

ΓΕΝΕΑ IN MATTHEW 24:34  
by Ryan E. Meyer

**Introduction**

C. S. Lewis, when looking at Matthew 24:34 from the perspective of a skeptic, called it the “most embarrassing verse in the Bible.”<sup>1</sup> Lewis is correct that a cursory read of the verse, set inside of Matthew’s Olivet Discourse (OD), seems to suggest that Jesus is solemnly promising to return within the lifetime of His listeners.<sup>2</sup> Jesus says in Matthew 24:34, “Truly I say to you, *this generation* will certainly not pass away until all these things happen” (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται).<sup>3</sup>

If ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη is understood to set a specific timeframe for Jesus’ παρουσία, and if that παρουσία did not come within that timeframe, then the verse could be understood as a prophecy which did not come to pass as predicted. For example, Reimarus writes concerning Matthew 24:34, “as Christ unfortunately did not come in the clouds of heaven within the appointed time, nor even after many centuries had passed away, people try now-a-days to remedy the failure of the promise by giving to its words an artificial but very meagre signification.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Kümmel asserts, “It is perfectly clear that this prediction of Jesus was not realized and it is therefore impossible to assert that Jesus was not mistaken about this.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The World’s Last Night, and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 98.

<sup>2</sup>For convenience, this study will refer to the Gospels, which technically are anonymous, using the traditional names for their authors. A conclusion regarding authorship or date of composition is not necessary for this study.

<sup>3</sup>Unless otherwise noted all translations of the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) are the author’s own. These terms are used for the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures for convenience sake and are based on normal conventions. All New Testament Greek Scripture quotations are taken from the NA28 text.

<sup>4</sup>Hermann S. Reimarus, *Fragments from Reimarus: Consisting of Brief Critical Remarks on the Object of Jesus and His Disciples as Seen in the New Testament*, ed. Charles Voysey, trans. G. E. Lessing (London: Williams and Norgate, 1879), 54.

<sup>5</sup>Werner G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, trans. Dorothea M.

There are only three ways to explain the apparent tension that Lewis observed in this verse—either Jesus, Matthew, or the reader has made an error in judgment.<sup>6</sup> Reimarus took the first option and has been followed by a significant number of commentators since. For example, Luz argues that any interpretation of the phrase other than a reference to Jesus’ contemporaries is “useless,”<sup>7</sup> and he concludes that “Jesus was mistaken in his expectation.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Luz acknowledges that this type of mistake makes it more difficult for the modern man to believe in the reality of a future παρουσία of Jesus. More recently, Scott McKnight, in discussing the parallel statement in Mark 13:30, succinctly states, “Jesus prophesied that God would wrap things up within one generation.”<sup>9</sup> Plummer takes the second option, a mistake on the part of Matthew, and cautions, “We have constantly to remember that we cannot be sure that we have got the exact words our Lord employed; and in no utterance of His that has come down to us is the length of the interval between the destruction of the Temple and the end of the world intimated.”<sup>10</sup>

The majority of Matthean commentators have argued that ἡ γενεά αὕτη is a reference to temporal cotemporaries.<sup>11</sup> However, many of these have given plausible explanations for why

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Barton (London: SCM Press, 1957), 149. Kümmel is speaking specifically of Mt 10:23; Mk 9:1 par.: and Mt 24:24 par. which he acknowledges represent a small portion of Jesus’ teaching.

<sup>6</sup>Mt 24–25 presents itself as a discourse given by Jesus and this study will assume that Matthew accurately gives us Jesus’ words.

<sup>7</sup>Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 208.

<sup>8</sup>Luz, 209.

<sup>9</sup>Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 138. McKnight prefers to describe Jesus’ perspective as “limited,” rather than “mistaken.”

<sup>10</sup>Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 338. For a similar position see M. Eugene Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 8 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 445; John P. Meier, *Matthew*, New Testament Message (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1980), 289.

<sup>11</sup>Besides the writers already mentioned above see e.g., Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 453; P. Benoit, *L’évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 150; Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 363; Pierre Bonnard, *L’Evangile Selon Saint Matthieu*, 4th

this position does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that either Jesus or Matthew was mistaken. Therefore, these writers have taken a third path, which says that understanding Matthew 24:34 to be a prediction of Jesus' physical return at a specific time is a mistake on the part of the interpreter. For example, some have argued that, based on the structure of Matthew's OD, πάντα ταῦτα in Matthew 24:34 refers only to signs which precede the coming of the Son of Man and not to the παρουσία itself.<sup>12</sup> A minority within this group have argued that Matthew 24:34 can best be understood by recognizing a double fulfillment of Jesus' words, that is, one fulfillment in AD 70 and another at the παρουσία.<sup>13</sup>

Still others have argued that the coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 24:30–31 should not be understood as Christ's eschatological return to earth to consummate His kingdom but

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ed. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2002), 353; John A Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew*. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 492; Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 519–20; John Calvin, "Commentaries on the Prophet Daniel," in *Calvin's Commentaries*, trans. William Pringle, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 151; D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Rev. ed., vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 569; Harold Fowler, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 3:509–512; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 930; Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2018), 1279; Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium II*, Herder, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg, 1988), 336; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1995), 2:715; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 589; Ulrich Luck, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993), 264; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 989; Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 341; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 899; Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 290; Rodney Reeves, *Matthew*, Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 470; Alexander Sand, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, Regensburg Neues Testament (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1986), 496–97; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 246; Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 270; Wolfgang Trilling, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 204–5; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 586; Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium Des Matthäus*, 4th ed., Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament (Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), 673; Spiros Zodhiates, *Exegetical Commentary on Matthew* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2006), 412; Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1993), 281.

<sup>12</sup>E.g., Blomberg, *Matthew*, 364; Carson, "Matthew," 569; Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:715; Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 5899; Osborne, *Matthew*, 899–900; Turner, *Matthew*, 586.

<sup>13</sup>E.g., Broadus, *Matthew*, 491–92; Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 228.

instead as His coming in judgment in AD 70.<sup>14</sup> So unlike the previous group of writers, these scholars include the coming of the Son of Man in 24:30–31 within the πάντα ταῦτα of 24:34, but they define this arrival in 24:30–31 as something other than Christ’s Second Coming. Therefore, πάντα ταῦτα in 24:34 does not include the end of this present age.

One final group of writers, among those who argue ἡ γενεά αὕτη should be restricted to people living at the same time, suggests that the generation being referred to in Matthew 24:34 is an eschatological generation, not Jesus’ contemporaries. In other words, these scholars argue that the same generation which sees the eschatological signs begin will also see Christ return.<sup>15</sup> Matthew’s OD is not intended to describe unique signs occurring in the first century, such as Jerusalem’s fall in AD 70. Instead, the distinctive signs are eschatological events that only a future generation will see.<sup>16</sup>

### Thesis of this Study

There is another way to understand the enigmatic ἡ γενεά αὕτη in Matthew 24:34. This

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<sup>14</sup>David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 240–43; Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, 1278–89; Fowler, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 4:389ff; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 339–66; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 890. E.g., France reserves the term παρουσία for Christ’s eschatological Second Coming, but he argues that Matthew’s OD does not begin describing the παρουσία until 24:36. Harris makes a similar argument to these writers, but defines the παρουσία in Mt 24 as Christ’s continuing presence with His followers rather than His presence in judgment in AD 70. Mark Harris, “The Comings and Goings of the Son of Man: Is Matthew’s Risen Jesus ‘Present’ or ‘Absent’? A Narrative–Critical Response,” *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (2014): 51–70.

<sup>15</sup>Ron J. Bigalke, Jr., “The Olivet Discourse: A Resolution of Time,” *Conservative Theological Seminary Journal* 9 (2003): 117–29; John F. Hart, “A Chronology of Matthew 24:1–44” (ThD diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1987), 218–19; Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 475; Larry D. Pettegrew, “The Messiah’s Lecture on the Future of Israel,” in *Forsaking Israel*, ed. Larry D. Pettegrew (The Woodlands, TX: Kress, 2020), 274; Robert Shank, *Until: The Coming of Messiah and His Kingdom* (Springfield, MO: Westcott, 1982), 378; Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King: A Study of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 279–80; John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 193. This view can also be found among those who comment on the Lucan parallel. See e.g., Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1691; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Anchor Yale Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 1353.

<sup>16</sup>An unique variation of this view which argues for a chiastic structure to Mt 23–25 with the γενεά in 23:36 being parallel to and distinct from the γενεά in 24:34 is argued for by S. Joseph Kidder, “‘This Generation’ in Matthew 24:34,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 (1983): 203–9.

view has been argued for by a significant minority through the centuries and can be put most simply this way: *γενεά* is being used in Matthew 24:34 to refer to a type of people (a qualitative use) rather than people living at a specific time (a temporal use).<sup>17</sup> A qualitative use can include temporal contemporaries, but it is not restricted to those contemporaries. A qualitative use is

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<sup>17</sup>Some have argued that *γενεά* refers to the company of believers. E.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. on Mt. 77:1*; James A. Kellerman and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus Imperfectum)*, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 2:396–97; Origen, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2:635–46; Theophylactus, *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* (House Springs, MO: Chrysostom, 1994), 210; H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 202. Others argue it refers to the company of unbelievers. E.g., Anthony Buzzard, “The Olivet Discourse: Mostly Fulfilled or Mostly Unfulfilled?,” *Journal from the Radical Reformation* 12 (2004): 18; Philip La Grange Du Toit, “‘This Generation’ in Matthew 24:34 as a Timeless, Spiritual Generation Akin to Genesis 3:15,” *Verbum Er Ecclesia* 39 (2018): 1–9; Benjamin A. Edsall, “This Is Not the End: The Present Age and the Eschaton in Mark’s Narrative,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2018): 440; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 491; Evald Lövestam, *Jesus and “This Generation”*: A New Testament Study, trans. Noira Linnarud, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 25 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995); Wilhelm Michaelis, *Der Herr verzieht nicht die Verheissung: die Aussagen Jesu über die Nähe des Jüngsten Tages* (Bern: Buchhandlung der Evangelischen Gesellschaft, 1942), 32; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 613; Neil D. Nelson, “‘This Generation’ in Matt 24:34: A Literary Critical Perspective,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1996): 369–85; Marc Philonenko, “Les paroles de Jesus contre cette generation et la tradition qoumranienne,” in *Geschichte - Tradition - Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Peter Schäfer, and Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 89–96; Robert L. Thomas, “The Doctrine of Imminence in Two Recent Eschatological Systems,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, no. 628 (2000): 457–58; Leopold Sabourin, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Bombay: St Paul, 1983), 827–28; Susan M. Rieske, “A Tale of Two Families: ‘This Generation’ and the Elect in the Book of Matthew” (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2019). Some see it as a reference to the Jewish people viewed neutrally or positively. E.g., Lyman Abbott, *An Illustrated Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1875), 264–65; William Hendriksen, *Matthew*, Baker New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 868; Homer A. Kent, Jr., “Matthew,” in *The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Everett F. Harrison and Charles F. Pfeiffer (New York: Iversen Associates, 1971), 88; Anthony J. Maas, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Herder, 1916), 245; Franz Mußner, “Wer Ist ‘dieses Geschlecht’ in Mk 13,30 Parr,” *Kairos* 29 (1987): 23–28; James F. Rand, “A Survey of the Eschatology of the Olivet Discourse—Part 2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, no. 451 (1956): 205–6; J. C. Ryle, *Ryle’s Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), 1:324. Jerome cites this view as a possibility alongside the human race view. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, Father of the Church 117 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 277. Finally, some argue it is a reference to the Jewish people negatively, i.e., in their unbelief or apostasy. E.g., Lawrence A. DeBruyn, “Preterism and ‘This Generation,’” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, no. 666 (2010): 190; E. Schuyler English, *Studies in the Gospel According to Matthew* (New York: Revell, 1935), 179; Felix Flückiger, *Der Ursprung des christlichen Dogmas: eine Auseinandersetzung mit Albert Schweitzer und Martin Werner* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1955), 116–17; Kenneth E. Guenter, “This Generation in the Trilogy of Matthew 24:34–35,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, no. 698 (2018): 174–94; Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 117; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1943), 952–53; Max Meinertz, “„Dieses Geschlecht“ Im Neuen Testament,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1 (1957): 283–89; Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Mätthäus*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950), 246.

broader and includes people who share something in common besides a temporal place in history. In Matthew 24:34, I would suggest that ἡ γενεά αὕτη denotes *the people of Israel who are unfaithful to God*. I will seek to demonstrate that thesis in this paper by (1) demonstrating that qualitative uses of γενεά were common in ancient Greek literature, and (2) demonstrating that this specific qualitative use of γενεά was used in Deuteronomy 32 which is the source of Jesus' "this generation" sayings in Matthew.

