

Jesus' Sermon on the Last Days: Matthew 24

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More than 11 years ago I visited the remains of an ancient church that sits on the crest of the Mount of Olives. That visit piqued my interest in Jesus' sermon that Matthew has recorded in chapter 24 of his Gospel. The building itself commemorated Jesus' sermon, as well as the place of His ascension and His Second Coming. The remains stand atop the site where early Christian tradition recalled that Jesus had prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, the difficulties that His disciples would face, and events of the last days.

The Setting

It was probably on Tuesday of the last week of His life that Jesus climbed the Mount of Olives after leaving Jerusalem. He had spent His day teaching at the temple. As the sun began to sink toward the western horizon at day's end, Jesus paused high on the slope of the mountain with four of His apostles. They had evidently exited the city by leaving directly from the temple grounds through the so-called Golden Gate, which pierced the eastern wall. They then descended into the Kidron Valley before beginning their ascent.¹ The Gospel of Mark names the apostles who were with Jesus. They were the two pairs of brothers from Galilee: Peter and Andrew, James and

John. Thus Jesus spoke the words of His sermon in the presence of the most trustworthy witnesses of that age. I wish to emphasize that this point is not minor. This discourse, detailed in Matthew 24, was to be one of the most significant of Jesus' mortal ministry.

The place where tradition says that they halted that afternoon cannot be far from where they actually stopped to rest themselves. In fact, it may be the very place. In the area of Gethsemane three paths led from the bottom of the Mount of Olives to the top, and they all converged near the crest where a single path continued eastward to Bethany.

Nowadays there are walls and buildings that block one's view. But in that era, the view of the city and its temple must have been spectacular. This party of five may have gazed westward across the Kidron Valley to the walls that surrounded the temple Court of the Gentiles. Raising their eyes slightly, they would have seen the sanctuary itself, an imposing edifice built of solid marble and decorated with gold leaf. King Herod had refurbished it

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handsomely and thereby created an enduring monument, perhaps the most impressive in the entire Roman world.² Looking above and beyond the temple enclosure, these men would have seen the upper city on the west ridge. Now largely in shadow because of the angle of the slanting sunlight, only the tops of buildings and homes would have been clear to their vision. Jesus knew, though the other four did not, that their last evening together would be spent in that part of town. The Last Supper was now only 48 hours away.

Tradition holds that Jesus and His four apostles sat together in a small cave near the crest of the mountain while He spoke the words of His now-famous sermon. Tradition has also associated this spot with other very important events, as we have noted. As a result, Queen Helena, the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, founded on this spot a church that was built at the same time as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.³

Effects

This sermon about the looming fate of Jerusalem and about events of the last days had two notable effects. First, Christians left the city long before it fell to Roman legionnaires in late summer A.D. 70.⁴ In a word, Jesus' prophecy saved their lives. Second, at least as early as the fourth century, Christian pilgrims would climb the slopes of the Mount of Olives on the Tuesday before Easter to the traditional spot where Jesus delivered His sermon. There they would read together the words of Matthew in chapters 24 and 25.⁵ By then they knew what had happened long ago to Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies. After all, they had the account of Josephus, who was an eyewitness to much of the carnage. What they did not know, of course, was how Jesus' predictions about the last days would be fulfilled.

Records

Latter-day Saints stand in a unique position among Christians when it comes to appreciating this sermon. We possess no fewer than seven accounts. There are the three records of the sermon written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Then there are the revised versions of these chapters in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. One of these latter, the one from Matthew, chapter 24, appears in the Pearl of Great Price as Joseph Smith—Matthew. We find the seventh account in section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This last consists of only a part of the sermon. But the Risen Savior thought it important enough that He repeated at some length what He had shared with His apostles that evening on the Mount of Olives (D&C 45:16–59). There must be reasons for these added records, all coming through the inspired work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I shall mention one that is obvious.

The added accounts now available through the Joseph Smith Translation and section 45 underline the significance of the sermon. To be sure, early Christians sensed the value of Jesus' discourse as a definitive statement about the fate of Jerusalem and the events of the last days. But the fact that the Lord inspired the Prophet Joseph to provide additional records to us in our day emphasizes its importance as the Savior's statement to us in our circumstances.

