

# Matthew 24:34

## What The Scholars Say

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*Truly I say to you, this **GENERATION**  
[Greek: genea] will not pass away  
until all these things take place.*

*Matthew 24:34 NASB*

*Return for a moment to your pre-teen days. Every neighborhood had one of them, the kid whose sole goal was to win the game at all costs. This kid, if in the middle of a game and losing, would make up his own rules, redefine words in the rules, whatever it took to ensure that he'd win the game. As we all moved up into high school, many of our games acquired referees, we matured enough to follow the rules, and these childish antics were halted.*

*Certain Christians, however, never matured enough to play by the rules, and instead, to save their savior from being a FALSE PROPHET, create out of thin air **new** definitions for **old** words. They try to change the standard definition of the New Testament word generation (from Matthew 24:34) from what it actually is into something else; a group of people that have things in common, and maybe a half dozen other variations- all equally bogus, and all designed to get their savior off the hook. For example, by one of these bogus definitions, Julius Caesar and I are of the same generation, as we both have "things in common" (eating, breathing, sleeping, etc.). The other bogus definitions are just as ridiculous.*

Because of this intellectually dishonest abuse of language, some Christians need to have a "referee" curb their creativity in making up rules and definitions, which they make up solely to win arguments. Dictionaries already exist, scholars already have done the dog work, rules are already in place. These are our referees. And as you will see from what follows in the section further down, the vast majority of Christian scholarship shows that there is little doubt as to what the word "generation" (Greek: "genea") really means in this Bible verse, and what this Bible verse as a whole, is really saying.

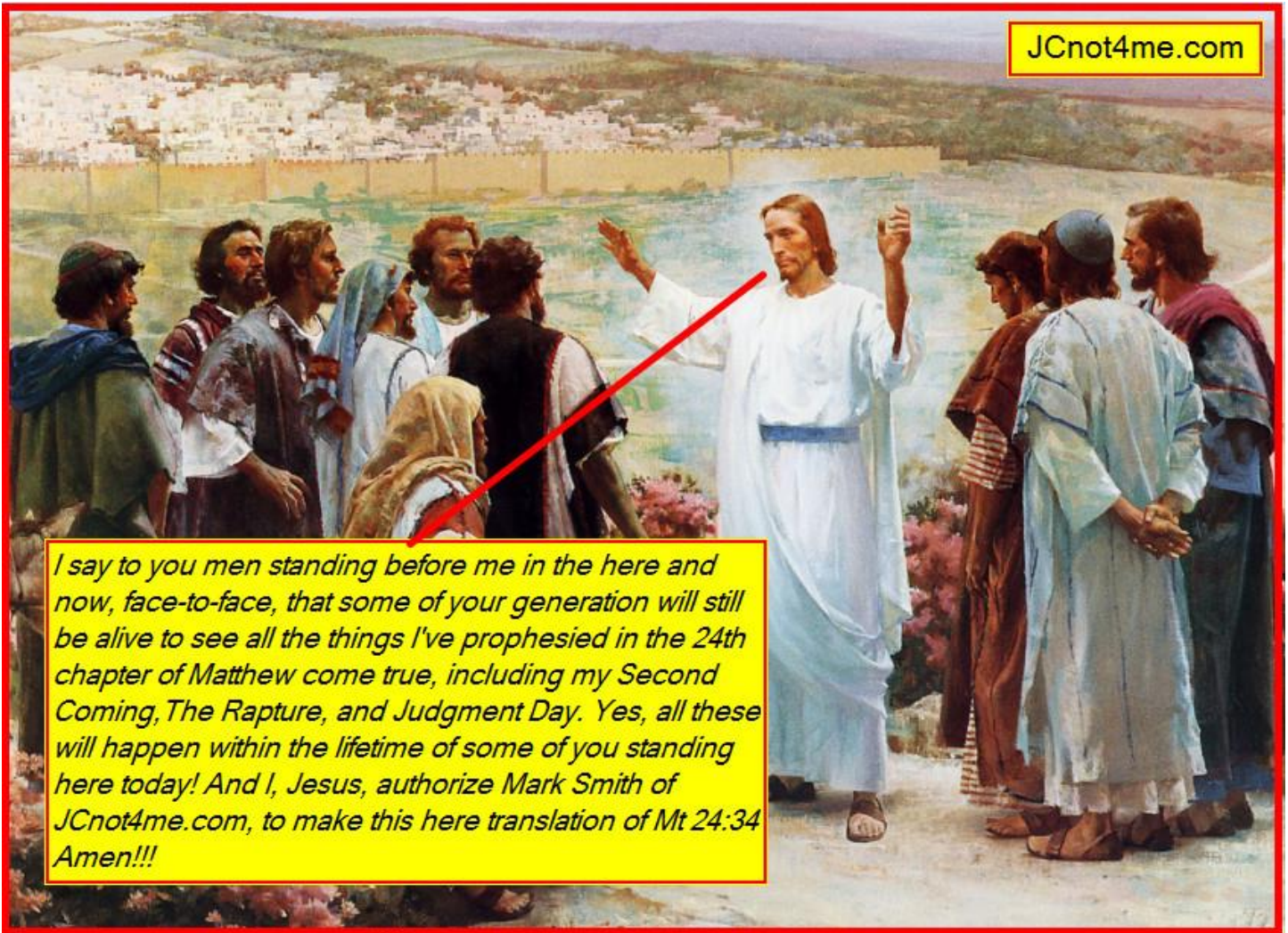
So picture Jesus standing in front of his small flock of followers around 33 AD, and predicting to them, prophesying to them, face to face, that the following things from the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew would happen within their lifetime:

**“All These Things” Predicted Within Their Lifetime:**

- Destruction of The Temple (v. 2)
- False Messiahs (vs. 5, 24)
- Wars, Famines, Earthquakes (v. 7)
- Christians Hated by **ALL** Nations of The Earth (v. 9)
- The Falling Away (v. 10)
- Gospel Preached to **EVERY COUNTRY in the World** (v. 14)
- **THE Greatest Disaster** Earth Will Ever Know (v. 21)
- Life on Earth Itself **Close to Extinction** (v. 22)
- The **Sun Will Go Black** (v. 29)
- The **Stars Will Fall From the Sky** (v. 29)
- **Everyone** on Planet Earth Will **See Jesus** “Coming On The Clouds” i.e. **His Second Coming** (v. 30)
- The Rapture of The Saints: **All Christians Evacuated from The Earth** (v. 31)

Then, continuing in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, after listing all of the things above, Jesus caps it off with the following prophesy:

“Truly I say to you, **THIS GENERATION** will **NOT** pass away until **ALL THESE THINGS** (i.e.what he just promised) take place” (Mt 24:34 NASB)



*I say to you men standing before me in the here and now, face-to-face, that some of your generation will still be alive to see all the things I've prophesied in the 24th chapter of Matthew come true, including my Second Coming, The Rapture, and Judgment Day. Yes, all these will happen within the lifetime of some of you standing here today! And I, Jesus, authorize Mark Smith of JCnot4me.com, to make this here translation of Mt 24:34 Amen!!!*

*The consensus of the scholars, i.e. our referee, will be stated without comment, because no comments are necessary. Readers who want to know the sources of the quotations can match the numbers before the quotations with the numbers in the listings of translations, commentaries, lexicons, etc. at the end of the article. Everything I've quoted in here can be backed up by "book, chapter, and verse". Unlike many Fundamentalists & Apologists, I have no reason to lie or fudge the truth. Feel free to look up the originals.*

## Seventy-Plus Translations: Matthew 24:34

- (1) Truly I say to you, **this** generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
- (2) **This** generation will not have passed before all this is accomplished.
- (3) By no means may **this** generation be passing by until....
- (4) **This** generation shall not pass away till all these things....
- (5) Before the **present** generation passes away, these things will all happen.
- (6) This generation will not pass away....
- (7) In no wise shall this generation pass away until all these things shall happen.
- (8) This generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled.
- (9) This generation will not disappear till all this has taken place.
- (10) This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things....
- (11) ...this generation will not pass away....
- (12) ...this generation will not pass away....
- (13) ...this generation shall not pass away till....
- (14) This generation may not pass away till all these things...
- (15) ...this generation shall not pass away....
- (16) ...this generation shall not pass away....
- (17) ...this generation will not come to an end....
- (18) This generation will not have passed away until all these things shall have taken place.
- (19) This generation will not disappear until these things happen....
- (20) This generation shall not pass until....
- (21) In no way will this generation pass away until all these things have occurred.
- (22) This generation shall not pass....
- (23) This generation shall not pass away....