Γενεά is used in Greek literature to refer to "the sum total of those born at the same time" or "all those living at a given time."<sup>18</sup> However, γενεά can refer to more than temporal contemporaries. The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) contains 8,483 instances of the lemma γενεά. Not only does the word γενεά occur frequently, but it also has a wide range of meanings. The *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (GE) divides the usages of γενεά into multiple semantic fields with appropriate glosses: (1) "race, generation," (2) "race, family, descent," (3) "breed," (4) "nation, tribe," (5) "kind, class," (6) "origin, birth," (7) "age, eon, historical period," (8) "place of birth" or "nest," and (9) "act of generation, procreation."<sup>19</sup> Of these, *race, family, breed, nation, tribe, kind, and class* are what this study is calling qualitative uses of γενεά. That is to say, γενεά can describe a group of people, animals, or things which do not necessarily live together at the same time. The following survey will demonstrate usages for all nine of GE's categories, including the qualitative uses, and show that these usages are not limited to the earliest Greek literature.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>BDAG, s.v. "γενεά," 191.

<sup>19</sup>GE, s.v. "γενεά," 421–22. LSJ similarly breaks down the usages of γενεά into seven categories. The first four of these are grouped under the category "of the persons in a family." LSJ, s.v. "γενεά," 342. BDAG, which has a narrower focus than GE and LSJ, still lists the following glosses for γενεά: "race, kind"; "generation, contemporaries"; "age"; and "family history." BDAG, s.v. "γενεά," 191–92.

<sup>20</sup>Since γενεά occurs so frequently in the TLG corpus this survey will by necessity be selective while also striving to be representative. See section below on methodology. For further evidence in support of this chapter's

## Methodology

Of the 8,483 occurrences of *γενεά* in *TLG*, less than fifteen percent occur before the second century AD. The following method will be employed to examine a representative sample of these 1,100+ earlier occurrences. First, the two writers from the pre-classical period (i.e., before the fifth century BC) who use *γενεά* more than once, Homer and Hesiod, will be examined comprehensively. Second, eight writers from the classical period (fifth through fourth centuries BC) were selected, and their usages of *γενεά* will be discussed thoroughly. These eight include all of the writers during this period who use *γενεά* twenty times or more. Third, all of the uses of *γενεά* in the LXX will be examined and compared against the Hebrew MT. Fourth, the post-classical period will be examined from the first century BC through the first century AD. All of the writers from this period who used *γενεά* twenty times or more in their extant writings will be analyzed comprehensively.<sup>21</sup> Because of the importance of the usage in the first century AD in understanding Matthew's usage, the first-century writers Strabo (nine uses) and Clement of Rome (eleven uses) were also included. By adding these two writers, all of the writers from the first century AD who used *γενεά* nine times or more will be examined comprehensively.

## Pre-Classical Greek

This first section will examine the work of two writers. First, Homer's two epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, represent the earliest extant Greek writings and thus the earliest usages of *γενεά*. The two poems likely predated the Greek alphabet and were initially transmitted orally,

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argument see esp. Steffen Jöris, *The Use and Function of Genea in the Gospel of Mark: New Light on Mk 13:30*, *Forschung Zur Bibel* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2015), 29–120. For example, Jöris includes evidence from Qumran not included in this survey. Jöris' findings in Qumran support the conclusion of this chapter. Therefore, more space will be devoted in this chapter to sources not investigated by Jöris.

<sup>21</sup>The first century AD writer Aristonicus was not included because all of his twenty uses of *γενεά* occur in quotations from Homer.

but their written forms date back to at least the sixth century BC.<sup>22</sup> Γενεά appears forty-six times in the two epics, and this significant representation allows for a clear picture of how γενεά was used in the earliest Greek literature. Second, this section will examine the works of Hesiod, whose poems appeared shortly after those of Homer. Both writers became influential in the Greek world and are commonly quoted by later writers.

### Pre-Classical Period: Lineage and Race

The evidence supports Jöris' conclusion that the "most prominent use of γενεά in the Homeric works seems to express the lineage or genealogy of an individual or a certain people."<sup>23</sup> And as Jöris suggests, under this broad category, two uses of γενεά in pre-classical Greek can be considered: (1) the lineage or ancestry of an individual and (2) the lineage of a group of people, that is, people or animals who are all descended from one distant ancestor. For the former occurrences, I will use *lineage* or *ancestry* to describe this use. For the latter, I will use *race* to refer to people and use *stock* when referring to animals.

### Lineage and Ancestry

The most common way that Homer uses γενεά is to describe the lineage or ancestry of an individual. In other words, to inquire regarding the γενεά of an individual in Homer's epics is most often to ask regarding the family tree to which he belongs. For example, King Agamemnon orders, "Call every man on your way, and bid him by stirring; name him by his **lineage** and by his father's name" (πατρόθεν ἐκ **γενεῆς** ὀνομάζων ἄνδρα ἕκαστον πάντας κυδαίνων, *Il.* 10.68–9).<sup>24</sup> He later urges Diomedes to choose comrades in arms without respect to their "lineage"

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<sup>22</sup>Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Barry B. Powell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.

<sup>23</sup>Jöris, *Use and Function*, 29.

<sup>24</sup>Unless otherwise noted all English translations of Homer are from Homer, *The Iliad of Homer and the*

(γενεήν) or “royal blood” (βασιλεύτερός, *Il.* 10.239), that is, to choose common folk.<sup>25</sup>

In the *Odyssey*, Athena tells Telemachus that he has been given a nameless or inglorious lineage (οὐ μὲν τοι γενεήν γε θεοὶ νόνυμνον ὀπίσσω θῆκαν, *Od.* 1.222–23). Later, Telemachus explains to Odysseus that Cronos had made their lineage a “single line”

(ὥδε γὰρ ἡμετέρην γενεήν μούνωσε Κρονίων, *Od.* 16.117) because both Telemachus’ great-grandfather, grandfather, and father all had only one son. This use of γενεά is not limited to Homer. In Hesiod’s *Shield of Heracles*, two half-brothers have a distinctive lineage (κεκριμένην γενεήν, *Shield of Heracles* 55) because they have different fathers.<sup>26</sup>

This common usage of γενεά in Homer can often appear in contexts that also use the distinctively temporal sense for γενεά that would later become more common. In one of Homer’s more well-known passages, Glaucus, upon meeting Diomedes on the battlefield for single combat, is asked by Diomedes whether he is an immortal. Glaucus replies, “Mighty son of Tydeus, why ask me of my lineage? Men come and go as leaves year by year upon the trees (Τυδεΐδῃ μεγάλθυμῃ τί ἢ γενεήν ἐρεΐνεις; οἷα περ φύλλων γενεή τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν, *Il.* 6.145–6).<sup>27</sup> This quotation contains two uses of γενεά. In the first (γενεήν), Diomedes is using it with the sense of “lineage” because he is responding to a question on whether he descends from the gods. The second use (γενεή) occurs in a phrase that could also be translated as “generation,” or as Butler translates it, “year by year,” that is, a period of time, and is describing how one

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*Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler, Great Books of the Western World 4 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952). Comparisons to other translations will be noted below where relevant.

<sup>25</sup>In the context, Agamemnon could be referring specifically to the status gained by one’s lineage. In a more recent edition of the *Iliad*, Powell translates γενεά here as “status.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 242. Uses of γενεά for one’s status by birth will be examined below.

<sup>26</sup>This same usage also appears in *Shield of Heracles* 327.

<sup>27</sup>A similar question using γενεά is found in *Il.* 21.153.

generation of men dies and is replaced by another.<sup>28</sup>

This temporal meaning becomes more apparent as the passage continues, “Even so is it with the **generations** of mankind, the new spring up as the old are passing away” (ὥς ἀνδρῶν **γενεῖ** ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ’ ἀπολήγει, *Il.* 6.149). Homer is using γενεά to describe the lifecycles of men, and this manner of using γενεά will be seen again in later Greek literature. Homer is still describing a family tree or a lineage, but he focuses on the various ages, or perhaps we could say the horizontal cross-sections that come and go of that tree. However, then Diomedes returns to the prior qualitative sense of γενεά which views the tree in its totality, “If then, you would learn my **descent**, it is one that is well known to many” (εἰ δ’ ἐθέλεις καὶ ταῦτα δαήμεναι ὄφρ’ ἐὺ εἰδῆς ἡμετέρην **γενεήν**, πολλοὶ δέ μιν ἄνδρες ἴσασιν, *Il.* 6.150–1).

One way in which the meaning of γενεά can be determined is by examining the words with which it is paired. After recounting his family history, Diomedes concludes, “This, then, is the **descent** I claim” (ταύτης τοι **γενεῆς** τε καὶ αἵματος εὐχομαι εἶναι, *Il.* 6.211). Or, as Murray’s translation renders it more literally, “This is the **lineage** and the blood whereof I avow me sprung.”<sup>29</sup> Γενεά is being used synonymously with αἷμα in the sense of “bloodline” or “kin.”<sup>30</sup> This collocation of γενεά and αἷμα when referring to one’s lineage occurs again in Homer.<sup>31</sup>

Γενεά also describes the lineage of the gods in Homer. For example, Juno responds to Zeus that she is Cronos’ eldest daughter and honorable not only on account of her “lineage” but also because she was his wife (καί με πρεσβυτάτην τέκετο Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης, ἀμφότερον

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<sup>28</sup>Powell translates the passages: “why do you ask me of my lineage? As are the generations of leaves, so are the generations of men.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 163.

<sup>29</sup>Homer, *Iliad*, trans. A. T. Murray, vol. 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924). Powell translates γενεά here as “background.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 166.

<sup>30</sup>For this sense of αἷμα see LSJ, s.v. “αἷμα,” 38 and GE, s.v. “αἷμα,” 51. Cf. e.g., *Il.* 19.111; *Od.* 8.583.

<sup>31</sup>See e.g., *Il.* 19.105; 20.241. Other instances where γενεά refers to a lineage include *Il.* 21.153; *Od.* 15.225.

γενεῇ τε καὶ οὐνεκα σὴ παράκοιτις, *Il.* 4.59–60).<sup>32</sup> And she makes a similar statement in *Iliad* 18.365 (ἀμφοτέρων γενεῇ τε καὶ οὐνεκα σὴ παράκοιτις). Later in the story, Achilles will boast that he belongs to the lineage of Zeus (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γενεῇν μεγάλου Διὸς εὔχομαι εἶναι, *Il.* 21.187).<sup>33</sup>

With this sense of “lineage” or “ancestry,” English translations of Homer will at times use *race* to gloss γενεά. For example, Aeneas says to Achilles, “We know one another’s **race** and parentage as matters of common fame” (δμεν δ’ ἀλλήλων γενεήν, ἴδμεν δὲ τοκῆας πρόκλυτ’ ἀκούοντες ἔπεα θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων, *Il.* 20.203–4). Today’s English word *race* often describes one’s culture or physical appearance. Butler’s translation reflects an older sense of *race* that refers to people descended from a common ancestor,<sup>34</sup> or what Büchsel describes as “bound by common descent.”<sup>35</sup> That is, both Aeneas and Achilles know each other’s family tree.<sup>36</sup>

## Race or Stock

However, not only can γενεά refer to the ancestry of specific individuals, but it can also refer to a large people group descended from a common distant ancestor. This use of γενεά is also qualitative because the γενεά is more extensive than people living at the same time. Two people could live many years apart, that is, be part of different generations, but still belong to the same γενεά when γενεά refers to this larger group descended from a distant ancestor. In these instances, it might be more appropriate to use the gloss *race* to emphasize the large size of the

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<sup>32</sup>Again there is some overlap here between one’s lineage and the status gained by that lineage. Powell translates γενεά here as “status.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 109.

<sup>33</sup>This same usage of γενεά is repeated in *Il.* 21.157, 191.

<sup>34</sup>Murray translates this passage as, “We know each other’s lineage, and each other’s parents.” Powell also uses “lineage” here. Homer, *The Iliad*, 467. So also DGE. Both Butler and Murray translate γενεά as “race” in *Il.* 20.303 in a passage that speaks of “race of Dardanus,” i.e., Dardanus’ descendants.

<sup>35</sup>Friedrich Büchsel, “γενεά,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964): 1:662.