Apocalyptic

In this connection it is worthwhile observing that Jesus' prophecy fits comfortably within a type of discourse that students of ancient literatures call *apocalyptic*. This term derives from a Greek verb that means "to take off a covering"; that is, "to reveal." The best-known representative of this kind of religious expression is the book of Revelation in the New Testament. One of the chief features of this type of prophecy of the future is the very strong reassurance that God is in charge of events and that He will bring them to proper

conclusion. A person does not read far in the accounts of Jesus' sermon before meeting this kind of assurance. For instance, Jesus predicted that in the last days "you . . . shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars." Joseph Smith then added, "see that ye be not troubled, . . . Behold, I have told you before" (JS—M 1:23–24). Here, according to inspired words received by Joseph Smith, Jesus reassured the apostles—and ourselves—that we are not to be troubled. In order to lower our anxiety about the way that events might go, He had informed us beforehand.

Here is another example: Jesus soothed believers by saying that, "Although, the days will come, that heaven and earth shall pass away; yet my words shall not pass away, but all shall be fulfilled" (JS—M 1:35). We note the force of Jesus' prophecy, even in the face terrible calamity: "My words shall not pass away." And who will guarantee that His words will not pass away? It is my testimony that the guarantor is Christ Himself.

Early Prophecies

One intriguing question, because of where it will eventually lead us, has to do with whether Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives was the first occasion that His disciples had heard such prophecies.

As a matter of fact, Jesus had already given expression to many of these teachings during His ministry. For example, Jesus had spoken directly about His Second Coming long before He arrived in Jerusalem the last time. In Luke, chapter 12, Jesus said, "The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." The JST version of the same chapter adds, "The coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night."⁶ Moreover, according to this very chapter in Luke, Jesus had addressed the unexpected character of His Second Coming. He related a story about a steward who does not know when his master will return home. In it, Jesus warned that the "lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he

is not aware." The sense of the final judgment also permeates this passage, thus tying it to the last days and the Second Coming. For Jesus said that the lord who finds the servant to have been unfaithful "will cut him in sunder"—that is, dismiss him—"and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" (Luke 12:46).

These passages, and others,⁷ make it plain that Jesus had already spoken about the last days and His Second Coming before His discourse to His four trusted apostles. Hence, we are justified in viewing Jesus' Mount of Olives sermon—at least in some of its parts—as a gathering of several strands of His prior preaching into a unified prophecy of the future.

Pattern

In this light there seems to be an interesting pattern in the discourse. In the parts about the future of the city of Jerusalem and the future of His followers, Jesus was rather specific. For instance, He spoke of the impressive buildings in the city lying in ruins, especially the temple. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies and overrun by "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14; see also Luke 21:20). In addition, the disciples would be hailed before authorities in "the synagogues" and be delivered "into prisons" (Luke 21:12; see also Mark 13:9). Moreover, those in Judea who saw that these evil days were approaching were to flee to "the mountains," not stopping even to pick up a few clothes (Matthew 24:16–18, Mark 13:14–16, Luke 21:21).

However, when Jesus began to address the situation in the last days, His words became more general, less precise. Was it because His view of the future was somehow dim? Not at all. The records let us know that His view was very clear. But He was evidently unwilling to let the whole view out of the bag, so to speak. He offered enough to warn us in our day about difficulties that we will face. But He spoke in more or less general terms. For instance, when

the Lord rehearsed to Joseph Smith what He had said about circumstances that are traceable to people, He said, “In that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion.” Furthermore, “the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound” (D&C 45:26–27). Sound familiar? Yes. And we can tie Jesus’ words to many events and currents in the modern world.

Jesus also spoke about unusual events in nature. For example, He spoke of “signs and wonders” that “shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath.” Presumably it would be in the earth that witnesses would “behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke.” In the celestial realm, too, “before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and the stars fall from heaven” (D&C 45:40–42). What are these signs and wonders? They could be any number of natural phenomena. We can recall photographs of natural disasters on television that generally match these expressions. One also thinks of modern warfare producing such scenes. So what do these images mean in Jesus’ prophecy? The answer is that we do not know precisely. It could be any such phenomena. Or it could be none of them. We shall know only if, as the Lord says through Joseph Smith, we “shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved” and “have taken the Holy Spirit for [our] guide” (D&C 45:32, 57).

Fulfillment

At this point we might ask whether we can somehow know the meaning of any of the images that the Savior appealed to. To answer, we turn back to the sermon. When Jesus chose to be clear, we sense a very literal fulfillment of His words. For instance, the prophecy that “there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2) was fulfilled to the letter, so to speak. Below what were the temple walls on

the west side one can see the fallen, fractured stones of the royal porch named in honor of Solomon. Romans pushed these stones down from their lofty perches after the temple fell into their hands. In addition, one can find evidence here and there that legionnaires hooked their horses to pillars and decorative stones and dragged them off in order to pulverize them with sledge hammers. Not a piece of the temple superstructure remained standing after the Romans finished their devastating work. This fact alone leads me to believe that Jesus’ prophecy of events of the last days will also be fulfilled to the final detail, even though we may not understand certain aspects of His imagery.