- (24) Before this generation has passed away, all these things will have taken place.
- (25) This generation will not pass away....
- (26) This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.
- (27) The present generation will not pass away until all this takes place.
- (28) These people will not pass away till all this happens.
- (29) This generation will not pass away....
- (30) This generation shall not pass away....
- (31) This generation will not pass away before all these things have taken place.
- (32) This generation will not come to an end till all these things are complete.
- (33) This generation will by no means pass away before all these things take place.
- (34) This generation will not pass away....
- (35) **Before** this generation passes away, **all** these things will happen.
- (36) This generation will not pass away....
- (37) This generation will not pass away....
- (38) Indeed, I can give you solemn assurance that **this generation will not have passed away** before all this has taken place.
- (39) This generation **shall not pass** till all these things be fulfilled.
- (40) I tell you, even **the present generation** will not pass away, till all these things have taken place.
- (41) The people of **this day** will not pass away before all these things have happened.
- (42) The **present** generation shall not pass away till all these things happen.
- (43) **This present generation** shall not pass away until all these things arrive.
- (44) The present generation will not pass away till all this happens.
- (45) I tell you this: **the present generation will live to see it all.**
- (46) I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.

(47) I assure you, all these things will take place **before** this present generation passes on.

(48) **I swear to God, this generation** certainly won't pass into oblivion before all these things take place!

(49) I can promise you that **some of the people of this generation will still be alive** when all this happens.

(50) Truly, I tell you, this generation--that is, the whole multitude of people living at the same time, in a definite, given period--will not pass away till all these things taken together take place.

(51) I tell you the truth--**all these things will happen while the people of this time are still living!**

(52) Remember that all these things will happen **before the people now living have all died.**

(53) I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

(54) Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things take place.

(55) I assure you that **all these things** will happen while **some of the people of *this* time are *still living*.**

(56) Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

(57) Verily I say to you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

(58) I can guarantee this truth: **This generation will not disappear** until all these things take place.

(59) I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time are still living!

(60) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled.

(61) Truly I say to you that this generation will never pass away until all these things take place!

(62) I can guarantee this truth: This generation will not disappear until all these things take place.

(63) Amen, and I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place.

(64) I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

(65) What I'm about to tell you is true. The people living now will certainly not pass away until all these things happen.

(66) For sure, I tell you, **the people of this day** will not pass away before all these things have happened.

(67) I tell you the truth, **this generation will not pass from the scene** until all these things take place.

(68) Omein, I say to you, that this dor (generation) will by no means pass away until all these things come about.

(69) Amen, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen.

(70) I tell you this: this generation will see all these things take place **before** it passes away.

(71) Most certainly I tell you, this generation will not pass away, until all these things are accomplished.

(72) Truly I say to you, for this generation shall not pass, till all things be done.

(73) Verily I say to you, this generation may not pass away till all these things come to pass.

(74) So you, when you see all this, will know that **it is at hand, at the very doors**. I tell you truly, this generation will by no means pass away before all these things take place.

### **Five Greek Lexicons: *genea***

(1) The interval of time between father & son... from thirty to forty years those living in any one period; this present generation.

(2) A generation of mankind, a step in genealogy.

(3) A generation, an interval in time.

(4) The whole multitude of men living at the same time--Mt xxiv.34... used esp. of the Jewish race living at one and the same period.

(5) The sum total of those born at the same time... all those living at the same time... contemporaries... Mt. 24:34.