<sup>36</sup>In the immediate context, γενεά has this same sense in 20.214, 306.

group and the distance between current members of the *γενεά* and their common ancestor. For example, Peleus inquired regarding the “**race** and lineage of all the Argives” (πάντων Ἀργείων ἐρέων **γενεήν** τε τόκον τε, *Il.* 7.128).<sup>37</sup> Here *γενεά* is collocated with *τόκος* with the latter having the sense of “offspring.”<sup>38</sup> Peleus is asking about the ancestry of *all* the people of Argos, not merely the family of specific individuals. *Γενεά* is also used in this way by Homer to describe the race of Dardanus (*Il.* 20.303) and the race of Priam (*Il.* 20.306).<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, Hesiod uses *γενεά* interchangeably with *γένος* to describe various races of men created by Zeus (*Works and Days*, 159–60). The race before our own (προτέρη γενεή), the fourth race of humans, was a god-like race (ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος). According to this myth, rather than one human race descended from a common ancestor, there had been a succession of races. The present race is the fifth, and each race could be called a *γενεά*. This section in Hesiod demonstrates not only that *γενεά* could be used to describe a race of people but also that at times it was treated as a synonym for *γένος*.<sup>40</sup>

In one instance, the Homeric poems use *γενεά* with the sense of “stock” to describe animals descended from a common ancestor. Diomedes extols the virtues of a group of horses, “They are of the **stock** that great Jove [or Zeus] gave to Tros” (τῆς γάρ τοι **γενεῆς** ἧς Τρωΐ περ

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<sup>37</sup>The distinction between one’s “lineage” and “race” is admittedly imprecise. E.g., Powel translates *γενεά* here as “lineage.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 181.

<sup>38</sup>LSJ, s.v. “τόκος,” 1803. This same collocation occurs in *Il.* 15.141 where Butler translates *γενεήν τε τόκον τε* as “one’s whole family,” but as Jöris suggests, the reference could also be to a large group of men descended from a common ancestor. Jöris, *Use and Function*, 31.

<sup>39</sup>A further example of this usage might be found in *Il.* 23.471 where Diomedes is described as a ἀνὴρ Αἰτωλὸς γενεήν. This could be a reference to his place of birth. So e.g., Jöris, 33. However, it could also mean that he belongs to the Aetolian race. E.g., Powell simply translates the three word phrase as “an Aetolian.” Homer, *The Iliad*, 529. DGE places this reference under the suggested glosses “tribu, nación, pueblo.” DGE, s.v. “γενεά.” The difference in meaning between one’s place of birth and one’s ethnic group is, especially in the ancient world, slight.

<sup>40</sup>Γένος was used for a race, stock, kin, offspring, single descendant, posterity, clan, house, family, tribe, caste, breed, age, generation, gender, class, sort, kind, etc. LSJ s.v. “γένος,” 344. I.e., γένος could be used in all the ways that *γενεά* was used and as this survey will show in various places, the two words were used at times interchangeably.

εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς, *Il.* 5.265).<sup>41</sup> This is another qualitative use of γενεά since the original horse or horses, given by Zeus many years prior, and the current horses descended from those original horses together constituted one γενεά.<sup>42</sup>

#### Pre-Classical Period: Offspring

Γενεά can also refer to future offspring, that is, the family tree that proceeds from a person rather than, as the examples examined above, the family tree from which he came. The tree is viewed from the opposite direction—towards its product rather than its source—to state it differently. This use could also be glossed as *children*. Homer does not appear to use γενεά in this manner, but it does appear at least twice in Hesiod’s writings.<sup>43</sup> In *Works and Days* 284–85, Zeus gives prosperity to the offspring (γενεά) of the one who gives true testimony and “leaves obscure” the offspring (γενεά) of those who give false witness. Later in the work, the reader is warned not to beget **offspring** after returning from an ill-omened burial (μηδ’ ἀπὸ δυσφήμοιο τάφου ἀπονοστήσαντα σπερμαίνειν **γενεήν**, *Work and Days*, 735–36).

#### Pre-Classical Period: Birth

Three different senses of γενεά in the pre-classical era may be glossed *birth*: (1) one’s birth order, (2) one’s status gained by birth, (3) and one’s place of birth.

#### Birth Order

In several instances, γενεά refers to the order of one’s birth into a family or humanity at

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<sup>41</sup>For this passage, the Brill lexicon suggests the gloss *breed* for γενεά. GE, s.v. “γενεά,” 422. Γενεά is used a second time to refer to the horses in *Il.* 5.268.

<sup>42</sup>Dionysius Periegetes (2nd or 3rd century AD) uses γενεά in the same way to describe a group of birds, *De aucupio* 1.20. DGE.

<sup>43</sup>LSJ lists *Il.* 21.191 as an example of “offspring” in Homer. LSJ, “γενεά,” 342. However, as discussed above, in that passage Achilles is talking about his own descent from Zeus and not of his own offspring. Achilles was Zeus’ great-grandson. So also DGE which lists *Il.* 21.191 under “*descendencia*.”

large. In other words, *γενεά* is used to describe whether one is older or younger than another. In these instances, *γενεά* is collocated with words such as *πρεσβύτερος* (“elder”), *ὀπλότερος* (“younger”), *νεώτατος* (“youngest”), and *πρότερος* (“first”). For example, Podares is *ὀπλότερος γενεῇ*, that is younger by birth, when he replaces his fallen older brother as leader of his people (*Il.* 2.703–8).<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Diomedes admits he is “younger by birth” (*Il.* 14.112–13). Bucolion was the eldest born son (*πρεσβύτατος γενεῇ*) of Laomedon (*Il.* 6.23–24). Nestor describes himself as “the youngest man of them all” (*γενεῇ δὲ νεώτατος ἔσκειν πάντων, Il.* 7.153).<sup>45</sup>

### Status Granted by Birth

In a few instances, *γενεά* can be glossed as *birth*, but the emphasis is on a right or status granted to an individual by their birth. As already noted above, there is some overlap between this usage and the sense of lineage examined above. However, there are at least some instances where the context indicates that an emphasis on status rather than ancestry is intended by Homer’s use of *γενεά*. For example, Telemachus is the rightful king of Ithaca by birth (*γενεῇ, Od.* 1.387). Also, Menoetius says to his son Patroklos, “Achilles is of nobler birth than you are, but you are older than he” (*γενεῇ μὲν ὑπέρτερός ἐστιν Ἀχιλλεύς, πρεσβύτερος δὲ σὺ ἐσσι, Il.* 11.786). Achilles’ descent from Zeus gave him a status that superseded the status gained by Patroklos’ greater age.<sup>46</sup>

### Place of Birth

*Γενεά* is also used for the place of birth. For example, Homer uses it to describe the

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<sup>44</sup>The same expression is also used in *Od.* 19.184.

<sup>45</sup>For additional examples of *γενεά* with the sense of birth-order see *Il.* 9.161; 15.165–6, 182.

<sup>46</sup>This usage of *γενεά* continued into at least the third century BC. See e.g., Callimachus, *Epig.* 1.3–5; *Aetia* 178.14.

birthplace of an eagle (*Od.* 15.175). However, it more often describes a human's birthplace, often in passages that reference the individual's "fathers" or ancestors. These collocations denote a familial sense. For example, when Achilles splits Iphition's head in two, the victor stands over the fallen and exclaims, "You lie low, son of Otrynteus, mighty hero; your death is here, but your **lineage** is on the Gygæan lake where your father's estate lies" (**γενεῇ** δέ τοί ἐστ' ἐπὶ λίμνῃ Γυγαίῃ, *Il.* 20.390–1). Rather than being a reference to lineage, γενεά is more likely here a reference to Iphition's birthplace. The place of his birth contrasts with the location of his death.<sup>47</sup> Also, when Philoetius asks concerning Ulysses, "What is his family? Where does he come from?" (ποῦ δέ νύ οἱ **γενεῇ** καὶ πατρὶς ἄρουρα; *Od.* 20.193), the question is best understood as asking the same thing in two different ways. That is, Philoetius wants to know the place of Ulysses' birth.<sup>48</sup>

#### Pre-Classical Period: Common Characteristics

At times, Homer uses γενεά to refer to people who share a set of qualities or characteristics. In my estimation, this use of γενεά would match the way Jesus uses ἡ γενεά αὕτη in Matthew 24:34. For example, in the *Iliad* 14.470–74, Ajax shouts, "Think, Polydamas, and tell me truly whether this man is not as well worth killing as Prothoënor was: he seems rich, and of a rich family, a brother, it may be, or son of the knight Antenor, for he is very like him." The last clause is αὐτῷ γὰρ γενεὴν ἄγχιστα ἑώκει. Murray translates this as "for he is most like to him in build."<sup>49</sup> The familial connection is still present (as it is also in Mt 24:34), but common

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<sup>47</sup>Murphy translates the relevant phrase as "thy birth was by the Gygaean lake." Powell has "you were born beside Lake Gygaia." Homer, *The Iliad*, 473.

<sup>48</sup>This second example is admittedly not as clear as the first, but it is noteworthy that the two examples are paired in GE, "γενεά," 422. The same question (ποῦ δέ νύ οἱ γενεῇ καὶ πατρὶς ἄρουρα;) appears again in *Od.* 1.407 where it again seems to refer to the place of birth.

<sup>49</sup>Powell also has "For he seems to be just like him in build." Homer, *The Iliad*, 346.

characteristics, in this instance in Homer, the physical appearance, identify the familial connection. Something similar occurs when Eteoneus describes his master's two visitors as looking like the offspring of Zeus (ἄνδρε δύω, γενεῇ δὲ Διὸς μέγαλοιο ἔϊκτον, *Od.* 4.27). Again, one's γενεά was associated with one's personal characteristics, in this instance, with the physical appearance of the two travelers. To this category could also be added Hesiod's description of the three winds as the "god-sent kind" (θεόφιν γενεήν, *Theogony* 871).<sup>50</sup> These three winds shared the characteristics of being beneficial to mankind, while the fourth wind brought trouble.

### Pre-Classical Period: Generations

In a few instances, Homer uses γενεά to refer to generations, that is, people living at the same time. If a γενεά is pictured as a family tree with offspring ascending vertically from a common ancestor, then this use of γενεά would be a horizontal cross-section of that tree. Homer uses numerical adjectives to describe multiple horizontal groupings in a family tree in two of these instances. First, Homer describes Nestor's long reign, "Two **generations** of men born and bred in Pylos had passed away under his rule, and he was now reigning over the third" (τῷ δ' ἤδη δύο μὲν γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων ἐφθίαθ', οἳ οἱ πρόσθεν ἅμα τράφεν ἡδ' ἐγένοντο ἐν Πύλῳ ἡγαθέη, μετὰ δὲ τριτάτοισιν ἄνασσαν, *Il.* 1.250–53). Second, Ulysses obtains a treasure that will maintain his family for "ten generations" (δεκάτην γενεήν, *Od.* 14.325; 19.294). The familial sense is still present in both examples. In the first example, the "generations" are all from the same place and, ostensibly, from the same people group. And in the second, the "generations" are all Ulysses' descendants.

In one other place, Homer seems to use γενεά with a temporal sense. Toward the end of

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<sup>50</sup>Since the three winds themselves were also thought to be gods, it is also possible the γενεά is being used here to refer to the wind gods' lineage. So e.g., Jöris, *Use and Function*, 31–32.

the *Iliad*, Achilles states that Ajax is “somewhat older than I” (ἐμεῖ’ ὀλίγον προγενέστερός ἐστιν), but he contrasts Ajax with Ulysses. The latter “belongs to an earlier generation” of men (οὗτος δὲ προτέρης γενεῆς προτέρων τ’ ἀνθρώπων, *Il.* 23.790). The use of the adjective πρότερος indicates that γενεά has a temporal sense. Similarly, Homer uses πρότερος with ἀνὴρ or ἄνθρωπος to refer to people who lived in earlier ages.<sup>51</sup> It is the use of the temporal adjective that indicates the temporal use of the noun.

TABLE 1

USES OF ΓΕΝΕΑ IN HOMER AND HESIOD

Usage	Number	References
Lineage/Ancestry	21	<i>Il.</i> 4.60; 6.145, 151, 211; 10.68, 239; 18.365; 19.105; 20.203, 214, 241, 306; 21.153, 157, 187, 191; <i>Od.</i> 1.222; 15.225; 16.117; <i>Shield of Heracles</i> 55, 327
Race/Stock	7	<i>Il.</i> 5.265, 268; 7.128; 15.141; 20.303; 23.471; <i>Work and Days</i> 160
Offspring	3	<i>Work and Days</i> 284, 285, 736
Birth Order/Status/Place	13	<i>Il.</i> 2.707; 6.24; 7.53; 9.161; 11.786; 15.166, 182; 20.390; <i>Od.</i> 1.387, 407; 15.175; 19.184; 20.193
Common Characteristics	3	<i>Il.</i> 14.474; <i>Od.</i> 4.27; <i>Theogony</i> 871
Generation(s)	6	<i>Il.</i> 1.250; 6.146, 149; 23.790; <i>Od.</i> 14.325; 19.294

Classical Greek

Since the usage of γενεά in the classical period approximates the usage of the pre-classical era, and to reserve space for an examination of literature closer to the writing of the New Testament (NT), this section will be brief. It will examine a few prominent writers from the fifth and fourth centuries BC.<sup>52</sup> This overview will demonstrate that the same uses of γενεά seen in Homer and Hesiod were present in the classical period leading up to the translation of the

<sup>51</sup>E.g., *Il.* 5.637; 21.405; 23.332.