The Question

I want now to turn to other parts of the sermon. One of the immediate benefits of the Joseph Smith Translation has been to offer a more correct version of the disciple’s question that coaxed the sermon from Jesus. The Gospel of Mark reports that “one of his disciples saith unto him; Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” (Mark 13:1). But according to JST Matthew 24:1, the request was, “Master, show us concerning the buildings of the temple; as thou hast said; They shall be thrown down and left unto you desolate.” Then, after the party had reached the top of the Mount of Olives, the disciples begged, “Tell us, when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and what is the sign of thy coming; and of the end of the world?” (JST Matthew 24:4). From these passages, parts of which go back to inspiration received by Joseph Smith, we learn that Jesus had spoken about both the desolation of the temple and the last days on earlier occasions. This observation agrees with our prior point that Jesus had already made parts of the sermon public. The disciples simply wanted a fuller explanation, which Jesus then unfolded to their view.

“Take Heed”

Most of the sources agree that Jesus’ first words in the sermon were: “Take heed that no man deceive you.”⁸ Jesus intended, I believe, that the disciples keep this warning in mind throughout the entire discourse. Jesus’ first point, of course, was that His followers not think that any who came in His name, “saying—I am Christ,” really bore His authority (JS—M 1:6, Matthew 24:5; cf. Mark 13:6, Luke 21:8). Furthermore, they were not to believe that the end had come with the fall of the city and its temple. For “after the tribulation of those days which shall come upon Jerusalem,” He declared, there would “arise false Christs, and false prophets, and [would] show great signs and wonders” (JS—M 1:21–24; cf. Matthew 24:23–25, Mark 13:21–23).

In addition to these possible deceptions that would occur within or soon after the days of the apostles, there was a specific falsehood connected to the last days. It is the deception that “all is well.” This statement, which I have borrowed from 2 Nephi 28:21 and 25, underlies the following in Jesus’ prophecy:

As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man;

. . . for until the day that Noah entered into the ark they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage;

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. [JS—M 1:41–43]

We notice that, as the scriptures say here and elsewhere, wickedness was more or less the norm in the days of Noah, and everyone evidently assumed that life would continue as it had. Then came the flood, and it changed everything. The warning to those of the last days, of course, is not to assume that all is well and will remain so.

How does one avoid such a pitfall? Are there protections? The Lord offers a few clear

hints, all tied to Joseph Smith’s work on this sermon. The first represents a modification of a statement by Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew quoted Jesus as saying, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” The JST version very much intensifies the sense of enduring: “He that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13, JS—M 1:11). It is this set of qualities, then, that is to characterize the faithful. A second virtue appears in a passage that also modifies what we find in Matthew’s Gospel. But the modification is very noticeable and appears this time in D&C 45. In Matthew 24:15 we read, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.” The JST version of Matthew changes this passage but little. However, the Lord’s words in section 45 make major alterations, pointing the statement to the last days. There we read:

There shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. [D&C 45:31–32]

The activity that permits disciples to survive without finding themselves among the wicked is standing in holy places. Such holy places, of course, include temples. Is there something that we can attach to temple worthiness in Jesus’ words? In my view, yes.

A third spiritual security consists in treasuring up God’s word. The relevant saying stands only in JST Matthew. In it Jesus assured His followers, “Whoso treasureth up my words, shall not be deceived. For the Son of Man shall come” (JST Matthew 24:39–40; also JS—M 1:37). Evidently, those who take the Lord’s

word seriously hold off a certain kind of deception that otherwise might engulf them.

The fourth promised protection also derives from the Prophet Joseph Smith. In D&C 45, the Savior said:

At that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day. [D&C 45:56–57]

We note that in order to avoid deception we must take the Holy Spirit as our guide. It is a most important means of safety.

The Last Days

We now turn to descriptions of events in the last days. As we have seen, Jesus addressed the issue of natural disasters. We recall His words: “There shall be earthquakes . . . in divers places, and many desolations” (D&C 45:33). One thinks back across the past few months to recall some terrible earthquakes that have led to the loss of thousands of lives. We need mention only Turkey and Taiwan, to name two. Although severe earthquakes have characterized other ages, such phenomena are indicators of the last days, indicators that Jesus underlined in bright colors. What interests me more here, however, is the ultimate purpose that natural disasters might be playing in the divine drama of our day. What might lie behind such frightening events? I shall hazard an answer, but only by appealing to scripture.

