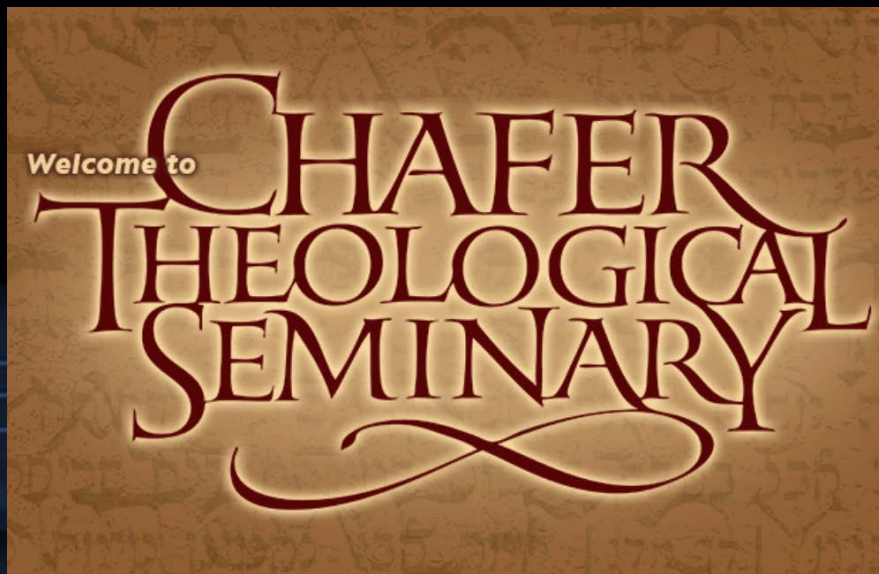
- The mention of the end signifies the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the nations in the second half. Then the end will come. 24:15 recapitulates in the sense of revealing the abomination of desolation as the event spoken of by Daniel the prophet that will initiate the persecution of the Jewish remnant in verse 9. Therefore, the conclusion is that there are no signs in the present Church age that are indicative of His coming, only events that are setting the stage for these verses to be fulfilled during the first and second halves of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

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Bible

Church



 BIBLEFRAMEWORK