<sup>52</sup>As noted above, the three writers in *TLG* from the classical period who use γενεά more than twenty times (Pindar, Herodotus, and Hippocrates) were selected and their usage was examined comprehensively. Along with these three, five other well-known authors (Aeschylus, Thucydides, Sophocles, Xenophon, and Plato) were included for illustrative purposes. For Pindar, only the 20 occurrences in his complete works were examined.

LXX after the close of this era.

### Classical Period: Lineage

Γενεά continued to be used often in a qualitative sense for one's lineage. Sophocles (fifth century BC) refers to the lineage of Sisyphus (Σισυφιδᾶν γενεᾶς, *Ajax* 189), the lineage of Ajax (*Ajax* 636), and Danae's respected lineage (γενεᾷ τίμιος, *Antigone* 947). Herodotus (fifth century BC) mentions the lineage of the Minyae (τῆς γενεῆς τῶν Μινυέων, *Histories* 4.145.13). Aeschylus (fifth century BC) describes Xerxes' lineage as golden because it led back to Zeus (χρυσονόμου γενεᾶς, *Persians* 80). Plato (fourth century BC) uses the expression ταύτης τῆς γενεᾶς τε καὶ αἵματος, the same collocation used in earlier Greek literature to refer to one's lineage, specifically a lineage noted for certain characteristics (*Sophist* 268d.3). The demonstrative οὗτος is used to point back to the lineage characterized by Plato in the preceding discussion.

### Classical Period: Family and Descendants

Herodotus recounts Glaucus' visit to Delphi where the Pythoness tells him that the son of the Oath god will destroy the γενεὴν καὶ οἶκον ἅπαντα (*Histories* 6.86.50) which could refer to an entire race and household,<sup>53</sup> or more likely, to one's whole family and household.<sup>54</sup> In the following line (6.86.51), the Pythoness says, "**The line** of a man who swears true is better later on" (ἄνδρὸς δ' εὐόρκου **γενεῇ** μετόπισθεν ἀμείνων) indicating that Herodotus is likely using γενεά to refer to not only one's immediate family but also to one's future descendants. Both of

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<sup>53</sup>So e.g., Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*, trans. George Rawlinson, Great Books of the Western World 6 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), 202.

<sup>54</sup>So e.g., Herodotus, *Herodotus*, trans. A. D. Godley, 4 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938). To these instances can be added Pindar's use of γενεά to describe an immediate family. *Nemean* 6.61; 10.15; *Isthmian* 4.21.

the references are in a context in which Herodotus has just used *γενεά* to refer to multiple generations (6.86.11). In the oration that Hippocrates is said to make before the altar of Minerva, he refers to his immediate family as “my generation” (*ἐμῇ γενεᾷ*, *Epistle* 26.5).

### Classical Period: Race

*Γενεά* is also used in the classical period in its broadest qualitative sense to refer to a race or people group. For example, Aeschylus uses it to refer to the Persian race (*Περσῶν γενεᾷ*, *Persians* 912).<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Sophocles refers to the race descended from the Erechtheids (*γενεᾷς χθονίων ἀπ’ Ἐρεχθιδῶν*, *Ajax* 203).<sup>56</sup> And he also laments an entire race brought to ruin by the gods (*Antigone* 585). Of the twenty occurrences examined in Pindar’s works, eight are references to a “race” or large people group.<sup>57</sup>

Of course, in some instances, there is an overlap between one’s race and one’s birthplace. For example, in Herodotus, Croesus is approached by a man of Phrygian birth (*ἐὼν Φρυγῆς μὲν γενεῇ* (*Histories* 1.35.4) and Rhodopis was Thracian by birth (*γενεὴν μὲν ἀπὸ Θρηκῆς*, *Histories* 2.134.13). In at least one place, Herodotus uses *γενεά* to refer to the entire human race when he describes Polycrates as the first race called men to build an empire of the sea (*τῆς δὲ ἀνθρωπίνης λεγομένης γενεῆς Πολυκράτης πρῶτος*, *Histories* 3.122.10).<sup>58</sup>

These types of broad qualitative uses of *γενεά* continued into the early period following Alexander’s conquests. For example, in Aratus’ *Phaenomena* (third century BC), the poem that

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<sup>55</sup>This could also be glossed as *nation*. So e.g., GE, s.v. “*γενεά*,” 422. Although it is not as clear, Aeschylus seems to use *γενεά* in the same way in *Seven* 952; *Agamemnon* 1572. DGE places *Fragmentum* 1 (*Τυρσηνὸν γενεάν*) in this category as well.

<sup>56</sup>Sophocles uses *γενεά* similarly in *Electra* 1413.

<sup>57</sup>*Olympian* 6.51; 11.16; *Pythian* 6.15; 7.3; 10.41; *Nemean* 6.32; *Isthmian* 5.55; 7.29. The Oration of Thessalus, which is wrongly attributed to Hippocrates, also refers to *γενεῆς ἡμετέρης* which appears to be a reference to the people group to which the speaker belongs. *Epistle* 27.223. The same document also uses *γενεά* to refer to a man’s children. *Epistle* 27.146.

<sup>58</sup>Rawlinson translates this as “the first of mere human birth.” Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*. Godley translates the phrase as “of such as may be called men.” Herodotus, *Herodotus*.

the Apostle Paul quoted from in Acts 17, which demonstrates its wide use, there is a mention of an “elder race” (προτέρη γενεή, 1.16), which in the context, appears to be a race of gods.

#### Classical Period: Offspring

As was the case in Homeric literature, γενεά does not seem to be commonly used in the classical period for offspring or children, but there are some examples of this use. For instance, Herodotus relates how Darius, after the conquest of Babylon, provided the men of the city with wives, to replace those strangled to save food during the siege, so that the Babylonians might have offspring (ἵνα σφι γενεῇ ὑπογίνηται, *Histories* 3.159.8). Pindar refers to the condition of lacking children as ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς (*Olympian* 9.60). He also describes Tyro’s son as his γενεά (Pythian 4.136), refers to a man leaving a good name to his “sweetest offspring” (γλυκυτάτῃ γενεᾷ, *Pythian* 11.57; cf. *Isthmian* 8.65), and relates how hymns are sung for Lamopon’s children (Λάμπωνος εὐαέθλου γενεᾶς, *Isthmian* 6.3). Also, Plato refers to the tradition that one who finds and steals another’s hidden treasure is rendered not able to produce children (εἰς παίδων γενεάν, *Laws* 913.c.2).

#### Classical Period: Birth

As in the Homeric literature, γενεά was used in the classical period in a variety of ways where it could rightly be glossed *birth*. Xenophon refers to a person’s γενεά in a context that could be referring to either a place of birth or lineage (*Cyr.* 1.1.6.2).<sup>59</sup> However, he later clearly uses it for “birth” when he speaks of children who are “sixteen or seventeen years from **birth**” (ἕξ ἢ ἑπτακαίδεκα ἐτῶν ἀπὸ γενεᾶς, *Cyr.* 1.2.8.16). He uses the same prepositional phrase ἀπὸ γενεᾶς to indicate a person’s age (*Cyr.* 1.2.13.13). Similarly, Cambyses was afflicted with a

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<sup>59</sup>DGE places this reference under the suggested glosses “*estirpe, linaje, familia*.”

disease from birth (ἐκ γενεῆς νοῦσον, Herodotus, *Histories* 3.33.4) and the Argippean men and women were said to be bald “from birth” (ἐκ γενεῆς, *Histories* 4.23.5). This prepositional phrase ἐκ γενεῆς often appears in Hippocrates’ works to describe various disorders which have been present “from birth,” that is, congenital disabilities.<sup>60</sup> Hippocrates also γενεά twice in contexts where he is describing a women’s inability to give birth due to a malady (*Epidemics* 2.51.6; *Women* 1.65.15).

### Classical Period: Kind or Class

In philosophical literature, there begins to be more examples in the classical period of γενεά used for a class grouped by common characteristics, as I am arguing is the case for ἡ γενεά αὕτη in Matthew 24:34. In Plato’s *Philebus*, Socrates has been describing four classes of existence or being, which he has repeatedly referred to using γένος, but at one point he switches and refers to a “class” characterized by certain qualities as a γενεά: τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ καλὸν καὶ τὸ τέλειον καὶ ἰκανὸν καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα τῆς γενεᾶς αὗ ταύτης ἐστίν (“proportion, beauty, perfection, sufficiency, and all that belongs to that class,” 66b.2).<sup>61</sup> The demonstrative οὗτος points back to the class that Socrates and Protarchus had previously been discussing and the switch from γένος to γενεά indicates that the words could be used synonymously. Plotinus also uses γενεά in a similar matter to describe a class of things (Ταύτης τοι γενεᾶς, *Enneades* 5.1.7).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>This phrase accounts for 33 of the 38 uses of γενεά in Hippocrates’ extant works. *Epidemics* 2.6.14; *Surgery*, 4.6; *Articulations* 12.4, 12; 21.1; 28.1; 29.4; 53.39, 57; 56.1; 58.50; 60.25; 62.1, 3; 82.14; 85.1; 87.7; *Mochlicus* 5.13, 16; 11.1; 18.1; 19.4; 20.6; 21.3, 9; 23.18; 24.11; 26.14; 29.2; 31.6; 32.1; 40.7; *Fleshes* 18.8.

<sup>61</sup>Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, 12 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Medford, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925). A few lines later (66c.8), Socrates refers to a ἕκτη... γενεᾶ, which Fowler translates as a “sixth generation,” but the context indicates that the discussion is still about various “classes,” and thus γενεά should also be translated here as “class.” So also DGE which places this reference in Plato under “como término clasificador” and suggests the glosses “género, especie, clase.”

<sup>62</sup>GE, s.v. “γενεά,” 422. DGE places this reference under the familial semantic range, regardless, the passage is clearly using γενεά in a qualitative sense. This is the only time Plotinus’ extant writings contain γενεά.

## Classical Period: Generations

During the classical period, there are many examples of *γενεά* being used with a temporal sense. As might be expected, these often occur in historical narratives. For example, Thucydides refers to many generations or ages which had passed since the time of Troy (ταῦτα πολλαῖς γενεαῖς ὕστερα γενόμενα τῶν Τρωικῶν, *History* 1.14.1).<sup>63</sup> Herodotus uses τοσαύτησι... γενεῇσι to express the same idea (*Histories* 2.100.3). Xenophon refers to provisions within a garrison that would last for a “generation of men” (ἀνθρώπων γενεάν, *Cyr.* 5.2.4; Pindar, *Nemean* 11.38). Pindar refers to an “ancient time” (πάλαι γενεᾷ, *Pythian* 6.40).

Often when relating his narrative, Herodotus will refer to multiple generations using a numerical adjective. For example, he speaks of two generations of men (δύο γενεὰς ἀνδρῶν *Histories* 5.28.7), three generations (τρίτην γενεὴν, *Histories* 6.86.11), five generations (γενεῇσι πέντε, *Histories* 1.184.5; cf. 2.44.16), eight generations of men (ἐπὶ γενεάς... ὀκτὼ ἀνδρῶν, *Histories* 4.145.13; cf. 4.163.6), etc.<sup>64</sup> Herodotus also often advances his narrative by referring to the next generation after the events already related (e.g., *Histories* 1.3.2; 6.126.1).<sup>65</sup>

Sophocles also mentions multiple generations of mortals (γενεαὶ βροτῶν, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1186). This plural form of the *γενεά* with the same meaning also occurs several times in Plato.<sup>66</sup> In an interesting passage, in which he has already used *γενεά* to refer to a race, Sophocles refers to a generation or time within a race using *γενεά* for the former and *γένος* for the latter (γενεὰν γένος, *Antigone* 596).

When used in a temporal sense, the length of a *γενεά* varied. Herodotus refers to the

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<sup>63</sup>He uses a similar expression in *History* 2.68.5. These are the only two instances of *γενεά* in the extant writings of Thucydides.

<sup>64</sup>Pindar once speaks of a specific generation when he describes an event that occurred in the δεκάτῃ γενεᾷ or tenth generation. *Pythian* 4.10.

<sup>65</sup>A similar usage appears in his *Histories* 3.48.4; 4.105.2.

<sup>66</sup>*Laws* 679d.2; *Times* 23c.3; *Critias* 109e.3; 114c.5; 114d.3; etc.

Heraclides' rule over Lydia as lasting for twenty-two generations, totaling 505 years, or roughly twenty-two years per generation (*Histories* 1.7.13). In *Histories* 2.142.2–8, he uses *γενεά* again to refer to a time period in Egypt that lasted for 341 generations. He then explains that three hundred generations are ten thousand years because there are three generations in a hundred years. The remaining generations are forty-one generations that lasted for 1340 years, so he says the entire time period described as 341 generations totaled 11,430 years. Therefore, Herodotus is reckoning each generation to have lasted for approximately thirty-three and a half years.