At the opening of the seventh seal in the book of Revelation, we read that “there was silence in heaven.” Following the silence, seven angels in turn blew their trumpets, each musical sound heralding a disaster. After the sixth

angel had winded the trumpet and disaster had followed, John wrote:

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver . . . :

Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. [Revelation 9:20–21]

How shall we understand this passage? On the surface at least, it seems plain that God expected people to repent in the face of disaster. They did not. Instead, they continued to rely on things for security and to pursue their normal lives of indulgence. Jesus said as much to His disciples on the Mount of Olives. Before His coming, He assured them, it shall be “as it was in the days of Noah” (JS—M 1:41). That is, life as people were living it seemed more or less normal. But what God wanted in Noah’s day and—according to scripture—will want in our day is repentance.

In this light we note the very suggestive language of section 43 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In a passage wherein the Lord spoke of calling on the “nations of the earth” to repent, He intoned:

How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind. [D&C 43:25]

From such passages—and there are others⁹—it seems plain to me that in the divine scheme such painful, disrupting occurrences come as a shrill, heavenly voice that begs us to repent. Another voice will be that of missionaries.

Our Place

In this connection, do any of us figure in the scenes of the last days painted by Jesus for His apostles on that spring evening? As we might expect, the answer is yes. How so? Each of us in this room who has served a mission or who will serve a mission, or has or will lead another to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, is a part of that painting. In Joseph Smith—Matthew, the Savior pointedly said, “Again, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations” (JS—M 1:31). It is we who appear in this part of the painting—as missionaries. For only after we do our part “shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked” (JS—M 1:31).

Jerusalem, Again

From this point on we note a certain vividness returning to Jesus’ words. For He came to speak again of Jerusalem, this time in the last days. He prophesied in D&C 45:47, “Then shall the arm of the Lord fall upon the nations” of the Gentiles.¹⁰ “And then shall the Lord set his foot upon this mount, and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble” (D&C 45:48). Moreover, as the prophet Zechariah had once declared:

Then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?

Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.

And then shall they weep. [D&C 45:51–53]

We should add parenthetically that the expression “I am” in this passage pointedly recalls the divine name revealed to Moses on the holy mount (Exodus 3:14). Significantly, Jesus applied this expression to Himself both in His mortal ministry and in postmortal appearances.¹¹ Thus, part of the reason that

Jews will recognize Jesus will have to do with His identification of Himself as their God.

Jesus as Servant

In this context of Jesus’ acts in the last days, I want to turn to an important promise that He offered to His faithful followers. Technically, this promise was not a part of His discourse on the Mount of Olives. But I would like to suggest that it was plainly associated with the sermon, at least in the minds of those who heard it. We read the promise in Luke, chapter 12. Let me sketch some background.

All the accounts of Jesus’ discourse report His very strong caution to followers that they be watchful because, as He said, “In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh” (JS—M 1:48; also Matthew 24:44, Luke 12:40, JS—M 1:46). Matthew and Luke record that Jesus then brought forward several illustrations to emphasize this point. Two invite our attention. In one, He said:

Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. [JS—M 1:49–50; also Matthew 24:45–46, Luke 12:42–43]

For emphasis, Jesus next presented a contrasting case:

But if that evil servant shall say in his heart: My lord delayeth his coming, . . .

The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. [JS—M 1:51, 53; also Matthew 24:48, 50; Luke 12:45–46]

There is a further point to make about this contrasting pair. In Matthew’s account, these two illustrations appear as part of Jesus’ discourse on the Mount of Olives. According to Luke, however, Jesus had featured these

examples on an earlier occasion, specifically in connection with His Second Coming (Luke 12:40; JST Luke 12:44, 49–56). In that episode, Jesus spoke these words to His followers:

Ye yourselves [are] like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.
[Luke 12:36–37]

I draw attention to the promise that rests within Jesus' words. In what can only be considered a major reversal of ancient custom, it is the lord who will serve his servants, even after the late hour of his arrival. Jesus, of course, had made the points elsewhere that, even though He was Lord, He had come as a servant and that His disciples were to follow His example. But this is one of the few passages that I can think of wherein Jesus effectively promised that He would continue His role as servant at His Second Coming.¹² And His words here are vivid with meaning: "I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37). Will such a scene transpire at Jesus' coming? I believe so. The JST version of Luke makes the case, as it were, by adding the following words directly after this promise: "And now, verily I say these things unto you, that ye may know this, that the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night" (JST Luke 12:44).¹³

