

Two things are to be noted for a proper understanding of this passage, first the word "generation," and second the phrase "shall not pass away." The word generation is used nine different times in Matthew, and in every case describes the nation of Israel as distinct from all the other nations around about them. In one place Peter speaks of the believers of all time as a chosen generation. In the gospel by Matthew, when the word is applied to Israel, it does not mean the people of any given period or a period of time loosely defined by the life of a man or his family, but, a race, offspring, a line of descent, and in time covers the current age or world period. By the word generation, then, Jesus meant the race or nation of whom He was speaking at that moment. But what is the meaning of this race or nation passing away? Some have supposed by the passing away that the Saviour meant the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, which would take place within a period of thirty years. This view is fully contradicted by (a) the meaning of the word generation as used by Matthew; (b) by the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem did not take place until about forty-two years after the prophecy was uttered; (c) and also by the fact that it would make the Saviour contradict Himself in his discourse. He described the time of the destruction of Jerusalem as quite unknown. Would He not be contradicting Himself did He predict the fulfillment of