### Summary of Usages in Classical Greek

First, *γενεά* continued to be used often during this period for one's lineage. If a family tree is pictured, the *γενεά* in these instances would be the bough from which one sprung. Second, viewing the tree from another angle, *γενεά* was also used for the branches that grew alongside you (your family) and the branches that came from you (your descendants). Not often, but occasionally, *γενεά* was used for one's immediate offspring. Third, the entire family tree of a people group could be called a *γενεά*, a use that could be glossed as *race* or *nation*. The whole *γενεά* grew up from one person. These uses are usually apparent due to the naming of a place associated with a particular people. Related to this, classical Greek writers would at times use *γενεά* for grouping or categorizing people or things not based on familial connections but some other shared quality. Fourth, in the classical period, there is evidence of *γενεά* being employed for various uses that could be glossed *birth*, including the moment of birth and the act of giving birth. Finally, in this period, there are many examples of *γενεά* being used in a temporal sense, usually indicated by the presence of a numerical adjective.

TABLE 2

## USES OF ΓΕΝΕΑ IN PINDAR, HERODOTUS, AND HIPPOCRATES

Usage	Number	References
Lineage/Ancestry	1	<i>Histories</i> 4.147.19
Race	13	<i>Histories</i> 1.35.4; 2.134.13; 3.122.10; <i>Olympian</i> 6.51; 11.16; <i>Pythian</i> 6.15; 7.3; 9.43; 10.41; <i>Nemean</i> 6.32; <i>Isthmian</i> 5.55; 7.29; <i>Epistle</i> 27.146
Family/ Future Descendants	5	<i>Histories</i> 6.86.50, 51; <i>Nemean</i> 6.61; 10.15; <i>Isthmian</i> 4.21
Offspring	7	<i>Histories</i> 3.159.8; <i>Olympian</i> 9.60; <i>Pythian</i> 4.136; 11.57; <i>Isthmian</i> 6.3; 8.65; <i>Epistle</i> 27.223
Birth	35	<i>Histories</i> 3.33.4; 4.23.5; <i>Epidemics</i> 2.6.14; <i>Surgery</i> , 4.6; <i>Articulations</i> 12.4, 12; 21.1; 28.1; 29.4; 53.39, 57; 56.1; 58.50; 60.25; 62.1, 3; 82.14; 85.1; 87.7; <i>Mochlicus</i> 5.13, 16; 11.1; 18.1; 19.4; 20.6; 21.3, 9; 23.18; 24.11; 26.14; 29.2; 31.6; 32.1; 40.7; <i>Fleshes</i> 18.8
Giving Birth	2	<i>Epidemics</i> 2.51.6; <i>Women</i> 1.65.15
Generation(s)	23	<i>Histories</i> 1.3.2; 1.7.13; 1.184.5; 2.44.16; 2.100.3; 2.142.4, 6, 7, 8; 3.48.4; 4.105.2; 4.145.13; 4.163.6; 5.28.7; 6.86.11; 6.98.8, 9; 6.126.1; 7.171.5; <i>Pythian</i> 4.10; 6.40; <i>Nemean</i> 11.38; <i>Epistle</i> 26.5

## Septuagint

Γενεά is used 239 times in the LXX.<sup>67</sup> Silva argues that the qualitative sense of “race” or “nation” for γενεά is unattested in the LXX.<sup>68</sup> However, a survey of the usages will reveal that other familial or qualitative uses of γενεά are present, and an examination of several passages, including Deuteronomy 32, will demonstrate that “race” or “nation” might be the best gloss for the occurrences of γενεά in those passages.

## LXX: Generations or Periods of Time

The most common word translated as γενεά in the LXX is the Hebrew דֹּר.<sup>69</sup> דֹּר

<sup>67</sup>This search of the LXX and the following quotes from the LXX are taken from the Rahfls 1979 edition. Unless otherwise noted, English translations of the LXX are the author’s own. These 239 occurrences include 3 in the variant of Tb 13.13 and 4 in the variants of Dn 4:37.

<sup>68</sup>NIDNNT, s.v. “γενεά,” 1:558.

<sup>69</sup>Γενεά is used 119 times in the LXX to translate דֹּר. *Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint*, s.v. “γενεά.” This represents roughly half of the total occurrences of γενεά in the LXX. In 17 others instances the LXX

commonly refers to a single lifetime or “all the people who have grown up in the period from the birth of a man until the birth of his first son.”<sup>70</sup> Γενεά also appears to often have this same meaning in the LXX. In the 119 instances where γενεά translates דור, γενεά is most often used to describe either multiple generations extending indefinitely into the past or future or, far less commonly, to describe one particular generation.<sup>71</sup>

An indefinite future time period from the perspective of the speaker is indicated by the presence of one or more of the following: (1) the duplication of the word (which approximates the Hebrew דור ודור), (2) the plural form of γενεά, (3) the use of an adjective such as πολύς, or (4) the use of a temporal preposition. 164 uses of γενεά fall into this category.<sup>72</sup> For example, this use can be seen in εἰς γενεὰς αἰωνίους in Genesis 9:12, εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν in Leviticus 7:36, διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν in Isaiah 13:20, and κατὰ γενεὰν καὶ γενεὰν in Esther 9:28. In most of these instances, a plausible argument could be made that γενεά could be rightly glossed as descendants. It is an indefinite line of future descendants, usually made up of Israelites, described. Still, in order to not overstate my case, I will include these in the temporal category.

In ten places, γενεά refers to past generations “in order to convey a point to the reader about certain past events that affected their ancestors.”<sup>73</sup> For example, in Deuteronomy 32:7, the Israelites are encouraged to remember “past days” (ἡμέρας αἰῶνος) and consider “years of

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uses γενεά to translate 1 of 10 other Hebrew words which will be examined below. In 9 instances the LXX uses γενεά when no corresponding Hebrew word occurs in the MT. The remaining 94 instances of γενεά in the LXX occur in passages which do not translate a Hebrew portion of the LXX. To put it another way, there are only eight occurrences of דור in BHS (out of a total 166 occurrences) that are not translated by γενεά in the LXX (Dt 1:35; Pr 30:11, 12, 13, 14; Jer 2:31; 50:39 [2x]).

<sup>70</sup>HALOT s.v. “דור,” 217.

<sup>71</sup>The 16 possible exceptions are Dt 32:5, 20; Ps 12:7; 14:5; 24:6; 49:20; 73:15; 78:5 (2x); 111:2; Prv 30:11, 12, 13, 14; Is 53:8; and Jer 7:2 which will be examined below. Therefore, at least 87% of the instances where γενεά translates דור the reference is to a generation or multiple generations. See Table 3 for a breakdown of the uses of γενεά in the LXX.

<sup>72</sup>See Table 3 for specific examples.

<sup>73</sup>Jöris, *Use and Function*, 57.

generations of generations” (ἔτη γενεᾶς γενεῶν; so also Odes 2.7). In Job 8:8, Bildad says ἐπερώτησον γὰρ γενεὰν πρώτην (“For inquire of an earlier generation,” NETS). Isaiah 51:9 asks God to act ὡς γενεὰ αἰῶνος (“like a generation of long ago”).<sup>74</sup> In these cases, the context indicates that the writer intends a temporal sense.

In one place, γενεά is used to translate יוֹם or “day” and appears to have the sense usually associated with דִּיּוּר. Isaiah 24:22 predicts that both heavenly and earthly rulers will be bound and then punished “after many days” (יָמִים וָמָוֶה). The LXX translates this as διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν. Jöris is likely correct that γενεά was chosen here because the context indicated that the “days” were a very long period of time.<sup>75</sup> The presence of the adjective πολὺς and the plural form of γενεά indicates that something broader than a particular generation is intended.

#### LXX: A Particular Generation

In some instances, the LXX uses γενεά to refer to a particular generation, that is, a specific group of people who are all descended from the same ancestor but who were born at the same approximate time and so lived together as contemporaries. This usage would be the closest to the usage argued for by the proponents of the temporal view in Matthew 24:34. However, when the LXX uses γενεά in this way, the translator usually modifies γενεά with a numerical adjective.<sup>76</sup> For example, Genesis 15:16 predicts that the Israelites will leave Egyptian bondage during the “fourth generation” (τετάρτη... γενεά). Similarly, Joseph lived to see the “third generation” (τρίτης γενεᾶς) of Ephraim’s sons (Gn 50:23). God warned the people that He would punish the “the third and fourth generations” of those who worshiped other gods (Ex 20:5).<sup>77</sup> In

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<sup>74</sup>For the remaining examples see Table 3.

<sup>75</sup>Jöris, *Use and Function*, 53. Jöris cites Strabo, *Geography*, 6.4.2 for a similar usage of γενεά.

<sup>76</sup>The 13 references that fall into this category may be seen on Table 3.

<sup>77</sup>See also Ex 34:7; Nm 14:18; Dt 5:9; 7:9; 23:4 [23:3 MT]; 23:9 [MT 23:8]; 1 Chr 16:15; Job 42:16 (Theod.); Ps 104:8 [MT 105:8].

some of these instances, the Hebrew noun דֹּר is being translated (e.g., Gn 15:16). However, often the MT merely has the numerical noun, and the LXX has added γενεά for clarity (e.g., Gn 50:23). In both cases, the numerical adjective's presence in the LXX clarifies that a particular generation of someone's descendants is intended.

Another way a particular generation is referenced is by singling out a specific person who belonged to that generation. For example, Noah is said to be a righteous man ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ (Gen 6:9). When Noah is told to enter the ark, God tells him that he has been found righteous ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ (Gen 7:1). This use of the demonstrative οὗτος approximates the use in Matthew 24:34 and might provide evidence for a temporal use in Jesus' saying in the Olivet Discourse. However, in the case of Noah's "generation," the narrative makes it clear that God is referring to the entire human race, everyone then living, and not merely to one generation of humans as we would use the word *generation* today. Therefore, Genesis 6:9 does not seem to support a temporal understanding of Matthew 24:34.<sup>78</sup>

### LXX: Offspring or Descendants

In several places in the LXX, γενεά is used in a qualitative sense to describe a person's offspring or descendants. In these instances, γενεά often is the translation for the Hebrew זָרַע which can refer to (1) a seed, of plant, animal, or human, (2) offspring or descendants, and (3) to the state or act of descent.<sup>79</sup>

For example, in Esther 9:28, the MT's final phrase וְזָכְרָם לֹא־יִסּוּף מִזֶּרְעָם ("the memory of them was not to cease among their descendants") is translated in the LXX as τὸ μνημόσυνον

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<sup>78</sup>Other examples of generations referenced by the naming of notable members include the generation of Joseph and his brothers (Ex 1:6), the wilderness generation (Num 32:13; Dt 2:14; Ps 94:10 [95:10 MT]), the conquest generation and its succeeding generation (Jdg 2:10), and the generation of the Patriarchs (1 Macc 2.51).

<sup>79</sup>HALOT, s.v. "זָרַע," 283.

αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ ἐκλείπῃ ἐκ τῶν γενεῶν (“the commemoration of them shall never cease among their generations,” NETS). The plural γενεῶν is not referring to multiple generations in general, but specifically to the descendants of Esther’s rescued countrymen, therefore it is an appropriate translation of נָרַע in this context.

In Exodus 30:21 the LXX’s αὐτῷ καὶ ταῖς γενεαῖς αὐτοῦ μετ’ αὐτόν translates the MT’s לֹא וְלִנְרָעוֹ לְדֹרֹתָם (“to his seed through their generations”). The Greek γενεά takes the place of the Hebrew דֹּר and נָרַע. So we have at least one instance where an LXX translator believed that the semantic range of דֹּר and נָרַע were close enough that, when they appeared together, they could together be rendered as γενεά. To cite one more example involving נָרַע, Daniel 9:1 tells us that Darius the son of Ahasuerus was מִן־רֵעַ מֶדֶי (“from the seed of the Medes”), that is, he was a descendant of the Medes. The Theodotion version reads ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν Μήδων, but the Old Greek version reads ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς Μηδικῆς (“of Median lineage,” NETS).<sup>80</sup>

Γενεά is also used in the LXX to translate יָלִיד, a word that can refer to (1) a son or (2) a slave born in one’s household.<sup>81</sup> However, יָלִיד does not necessarily have to refer to one’s child but can also refer to descendants from one’s child.<sup>82</sup> Thus, twice in Numbers 13, the LXX uses γενεά to translate יָלִיד when the reference is to descendants. First, in verse 22 יָלִידֵי הָעֲנָק (“descendants of Anak”) is translated as γενεαὶ Ἐναχ. Second, in verse 28 the similar phrase וְיָלִידֵי הָעֲנָק (“even the descendants of Anak”) is translated as τὴν γενεὰν Ἐναχ.