These words make firm the connection between Jesus' unusual promise and His Second Coming. Jesus, of course, did not repeat this promise on the Mount of Olives. But His contrasting illustrations spoken there about the faithful and unfaithful servants, it seems to me, would have recalled to the minds

of the four apostles the earlier occasion when Jesus rehearsed these same illustrations and tied them to this unusually vivid promise of His continuing service in the last days.

Conclusion

As we all know, the topic of the last days invites speculation as no other. And speculation leads one onto unsettled ground. For myself, I have appealed to Jesus' sermon not only because it stands so prominently within our scriptures but because we have assurance that it will be fulfilled. Why? Because the part about the fall of the temple was fulfilled to the last measure. And if that part came to pass as Jesus had prophesied, there can be little doubt—at least in my mind—that the other parts having to do with our day will also come to pass.

How shall we know about the approach of the end? Jesus offered one clue that is recorded in all of the sources, that of the budding fig tree. He declared:

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;

So likewise, mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even at the doors;

But of that day, and hour, no man knoweth.
[JS—M 1:38–40]¹⁴

We note with interest the image of the budding fig tree. It is an image of hope, of the promise of new growth, of renewed life after winter. Jesus' caution, as we can also see in other passages, is that we do not know the hour of His arrival.

The uniform picture that Jesus sketched for our era was dark and troubling. But throughout there run bright threads of hope, of expectations fulfilled, if we ourselves are true and faithful. And those threads are illumined particularly in parts of the discourse revealed to

the Prophet Joseph Smith, an observation underscoring that this sermon is for our day. Will our faith be tested? I believe so. Might we see disappointment and heartache and calamity? Again, I believe so. But we live with the ringing reassurance from the Savior both in this sermon and elsewhere that He is in charge. It is that reassurance which allows us to face an uncertain future and to know that He will see us through.

It is my testimony that He is in charge and that He will indeed see us through events ahead, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. To be sure, the Mishnah records that a causeway crossed the Kidron Valley, allowing the priests to perform the rite associated with the red heifer as outlined in Numbers, chapter 19 (Mishnah Parah 3.6). But there has been no archaeological confirmation of such a structure. Moreover, this written source speaks of events more than 150 years in the past and may therefore be inaccurate.

2. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.1–6 (§§ 380–425), and *Jewish War* 5.5.1–8 (§§ 184–247); see Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983 reprint), 39, 57.

3. Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.17; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.2. See also John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 118–22, 173–75; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, 3d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 128–30.

4. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 376–77. Eusebius repeated a story

that, before the attack on Jerusalem, church leaders received a revelation that members were to flee (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3).

5. Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land*, 129.

6. Luke 12:40, JST Luke 12:44. This latter statement also appears in 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

7. Luke 12 and 17 both record prophecies of Jesus about the end of time, at times focusing on events and at others dealing with resurrection or judgment. See Luke 12:4–5, 8–9, 21, 33–34, 40, 44, 46–48; 17:20–24, 30; cf. Luke 12:54–56, JST Luke 12:41–44, and JST Luke 17:24, 37–40.

8. Matthew 24:4, Mark 13:5, JST Matthew 24:5, JST Mark 13:10; cf. Luke 21:8, JST Luke 21:8. D&C 45 does not have an equivalent expression.

9. Other passages include Moses 8:4, 22; 1 Nephi 18:20, 19:11; D&C 45:33.

10. Reference to “the nations” in scripture almost always points to Gentiles; see Genesis 10:32, where the term *nations* translates the Hebrew *gôyîm*. Cf. D&C 43:23–24, etc.

11. See, for instance, John 4:26 (Greek text); 6:35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 23–24, 28, 58; 3 Ne. 11:10–11, 14; 15:5, 9; 27:27.

12. There is a hint that Jesus will be the host and, possibly, servant in His promise to drink with His apostles in the coming kingdom (Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18). Cf. also John 6:53–58 and Isaiah 58:8–9.

13. Cf. “the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (JST Luke 12:47).

14. Also Matthew 24:32–33, Mark 13:28–29, Luke 21:29–31, JST Matthew 24:41–42, JST Mark 13:45–46, JST Luke 21:29, D&C 45:36–38.