### **Twenty-Five Bible Dictionaries: *genea***

- (1) Those born at the same time constitute a generation... contemporaries.
- (2) Thus Herodotus says that "three generations of men make an hundred years."
- (3) It is used of people living at the same time, and by extension... of the time itself... 40 years.
- (4) Of the 43 references to *genea* in the NT... 25 (are) of its occurrences to the Jewish people in the time of Jesus.
- (5) The whole multitude of men living at the same time. A period ordinarily occupied by each successive generation, say, of thirty or forty years.
- (6) It mostly denotes "generation" in the sense of contemporaries... Mt. 24:34. This generation is to be understood temporally.
- (7) The age or period of a body of contemporaries.... The generation lasts as long as any of the members survive.
- (8) ... from thirty to forty years....
- (9) ... the sum total of individuals forming a contemporary group.
- (10) The period of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their children... most biblical writers seem to consider thirty to forty years a normal generation.
- (11) ...the period from a man's birth to that of his son--and collectively the people who live in that period.
- (12) ...the period of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their children... the term simply refers to all people living at a particular time.
- (13) A body of people who live at the same time in a given period of history.
- (14) ...from thirty to forty years... contemporaries.
- (15) Used in the general sense of a period of time, the span of one human life, or those who live at a particular period of time.
- (16) The "circle" of life, spanning from a man's birth to that of his son... forty years.
- (17) Mt. 24:34--"This generation" equals the persons then living contemporary with Christ.



(18) The age or period of a body of contemporaries....

(19) Mt. 24:34--"This generation" equals the persons then living contemporary with Christ.

(20) ...about 25 years. A generation is all the people living at about the same period of time, Mt 24:34.

(21) In general, the word generation in the Bible refers to any contemporary group.

(22) It was fixed by some at 100 years, by others at 110, by others at 33, 25, and even at 20 years.

(23) Of all men living at any given time... Mt 24:34... a period of about 30 to 33 years.

(24) Matt xxiv.34, "This generation shall not pass...." All who are at present living shall not be dead when this shall come to pass. There are some at this day living, who shall be witnesses of the evils which I have foretold shall befall the Jews.

(25) We must adhere to the ordinary usage, according to which *dor* signifies an age, or the men living in a particular age.

### **Six Bible Encyclopedias: *genea***

(1) *Genea* refers to a period of time loosely defined as the time between a parent's prime and that of his child.... Those living at a given time in history are referred to as a generation.

(2) Matt. 24:34, *genea* means the generation or persons then living contemporary with Christ.

(3) *Genea*: It has the concept of the sum total of those born at the same time--contemporaries.

(4) *Genea* means the generation of persons then living contemporary with Christ.

(5) Matt. xxix.34, *genea* means the generation or persons then living contemporary with Christ.

(6) "The present generation" comprises all those who are now alive. Matt xxiv.34, some now living shall witness the event foretold. Our Lord uses the term to express a period of about 36 or 37 years... say about A.D. 70.

## Sixteen Bible Commentaries: *genea*

- (1) ...verse 34 solemnly promises that Jesus will return while some of his contemporaries are still alive (a reprise of 16:28).... The gospel testimony provides strong support for this view: Jesus did not know all things.
- (2) (This generation) can only with the greatest of difficulty be made to mean anything other than the generation living when Jesus spoke.
- (3) "This generation" clearly designates the contemporaries of Jesus.
- (4) The statement in verse 34 is a difficult one. If generation is to be taken in this strict sense, then "all these things" must be limited to the events culminating in A.D. 70.... The majority of the best scholars today insist that generation be taken in its strictest sense.
- (5) Jesus was quite certain that they would happen within the then living generation.
- (6) [Matthew] probably believed, however, that the end would come before all of Jesus' hearers had died.
- (7) Further, he [Jesus] insists that his words are infallible, and that they are more certain than the material universe itself....
- (8) This verse recalls 16.28, and affirms that some of the disciples would live to see the Parousia. This would presuppose a relatively early date for the event.... Was Jesus in error in his prediction of the nearness of the end?
- (9) In the Old Testament a generation was reckoned as forty years. This is the natural way to take verse 34.... He plainly stated in verse 34 that those events would take place in that generation.... One may, of course, accuse Jesus of hopeless confusion.... It is impossible to escape the conclusion that Jesus, as Man, expected the end within the lifetime of his contemporaries.
- (10) The hard fact still remains that if Jesus spoke the sayings of St. Mark xiii and St. Matthew xxiv... he misjudged the extent of his own knowledge and uttered a definite prediction which was not fulfilled.
- (11) The Synoptists fell into the contradiction... of making Jesus declare at one moment that He did not know the time of the glorious Advent, and at another that it would infallibly happen within that generation.
- (12) The affirmation that "all these things" will happen in this generation is clear, and there is no reason to alter the meaning of the word *generation* from its usual sense except a fear that the Scriptures may be in error if it is not so altered.
- (13) Indeed, the fulfillment will take place before this present generation has passed away.
- (14) Did Jesus expect the end within the lifetime of those who heard him speak? It seems quite certain that the early church so understood him.