The LXX in Proverbs 22:4 also appears to use γενεά in a qualitative sense for offspring, albeit metaphorical offspring: γενεὰ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου καὶ πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα καὶ ζωή (“The

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<sup>80</sup>This use of γενεά is parallel to Herodotus’ description of one who was of Phrygian descent: ἐὼν Φρυγῆ μὲν γενεῇ (*The Histories*, 1.35). Jöris, *Use and Function*, 50 n126. Of course, since Darius’ lineage is being associated with a people group rather than an individual, it tantamount to saying that Darius belongs to the Median race. Uses of γενεά in the LXX for “race” will be investigated further below.

<sup>81</sup>HALOT, s.v. “יָלִיד,” 413.

<sup>82</sup>TWOT, s.v. “יָלִיד,” 378.

**offspring** of wisdom is the fear of the Lord as well as riches and honor and life,” NETS). The first two Greek words translate the Hebrew עֲקָב עֲנִיָּה. The word עֲקָב refers to results or wages,<sup>83</sup> in this case, the result of wisdom or humility is the fear of the Lord. Therefore, γενεά is being used to refer to “that which is produced.”<sup>84</sup>

Two passages from the Apocrypha can also be included here. These passages are especially relevant because they represent LXX passages written close to the time of Matthew. Wisdom of Solomon 3.19, which is usually dated to the mid-first century BC, states γενεᾷς γὰρ ἀδίκου χαλεπὰ τὰ τέλη (“for the end of an unrighteousness generation is grievous,” NETS). From verse 16, it is clear that the writer is speaking of the “children of adulterers” (τέκνα... μοιχῶν) and the “offspring of unlawful intercourse” (παρὰ νόμου κοίτης σπέρμα) when he refers to the γενεά in verse 19 who will meet a grievous end. Therefore, γενεά is not being used in a temporal sense but in a qualitative sense to describe those produced through immoral unions and who ostensibly are characterized by the same sinful activities. A more straightforward example occurs in Sirach 4.16b, which was written in the early second century BC: καὶ ἐν κατασχέσει ἔσονται αἱ γενεαὶ αὐτοῦ. The NETS translates this as “his descendants will be in possession of her,” that is, obtain wisdom. Similarly, the NRSV renders the passage as “their descendants will also obtain her.”

One final passage, where the LXX translates דִּוָּר, might also be included under this category. In Isaiah 53:8 the LXX translates מִי יְשׁוּעָה לְדִוְרוֹ as τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται (“Who will describe his generation?” NETS). The Hebrew phrase itself is difficult to understand. The particle תָּא can be used to give “greater definiteness” to a clause’s subject.<sup>85</sup> This

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<sup>83</sup>HALOT, s.v. “עֲקָב,” 873.

<sup>84</sup>GELS, s.v. “γενεά,” 127.

<sup>85</sup>BDB, s.v. “תָּא,” 85. Cf. GKC §117m.

understanding would support the NIV's "Yet who of his generation protested?" and indicate דֹּר was a reference to the Servant's contemporaries. It is also possible that the particle is being used here to mark a nominative absolute.<sup>86</sup> However, this use is rare. It is more likely that the particle here has its normal function of marking the direct object.<sup>87</sup> The verb שִׁיחַ in the Piel can mean, as it does in the Qal, "to concern oneself with, engage oneself with, consider."<sup>88</sup> Therefore, the sentence would be translated as "Who would consider the דֹּר," with the meaning of דֹּר still to be determined.

Goldingay translates דֹּר as "generation," that is, nobody is complaining at the Servant's generation for their treatment of him.<sup>89</sup> Driver suggested "lot" or "fate."<sup>90</sup> Westermann tentatively suggests "stock" although he states that the "usual meaning" would be a reference to the Servant's line of descendants.<sup>91</sup> And this meaning, "descendants," is probable here.<sup>92</sup> The thought then would be that the Servant suffers a death that leaves him without offspring. If the phrase refers to a lack of descendants, an ABBA pattern is present in verse 8, and verse 8 compliments verse 10. In verse 8, the Servant dies and is left without descendants. In verse 10, the situation is reversed; he sees his offspring, and his days are prolonged. Alternatively, many in

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<sup>86</sup>IBHS 10.3.2.c.; cf. Gen 13:15; 1 Kgs 15:13; Ezek 20:16; so e.g., NASB and ESV.

<sup>87</sup>So e.g., John Goldingay and David F. Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 2:323; John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 2:395; Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Second Isaiah* (New York: Scribner, 1928), 419–20.

<sup>88</sup>HALOT, s.v. "שִׁיחַ," 1320.

<sup>89</sup>Goldingay and Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*, 2:321.

<sup>90</sup>G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Isaiah XL–LXVI," *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1935): 403. So also Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study*, 2nd ed (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 123. Cf. CSB and NRSV. Similar is Kirchhevel with "fortune." Gordon D. Kirchhevel, "Who's Who and What's What in Isaiah 53," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13 (2003): 128.

<sup>91</sup>Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 254, 265.

<sup>92</sup>So e.g., Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 2:395; Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, 420; R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 56–66*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2014), 595.

the early church understood the LXX's τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ to be a reference to the servant's ancestry rather than his offspring. For example, in the second century AD, Justin argues that this refers to Christ's virginal conception; that is, the Servant does not have a traceable ancestry on his mother's side.<sup>93</sup> Augustine later used this passage as evidence for Christ's eternal generation (*Sermon* 195.1). Regardless of whether Justin or Augustine were correct regarding the prophet's meaning, they provide further evidence that γενεά was often understood in a qualitative rather than temporal sense.

### LXX: Relatives, Clan, or Nation

Muraoka cites Genesis 43:7 and Numbers 10:30, along with Numbers 13:22, which was examined above, as examples of γενεά used in the qualitative sense of the “whole body of blood-relations.”<sup>94</sup> This use of γενεά is especially relevant to Matthew 24:34's ἡ γενεά αὕτη because a large group descended from a common ancestor, not necessarily living contemporaneously, is described. In Genesis 43:7, γενεά translates תְּלִמָּוֹת which can refer to descendants (e.g., Gen 48:6) or relatives (e.g., Lev 18:9).<sup>95</sup> Joseph's brothers are relating to Jacob how the mysterious man in Egypt had questioned them regarding their relatives (τὴν γενεὰν ἡμῶν), that is, their father and youngest brother. In Numbers 10:30, Hobab states that he will return to his own family (εἰς τὴν γενεάν μου) rather than accompanying Moses and again γενεά translates מִשְׁפָּחָה. To these passages, we should also add Genesis 31:3, which has another occurrence of תְּלִמָּוֹת and where God instructs Jacob to return to his relatives (εἰς τὴν γενεάν σου). In both of these latter two

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<sup>93</sup>See e.g., *Dial.* 68.4; 69.4; 76.2; *First Apol.* 51.1. Justin believed that Isaiah is speaking of Christ's “ineffable origin” (ἀνεκδιήγητον ἔχει τὸ γένος). *First Apol.* 51.1. Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.28.5; 3.19.2. Later Athanasius will make a similar argument based on the LXX. *On the Incarnation*, 37.2–4; *De Syn.* 28.6. On the history of interpretation in the early church see esp. G. Durand, “‘Sa Génération, Qui La Racontera?’ Is 53, 8,” *Revue Des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 53 (1969): 638–57.

<sup>94</sup>GELS, “γενεά,” 127.

<sup>95</sup>HALOT, “תְּלִמָּוֹת,” 556.

examples, γενεά is clearly not referring to a temporal category; you cannot depart from or return to a temporal generation. Furthermore, the example of Jacob in Genesis 31 illustrates the fact that γενεά could refer to a relatively small family group such as Isaac’s children and their immediate families.

In other instances, γενεά is used in the LXX to describe a larger family unit and could be glossed as “clan.” For example, in Leviticus 25:41, a slave released at the Year of Jubilee is to return “to his clan” (εἰς τὴν γενεάν αὐτοῦ). Here γενεά is translating the Hebrew מִשְׁפָּחָה which can refer to an “extended family” or “clan” where “the sense of blood relationship is still felt.”<sup>96</sup>

One final OT passage might also be included under “clan.”<sup>97</sup> Genesis 25:13 gives the names of Ishmael’s sons לְתוֹלְדָתָם which has been translated as “in the order of their birth” (NIV, ESV, NRSV, and NASB), which would be a way that γενεά was used dating back to Homer, or “according to the family records” (CSB and similar in NET). The LXX reads τῶν γενεῶν αὐτοῦ, and the NETS translates this as “of his clans.”<sup>98</sup> It is possible that γενεά is being used to describe the order in which Ishmael’s sons were born. Or, γενεά could refer to the line of descendants or clans which the sons formed. Either way, it is not being used to refer to temporal contemporaries.

In some of the instances where γενεά is used to translate מִשְׁפָּחָה, the reference is likely to the entire nation or at least an entire tribe of Israel. That is, the idea of “clan” or “family” has been extended to everyone descended from Jacob or one of his twelve sons. For example, in Jeremiah 8:3, a passage that evokes the curses of Deuteronomy 28–32, God predicts death will

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<sup>96</sup>HALOT, s.v. “מִשְׁפָּחָה,” 651.

<sup>97</sup>The use of γενεά in Ex 13:18 is difficult to classify in part because the meaning of the Hebrew text is uncertain. The people of Israel are described as going up from Egypt in מַשְׁבָּחָה (“in marital array,” NASB; “ready for battle,” NIV). The participle מַשְׁבָּחָה refers to people arranged in groups of fifties. HALOT, s.v. “מִשְׁבָּחָה,” 331. The LXX translation may or may not indicate that the translator understood these groupings to be familial.

<sup>98</sup>Brayford suggests “families” for γενεῶν. Ishmael’s twelve sons became the heads of twelve families which, according to v. 16, “eventually grew into ‘nations’ (ἔθνος).” Susan Brayford, *Genesis*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Boston: Brill, 2007), 13.

be chosen over life by πᾶσιν τοῖς καταλοίποις τοῖς καταλειφθεῖσιν ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ἐκείνης ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (“all the remnant which remains from that family in every place”). The phrase ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ἐκείνης translates the Hebrew הַעַרְבָּה הַרְשָׁעָה (‘‘of this evil nation,’’ NIV).<sup>99</sup> In Jeremiah 10:25 the LXX again translates הַעַרְבָּה with γενεά, and because of the parallelism with the nations who receive God’s wrath (ἔκχεον τὸν θυμόν σου ἐπὶ ἔθνη), it is clear that ἐπὶ γενεὰς αἱ τὸ ὄνομά σου οὐκ ἐπεκαλέσαντο should be translated as ‘‘the peoples who do not call on your name’’ (NIV).

Several passages from the Apocrypha are also relevant here. First, in 1 Esdras 5.4 we are given a list of the names of returning exiles κατὰ πατριὰς αὐτῶν εἰς τὰς φυλάς ἐπὶ τὴν μεριδαρχίαν αὐτῶν (‘‘by their paternal families for the tribes, over their groups,’’ NETS).<sup>100</sup> The next verse (v. 5) includes the names of those who are ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Δαυιδ ἐκ τῆς γενεᾶς Φαρες, φυλῆς δὲ Ιουδα (‘‘of the house of David, of the clan [or lineage] of Phares, of the tribe of Judah’’). The surrounding words help us understand γενεά. Here γενεά is being used alongside πατριά, μεριδαρχία, οἶκος, and φυλή to refer to a unit within the nation of Israel bound by a common ancestor. Second, verse 37 tells us of certain descendants of Delaiah and Nekoda. They returned despite not being able to prove by τὰς πατριὰς αὐτῶν καὶ γενεάς (‘‘their ancestral

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<sup>99</sup>The Hebrew phrase has also been translated as ‘‘of this evil family’’ (NASB, ESV, CSB, NRSV) and ‘‘of this wicked people’’ (NET). The meaning of הַעַרְבָּה in Jer 8:3 can be illuminated by its use in Jer 33:24 where it refers to some sub-group within the descendants of Jacob. The ‘‘two families’’ could be understood as in the NIV as a reference to the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. This is the majority position. See e.g., J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 603. However, it could also be a reference to two families or clans within Judah (so e.g. NASB, ESV, CSB, NRSV, and NET). These two families could be the families of Jacob and David. So e.g., Michael L. Brown, ‘‘Jeremiah,’’ in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, Rev. ed., vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 428.

<sup>100</sup>The distinction intended in this passage between πατριά and μεριδαρχία is hard to determine because the terms are roughly synonymous. Myers translates the latter as ‘‘divisions,’’ but acknowledges that it could also refer to an ‘‘official genealogy’’ and be the rendering of שְׁבִיטָה (cf. Ezr 8:1). Jacob Martin Myers, *I and II Esdras*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 58. Muraoka suggests it refers to a ‘‘division of a nation.’’ GELS, s.v. ‘‘μεριδαρχία,’’ 449. On the other hand, πατριά refers to a ‘‘group of individuals bound through paternal lineage.’’ GELS, s.v. ‘‘πατριά,’’ 540. It also could be glossed as ‘‘clan,’’ see e.g., Jdt 8.2.

houses or **lineage**,” NRSV) that they belonged to the nation of Israel. The NETS renders γενεάς here as “generations.” However, it is clear that the individual’s descent from a particular ancestor is in question, and so γενεά is being used here as it was in verse 5 to refer to a clan.