(15) Matthew made it clear that some of the first disciples would live to see the Parousia.

(16) ... v. 34; there are those now alive, who shall see Jerusalem destroyed.

### **Eight Christian Scholars & Authors: *genea* & Matthew 24:34**

(1) As a rule, a generation in the Bible lasts 40 years.

(2) ...the word *genea*... was put to the torture....

(3) If the saying relates to the parousia, it sets the end time within the bounds of the first generation church. The phrase "this generation" should cause no difficulty for interpreters... It always signifies his [Jesus'] contemporaries.

(4) And He [Jesus] was to come, moreover, within the lifetime of the generation to which He had proclaimed the nearness of the Kingdom of God.

(5) No future generation of Jews is meant here.

(6) Next, our Lord sums up with an affirmation calculated to remove every vestige of doubt or uncertainty, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." One would reasonably suppose that after a note of time so clear and express there could not be room for controversy. Our Lord Himself has settled the question. Ninety-nine persons in every hundred would undoubtedly understand His words as meaning that the predicted catastrophe would fall within the lifetime of the existing generation. Not that all would live to witness it, but that most or many would. There can be no question that this would be the interpretation which the disciples would place upon the words.... His coming... would come to pass before the existing generation had wholly passed away, and within the limits of their own lifetime.

(7) [Members of the primitive church] were obliged to expect the second and glorious coming of the Son of Man in the clouds before that generation was totally extinguished which had beheld his humble condition upon the earth.

(8) The words immediately preceding them show the absurdity of applying them to another generation than that of the apostles: "When **ye** see these things coming to pass, know **ye** that he is nigh, even at the doors." The teaching of Jesus was emphatic beyond all rational question that **that** generation should not pass away before **all** those things of which they inquired should be fulfilled.

## Thirteen Scholars: The "Race" Argument

(1) Some have argued, for example, that "this generation" refers not to Jesus' contemporaries but to the Jewish nation or to the church. The linguistic evidence in favor of such proposals is not impressive.

(2) "This generation" cannot mean the Jews as a people, believers in Christ, or the future generation that will experience these things. It must be the particular generation of Jews to whom, or of whom, the words were spoken.... It is impossible to escape the conclusion that Jesus, as Man, expected the End within the lifetime of His contemporaries.

(3) The meaning of "this generation" is much disputed. Efforts like those of Jerome, to make it mean the Jewish race, or of Origen and Chrysostom, to refer it to all Christians, are arbitrary, and are to be rejected. "This generation" refers to the contemporaries of Jesus.

(4) Ver. 34. Declaration to the effect that all this is to take place before the generation then living should pass away. (It is) well-nigh absurd (the) manner in which it has been attempted to force into the word *genea* such meaning as: The Creation, The Human Race, The Jewish Nation, The Class of Men Consisting of My Believers, The Generation of the Elect Now in Question, The Future Generation Which is to Witness Those Events. (The Second Coming) is to occur during the lifetime of the generation then existing.

(5) (*Genea*) has been taken to mean The Jewish Race, or Unbelieving Judaism. It is unlikely that such an improbable meaning for the noun would have been suggested at all without the constraint of apologetic embarrassment...! Jesus was wrong.

(6) The end... will come within a generation. Attempts to translate *genea* as: Human Race, Jewish Race are misguided; the word refers to the generation living when Jesus spoke.