A third example of this qualitative use of γενεά in the Apocrypha occurs in Tobit 5.14 where Tobit, upon hearing Raphael’s false answer regarding his πατριά and φυλή, says Raphael is ἐκ **γενεᾶς** καλῆς καὶ ἀγαθῆς (“of good and noble **lineage**,” NRSV).<sup>101</sup> Tobit follows this up by declaring that Raphael comes ἐκ ῥίζης ἀγαθῆς (“of good stock”). Tobit is using γενεά as a synonym for ῥίζα which here refers to “a leading clan or family.”<sup>102</sup> This use of γενεά, from the intertestamental period, is very much like the uses which frequently appeared in Homer.

#### LXX: Type or Kind of People

In at least two places, the LXX uses γενεά in a qualitative sense which at least minimizes any biological connection among the members of the γενεά, if not avoiding the biological or familial sense altogether. First, in Isaiah 61:3, the prophet predicts that the restored exiles of Israel will be called “oaks of righteousness” (אִילֵי הַצֶּדֶק), or as the LXX puts it, the once brokenhearted captives will be called γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης.<sup>103</sup> The new name for the people “signifies a new nature with new potentialities.”<sup>104</sup> It is possible that the LXX used γενεά because the translator was either uncertain or uneasy about the meaning of אִיל in this context.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>101</sup>Moore translates the phrase as “a fine and worthy lineage.” Carey A. Moore, *Tobit*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 181.

<sup>102</sup>GELS, s.v. “ῥίζα,” 613. This use of ῥίζα can also be found in the NT, see e.g., Rom 15:12; Rv 5:5; 22:16 which have likely influenced by ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in Is 11:10. BDAG, s.v. “ῥίζα,” 905.

<sup>103</sup>It is widely recognized that the phrase אִילֵי הַצֶּדֶק parallels נֶצֶר מִטְעוֹ (‘‘branch of my planting’’) in Is 60:21 (and the similar expression in Is 61:3) with both phrases emphasizing God’s self-glorying work in restoring the people of Judah. See e.g., John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, Rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 303. The people of Judah, now made fruitful by God, are contrasted with their previous withered state in Is 1:30. Lessing, *Isaiah 56–66*, 267; Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 567.

<sup>104</sup>J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 501.

<sup>105</sup>John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56–66*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T & T Clark, 2014), 306.

Regardless, the choice of γενεά here indicates that the word was being used for a group of people primarily characterized by a specific quality, in this case, the quality of δικαιοσύνη.

A second possible example occurs in Psalm 111:2 where a blessing is promised for דֹר יִשְׁרָיִם (“the generation of the upright,” NASB, NIV, ESV, etc.). The LXX renders this phrase as γενεὰ εὐθείων. It is possible that דֹר is being used as a synonym for נֶרֶץ in the previous line, in which case, דֹר would be being used in the qualitative sense of “descendant.”<sup>106</sup> However, it is also possible that דֹר is being used here to describe a class of people characterized by a particular character trait.<sup>107</sup> This verse is one of eight places in the psalter where BDB suggests the definition “generation characterized by quality of condition” and the gloss “class” for דֹר.<sup>108</sup> All of these instances of דֹר are translated as γενεά in the LXX, and at least some are arguably a qualitative use of the word.<sup>109</sup> For example, God is “with the righteous generation” (ἐν γενεᾷ δικαία, Ps 13:5 [14:5 MT]). Psalm 23:6 [24:6 MT] speaks of “this generation which seeks” God (אֹתָּהּ הַיְּגֵנֶה זֶה הַדּוֹר).<sup>110</sup> And Psalm 72:15 [73:15 MT] refers to “the generation of sons” (τῇ γενεᾷ τῶν υἱῶν), that is, Israelites who genuinely belong to God.<sup>111</sup>

Examining all of the instances of דֹר that BDB places in this category of “class,” there are

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<sup>106</sup>Goldingay believes that is the “whole present generation or company.” John Goldingay, *Psalms*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 3:310. Hossfeld and Zenger understand דֹר as a reference to descendants. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 173.

<sup>107</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Nelson, 2002), 127. The NET translators also understand דֹר in the same way and translate דֹר יִשְׁרָיִם simply as “the godly.”

<sup>108</sup>BDB, s.v. “דֹר,” 190. The other seven occurrences are Pss 12:8 (MT); 14:5; 24:6; 49:20 (MT); 73:15; 78:5 (2x).

<sup>109</sup>Neuberg discusses many of these same passages and suggests that דֹר should be glossed as *assembly*. He suggests that this meaning of דֹר had possibly fallen into disuse by the time of LXX leading the translators to incorrectly render it as γενεά. However, it is also possible that the translators understood this meaning of דֹר and believed that γενεά could convey the same sense. Frank J. Neuberg, “An Unrecognized Meaning of Hebrew Dôr,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 9 (1950): 215–17.

<sup>110</sup>Because of the collocation with עוֹלָם, Ps 12:8 is arguably using דֹר to refer to a period of time.

<sup>111</sup>“דֹר בְּנֵי־יְהוָה is the totality of those, in whom the filial relationship in which God has placed Israel in relation to Himself is become an inward or spiritual reality, the true Israel, v.1, the ‘righteous generation.’” Franz Delitzsch, “Isaiah,” in *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin, vol. 7 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 490.

seven other OT occurrences outside of the psalter and all are translated in the LXX as γενεά. Two of them occur in the Song of Moses (Dt 32:5, 20) and will be investigated further below. The remaining occurrences are in Proverbs 30:11, 12, 13, 14, and Jeremiah 7:29. The passage in Proverbs 30 describes four groups of people characterized by certain behaviors. Thus, an appropriate gloss for דֹר here would be *group*.<sup>112</sup> In each case, דֹר is translated with ἔκγονος in the LXX, which does not aid in understanding the use of γενεά but does demonstrate the wide semantic range of דֹר.

In the remaining passage, Jeremiah 7:29, the MT reads כִּי מָאָס יְהוָה וַיִּטֹּשׁ אֶת־דֹר עֲבָרָתוֹ (“for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath”). The context indicates that the “generation” is the nation of Israel that had persisted in disobedience and rejection of God’s prophets since God brought her out of Egypt (vv. 25–27). The LXX translates this phrase in verse 29 as ὅτι ἀπεδοκίμασεν κύριος καὶ ἀπόσας τὴν γενεάν τὴν ποιοῦσαν ταῦτα (“because the Lord has discarded and rejected the generation that did these things,” NETS). In Jeremiah’s message, “the generation” obviously includes his contemporaries. It is the contemporary members of the nation who will experience God’s wrath due to disobedience. However, the context indicates that this particular generation is being punished for sins shared with previous generations of Israelites (e.g., 7:25). In this context, the same group is also called a λαός (7:16) and a ἔθνος (7:28). Therefore, while this might not be the best evidence for a non-temporal use of γενεά, it is plausible that Jeremiah 7:29 is another example of both דֹר and γενεά being used qualitatively to describe a class of people with the temporal sense being secondary.<sup>113</sup>

One additional occurrence in the LXX might be considered under this heading and be

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<sup>112</sup>So e.g., DCH s.v. “דֹר,” 2:430.

<sup>113</sup>Of course in this example the familial aspect would also be present since it is the nation that is being referenced.

given the gloss *company*. Psalm 48:20 [49:19 MT] refers to the rich man at his death going to γενεᾶς πατέρων αὐτοῦ (“the company of his fathers,” NETS), or, in the Hebrew text, עֲדֵי־דֹר, אֲבוֹתָיו. BDB suggests the glosses *dwelling-place* and *habitation* for דֹר here (and in Is 38:12). The thought would then be that the rich man at death goes to the place where his dead ancestors dwell. However, it is more likely that דֹר has its more common meaning of “assembly.”<sup>114</sup> The meaning would then be that the rich man is joining his dead ancestors’ assembly or company. These dead ancestors would ostensibly belong to multiple generations, but they constitute one company or one γενεά in the place of the dead.

### “Generation” in Deuteronomy 32

Finally, in the OT passage most relevant to Matthew’s use of γενεά, Deuteronomy 32, the word γενεά appears three times in the LXX. In all three instances, it translates דֹר. In verse 7, the phrase שָׁנֹת דֹר־דֹר (“the years of generations and generations”) is translated as ἔτη γενεᾶς γενεῶν. Here γενεά is being used to refer to multiple ages in the past. In the other two instances (vv. 5, 20), γενεά is used to describe the people of Israel in an unfavorable light, and it is commonly agreed that these two verses serve as the background of at least some, if not all of, Jesus’ “generation” sayings in the book of Matthew.<sup>115</sup> In verse 5, the people of Israel are called a γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη (“a generation, crooked and perverse,” NETS). In verse 20, they are called γενεὰ ἐξεστραμμένη (“a perverse generation,” NETS). In unmistakable echoes, Matthew’s Gospel similarly refers to the rebellious Israelites of Jesus’ day as τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ (“this wicked generation,” 12:45), a γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς (“wicked and adulterous

<sup>114</sup>So e.g., DCH s.v. “דֹר,” 2:430; Neuberg, “Unrecognized Meaning,” 216.

<sup>115</sup>See e.g., William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, International Critical Commentary (London: T & T Clark, 1998), 2:260, 354; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 433 n47, 660–61; Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 367, 421–22; Turner, *Matthew*, 326, 424; Brandon D. Crowe, “The Song of Moses and Divine Begetting in Matt 1,20,” *Biblica* 90 (2009): 51–52.

generation, 16:4; similar in 12:39), and, especially, a γενεά ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη (“unbelieving and perverse generation,” 17:17).

Two factors indicate that γενεά is used in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 in a qualitative rather than temporal sense.<sup>116</sup> Specifically, γενεά is used in Deuteronomy 32 as it is in Matthew 24:34 to describe people who have both (1) a familial and (2) a moral connection, and (3) do not necessarily live at the same time. First, the song in Deuteronomy 32 was not addressed solely to one generation but was meant for the people of Israel through multiple generations. Moses gave this song to the people forty years after the Exodus while waiting in Moab to enter the Promised Land (Dt 1:1–3). The wilderness generation had died off, and the current generation was not in open rebellion to God. In fact, the current generation would have the privilege of taking possession of Canaan. Still, God predicted that the nation would eventually turn to other gods after entering the Promised Land and fall under the covenant curses (Dt 31:20). On account of their unfaithfulness, the people who God brought out of Egypt would return to Egypt “in ships” (Dt 28:68).<sup>117</sup> When this occurred, the song of chapter thirty-two would be a testimony against the people (Dt 31:21). When the song refers to things that occurred in distant generations (Dt 32:7), it includes God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Dt 32:10–14).<sup>118</sup> In other words, the

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<sup>116</sup>As I have throughout this study, I am using *temporal* to describe the view that γενεά is *limited* to people living at the *same time*. I am arguing that both Dt 32 and Mt 24 use γενεά to describe people than living but in both passages the γενεά referenced had more members than the people than living.

<sup>117</sup>The reference to returning by the sea, an unusual way to go from Canaan to Egypt, is likely one of several indications in the text that Israel’s future dispersion will be world-wide and require a greater new exodus. “Thus, ‘Egypt’ may include the literal land of Egypt, but it is clearly not restricted to it.” Charles L. Quarles, “‘Out of Egypt I Called My Son’: Intertextuality and Metalepsis in Matthew 2:15,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 8 (2017): 8. By referencing Egypt and warning that the kind of plagues that fell on Egypt will fall on Israel, the future exile is presented in Dt as an “anti-Exodus.” Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy’s Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 233.

<sup>118</sup>“The days of old (עוֹלָם קִדְמִית), as v. 8ff show, are not the patriarchal age, but the period of the formation of the nation under Moses, and of its settlement in Canaan.” Samuel R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3rd ed., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895), 355. Cf. Is 63:11; Mic 7:14.

song includes future Israelites, Israelites who could ask their fathers about the Exodus.<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, the song is specifically said in 31:29 to address a judgment that will come upon God's chosen people "in days to come" (בְּאַחֶרֶת הַיָּמִים). While the point is debated, this phrase likely serves as a technical term in the Pentateuch for the eschaton.<sup>120</sup> Even if this conclusion about בְּאַחֶרֶת הַיָּמִים is not accepted, and a definite future point is not intended, the phrase at least points to a distant future and indicates that the song had a historical scope broader than Moses' contemporaries.<sup>121</sup> In other words, since we are talking about people who live at points in history, there is a temporal aspect to the song's uses of γενεά, but γενεά in the song is not limited to one particular time. It is transtemporal. The song addresses Israelites in Moses' day *and* future Israelites who will experience God's judgment at some distant time. Time is present, but time does not draw the boundaries of the γενεά. Instead, γενεά is used to describe people bound together not by a particular place in history but by their common descent from Jacob and also, as we will see below, their common rebellion against their ultimate Father, Yahweh.<sup>122</sup> This latter sense of γενεά is what I am calling a qualitative sense.