(7) This has been regarded as a hard saying.... Plainly the idea that the human race is meant cannot be entertained; every description of (the end of the world) implies that human beings will be around to witness it.... Nor is there much more to be said for the idea the Jewish race is meant; there is no hint anywhere in the New Testament that the Jewish race will cease to exist before the end of the world. In any case, what point would there be in such a vague prediction? It would be as much as to say, "At some time in the indefinite future all these things will take place." Jesus' hearers could have understood him to mean only that "all these things" would take place within their generation.... The phrase always means the generation now living.

(8) ...seems to require us here to translate the word *genea* as meaning "generation," not, as it is sometimes rendered, *race* or *people*. (Generation) is the usual meaning.

(9) It has been maintained by some that... our Lord identified generation with the Jewish race.... But that is a very forced explanation; and not a single example can be produced of an entirely similar use of the word. Whatever difficulties may hang around the interpretation of that part of Christ's discourse, it is impossible to understand by "the generation that was not to pass away" anything but the existing race of men living at the time when the word was spoken.

(10) Some have sought to get around the force of (Mt. 24:34) by saying that the word generation here really means race, and that Jesus was simply saying that the Jewish race would not die out

until all these things took place. Is that true? I challenge you: Get out your concordance and look up every New Testament occurrence of the word generation, and see if it ever means "race" in any other context.... Not **one** of these references is speaking of the entire Jewish race over thousands of years; all use the word in its normal sense of the sum total of those living at the same time. It always refers to contemporaries. In fact, those who say it means "race" tend to acknowledge this fact, but explain that the word suddenly changes its meaning when Jesus uses it in Matthew 24! We can smile at such a transparent error ....

(11) These words (Mt. 24:34) must be stained into meaning, not that generation, but the Jewish people. Thus by exegetical art they are saved forever, for the Jewish race will never die out.

(12) The various meanings which, under the pressure of a dogmatic (crisis), have been put upon the phrase "this generation" must appear in the highest degree absurd to an unbiased critic. It has been explained (away) as meaning: The Human Race [Jerome], The Jewish Race [Dorner], The Race of Christian Believers [Chrysostom].

(13) It has been contended by many that in (Mt 24:34) the word *genea* should be rendered "race" or "nation...." But we think... without any shadow of doubt that the expression "this generation" so often employed by our Lord, always refers solely and exclusively to His contemporaries, the Jewish people of His own period.

#### **References for Translations of Matthew 24:34**

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68) Orthodox Jewish Bible 69) Tree of Life Version 70) The Voice 71) World English Bible 72) Wycliffe Bible 73) Young's Literal Translation 74) The Original New Testament (Schonfield)

### **References for 5 Greek Lexicons: *genea***

1) Greek & English Lexicon of the New Testament [Robinson], 2) The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, 3) The Analytical Lexicon To The Greek New Testament [Mounce], 4) Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 5) A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, Vol. 1 [Arndt & Gingrich].

### **References for 25 Bible Dictionaries: *genea***

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### **References for 6 Bible Encyclopedia: *genea***

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### **References for 16 Bible Commentaries: *genea***

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1) Future Survival [Chuck Smith], 2) The Life of Jesus Critically Examined [Dr. David Friedrich Strauss], 3) Jesus and The Last Days [George Murray], 4) The Quest of the Historical Jesus [Dr. Albert Schweitzer], 5) Last Days Madness [Gary DeMar], 6) The Parousia [Stuart Russel], 7) The Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire [Edward Gibbon], 8) Apocalypse of The Gospels [Milton Terry].

### **References for 13 Scholars: The "Race" Argument**

1) Matthew [Hare], 2) The Gospel According to Saint Matthew [McNeile], 3) The Broadman Bible Commentary [Allen], 4) Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew [Meyer], 5) The Gospel According to Matthew [France], 6) A Commentary on The Gospel According to St. Matthew [Filson], 7) Hard Sayings of the Bible [F.F. Bruce et al], 8) Bible Commentary, 9) The Imperial Bible Dictionary [Fairbairn], 10) The Great Tribulation [Chilton], 11) The Quest of the Historical Jesus [Schweitzer], 12) Apocalypse of The Gospels [Terry], 13) The Parousia [Russel].

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