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<sup>119</sup> Meinertz points to the manner in which γενεά in Dt 32:5 is parallel to λαός in Dt 32:6 as further evidence that γενεά refers not to a "contemporary generation" ("zeitgenössische Generation") but to "the people of Israel in its sinfulness" ("das Volk Israel in seiner Sündhaftigkeit"). Meinertz, "Dieses Geschlecht," 285.

<sup>120</sup> The phrase appears in three key places in the Pentateuch where a central character (Jacob, Balaam, or Moses) gives an eschatological prophecy. John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 34–59; John Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 36–37. The phrase appears fourteen times in the OT and arguable always refers to the eschaton. Kevin Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 113. Cf. BDB s.v. "אַחֶרֶת," 31.

<sup>121</sup> So e.g., Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 344. Cf. "The poem has on its horizon the entire history to follow in the corpus of Joshua–Kings." Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 277. The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* indicates the presence of an early Jewish tradition which viewed the referent of Dt 32:20 extending across time and experiencing judgment at the hands of the "the Babylonians" (בְּבָבֶלָא, v. 21), "Media and Elam" (בְּמִדְיָ וּבְעִילָם, v. 24), "the house of Agag" (דְּבֵית אַגַּג, v. 24; cf. Nm 24:6), "the Greeks" (וְיוֹנָא, v. 24; cf. Zech 9:13), and "the Edomites" (אֲדוּמָא, v. 24). Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy, Translated, with Notes*, Aramaic Bible 5B (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 92–93.

<sup>122</sup> Similar is Winter who views Dt 32 as the synthesis between two songs, the later, which included vv. 5, 20, composed just prior to the Babylonian captivity. Thus, the song as a whole depicts Israel's history from the

A second indication of the qualitative sense of γενεά in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 is the familial language used throughout the song. In other words, γενεά does not merely describe people characterized by rebellion against God, but these are also people who have a familial connection to God, a fact that makes their rebellion more odious.<sup>123</sup> So the quality shared by this γενεά is not only perversion or corruption but also the quality of having God as her Father. Γενεά then would have here in Deuteronomy 32 a sense which was common in Greek literature, a familial sense that, as we have seen, הָיָה could also share. The wording of the context makes this clear. God is described as Israel's father who formed her (vv. 6, 18). In verse 5, in a statement parallel to the "crooked and perverse generation," Israel is called "blemished children" (τέκνα μωμητά). In verse 20, in the parallel statement to the other use of γενεά, Israel is called "sons who have no faith [or faithfulness] in them" (υιοί, οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς). These are God's special children who have rebelled, but this also means that He will not abandon them. After Israel has been punished, God will relent and "avenge the blood of His sons" (v. 43, τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται). The same nation that was punished will also be redeemed. This familial connection to God was not unique to Moses' generation but was shared by all Israelites.

Because of its purpose as a lasting witness to the people of Israel, the song of Deuteronomy 32 would have been well-known to Matthew's readers. The song's influence may be seen by later OT passages that allude to it (e.g., Ps 78:8; Isa 1:2, 4; 45:10; Jer 31:9; Hos 1:10; etc.).<sup>124</sup> Additional evidence from Second Temple literature demonstrates that the Song of Moses

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wilderness wanderings to the late seventy century BC. He argues that, if Dt 32 was post-exilic, it would have more explicitly described the Babylonian deporation. Paul Winter, "Der Begriff 'Söhne Gottes' Im Moselied Dtn 32 1–43," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67 (1955): 40–48.

<sup>123</sup>Driver acknowledges that the term הָיָה in 32:5, 20 carries a "moral connotation," but he does not acknowledge that it also has a familial connotation in this context. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 353.

<sup>124</sup>For a comprehensive list of the numerous places that Dt 32 is evoked in just the Prophets see esp. Guenter, "This Generation," 183 n40.

was “widely known and employed by authors preceding and roughly contemporaneous with Matthew.”<sup>125</sup> Thus, if the song was well-known and I am correct in saying that both דָּוָר and γενεά in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 are best understood as a reference to the entire nation, then Matthew’s readers would have recognized Jesus’ use of Deuteronomy 32 in the same way.

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<sup>125</sup>Crowe, “Song of Moses,” 48. See. e.g., Sir. 24.8–9; 2 Macc 7.6; 4 Macc 18.18–19; 2 Baruch 84.2; Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.34; *Posterity* 25, 35, 48; *Planting* 14; *Sobriety* 3, 222; *Prelim. Studies* 12, 28; *Change of Names* 34; *Worse* 30, 31; *Confusion* 28; *Dreams* 2.29, 44; *On Drunkenness* 53; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.303. Of course, another first century writer, the Apostle Paul, seems to have viewed Dt 32 as “a hermeneutical key of equal importance with the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah” in understanding God’s relationship to Israel. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 164. See esp. Rom 10:19; 15:10.

TABLE 3

## USES OF ΓΕΝΕΑ IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Usage	Number	References
Indefinite Future Generations	164	Gn 9:12; 17:7, 9, 10, 12; Ex 3:15 (2x); 12:14, 17, 42; 16:32, 33; 17:16 (2x); 27:21; 29:42; 30:8, 10, 31; 31:13, 16; Ex 40:15; Lv 3:17; 6:11; 7:36; 10:9; 17:7; 21:17; 22:3; 23:14, 21, 31, 41; 24:3; Nm 10:8; 15:14, 15, 21, 23, 38; 18:23; 35:29; Jo 22:27, 28; Ps 9:27 (2x); 21:31; 32:11; 44:18 (2x); 47:14; 48:12 (2x); 60:7 (2x); 70:18; 71:5 (2x); 76:9 (2x); 77:4, 6; 78:13 (2x); 84:6 (2x); 88:2 (2x), 5 (2x); 89:1 (2x); 99:5 (2x); 101:13 (2x); 101:19, 25; 105:31 (2x); 134:13 (2x); 144:4 (2x), 13 (2x); 145:10 (2x); Prv 27:24 (2x); Eccl 1:4 (2x); Is 13:20; 24:22; 34:10, 17 (2x); 51:8 (2x); 53:11 (2x), 12 (2x); 60:15 (2x); Lam 5:19 (2x); Dn 4:3 (2x); 4:34 (Theod., 2x); 6:27 (OG, 2x); Jl 1:3; 2:2 (2x); 4:20 (2x); Est 9:27 (2x); Tb 1.4 (AB); Tb 1.4 (8); Tb 5.14; 8.5 (8); 13.12 (AB); 13.12 (8); 13.13 (AB, 2x); 13.13 (8, 3x); 14.5 (AB); Jdt 8.32 (2x); Est 10.3k; Ws 7.27; Sir 16.27; 24.33; 39:9 (2x); 44.14, 16; 45.26; 1 Mc 2.61 (2x); 3 Mc 6.36; Odes 9.48, 50 (2x); 14:39 (2x); Ps. of Sol. 18.6; Dan 4.37b (2x); Dan 4.37c (2x)
Past Time/Generations	10	Dt 32:7; Jb 8:8; Is 41:4; 51:9; 61:4; Sir 2.10; 44.7; 1 Mc 2.51; Odes 2.7; Ps. of Sol. 18.12
Numbered Generation(s)	14	Gn 15:16; 50:23; Ex 13:18; 20:5; 34:7; Dt 5:9; 7:9; 23:4; 23:9; 1 Chr 16:15; Jb 42:16 (Theod.); Ps 104:8 ; 108:13; Letter of Jeremiah 2
Specific Generation(s) <sup>126</sup>	11	Gn 6:9; 7:1; Ex 1:6; Nm 32:13; Dt 2:14; 29:21; Jgs 2:10 (2x); Ps 94:10; Zep 3:9; Sir 14.18
Offspring/Descendants	12	Ex 30:21; Lv 23:43; 25:30; Nm 9:10; 13:22, 28; Jdg 3:2; Prv 22:4; Dn 9:1 (OG); Est 9:28; Ws 3.19; Sir 4.16
Relatives/Clan/Nation/Race	12	Gn 25:13; 31:3; 43:7; Lv 25:41; Nm 10:30; Jer 8:3; 10:25; Tb 5.14 (AB); Tb 5.14 (8); Jdt 8.18; 1 Esd 5.5, 37
Type/Kind/Company	15	Dt 32:5, 20; Ps 11:8; 13:5; 23:6; 48:20; 72:15; 77:8 (2x); 111:2; Is 61:3; Jer 7:29; Odes 2.5, 20; Ps. of Sol. 18.9
Other Qual. Uses	1	Is 53:8

<sup>126</sup>As argued above, some of these might plausibly be qualitative uses but they have been put in this category so as to not overstate my case. The use of γενεά in Zep 3:9 is perhaps the most puzzling. The MT reads: כִּי אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ אֶל־עַמִּים שְׂפָה בְרוּרָה (“For then I will give to the peoples purified lips,” NASB). The LXX reads: ὅτι τότε μεταστρέψω ἐπὶ λαοὺς γλῶσσαν εἰς γενεὰν αὐτῆς (“Because then I will change the tongue for peoples in its generation,” NETS). Possibly the LXX translator understood בְרוּרָה as a form of ברא and γενεά refers to the nations’ original origins or state of being (i.e. prior to Babel) when they spoke one language. Marvin A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 168.

## 1st Century BC – 1st Century AD

The qualitative uses of *γενεά* which were seen in the LXX can be seen in other Greek literature from the post-classical period. For example, Apollonius of Rhodes (3rd century BC) uses *γενεά* ten times in his well-known account of Jason of the Argonauts, and all of the uses refer to either ones' lineage, birth, race, or children.<sup>127</sup>

However, rather than examine all of the post-classical writers, this final section will explore the writings of men who lived roughly contemporaneously with Matthew (i.e., approximately within a century) to demonstrate that *γενεά* was still being used in the first century AD, in the various ways, including the qualitative ways, that we saw in earlier Greek literature. First, we will examine Diodorus of Sicily's *Bibliotheca historica* and Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*, two notable works of history composed just before the NT era. Second, the works of Philo of Alexandria, a Greek writer who, like Jesus and His followers, was Jewish and familiar with the Greek OT, will be examined. Third, Josephus's usage will be discussed. Fourth, the works of Plutarch will be examined. Plutarch's writings represent the period just after the time of the NT, and their varied subject matter provides a good test case for how *γενεά* was used in various contexts. In addition to these, the works of Strabo and Clement of Rome will be surveyed, despite only having nine and eleven occurrences respectively, to complete an examination of all first-century writers in *TLG* who use *γενεά* more than nine times.

### Post-Classical Period: Diodorus of Sicily

Diodorus (c. 90 BC – c. 30 BC) in his *Bibliotheca historica* frequently uses *γενεά* to describe a past time-period, accounting for 40 of his 43 total uses.<sup>128</sup> In these instances, *γενεά* is

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<sup>127</sup>*Arg.* 1.20, 203; 2.762, 990; 3.339, 354, 605; 4.727, 1016, 1212.

<sup>128</sup>For references see Table 4 below.

always accompanied by one or more of the following which makes the meaning of γενεά clear: (1) a numerical adjective, (2) πολύς, or (3) a temporal marker such as ὕστερος or πρότερος. In these cases, Diodorus refers to multiple past generations or one past generation in relation to some person or event. For example, Heracles lived “a generation before the Trojan War” (γενεᾷ πρότερον τῶν Τρωικῶν). Diodorus considers the length of a γενεά, when used to describe a period of time, to be thirty years in one place (2.55.3), but around 43 years in another (2.29.1).

Diodorus also uses γενεά in a qualitative sense to describe the race of the Titans (τὴν τῶν Τιτάνων γενεάν, 3.74.6). He also uses it to describe offspring. The Pythian priestess tells Myscellus that Apollo will give him children (γενεὰν δώσει, 8.17.1). Diodorus also uses γενεά for an immediate family. He relates the content of a decree that required a man and his family to be exiled (φεύγειν αὐτὸν καὶ γενεάν, 18.56.7).

#### Post-Classical Period: Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Like Diodorus, Dionysius (c. 60 BC – c. 7 BC) also frequently uses γενεά in his *Roman Antiquities* to describe a time period and, in thirty-five of these instances (out of a total of 52), he refers to past generations using the same numerical or temporal markers seen in Diodorus’ work.<sup>129</sup> However, he also refers four times to the present generation (from the character’s perspective in the narrative). For example, he refers to a third generation before the present one (τῇ τρίτῃ πρὸ ταύτης γενεᾷ, 3.10.3). Here he is using the demonstrative οὗτος to refer to the speaker’s current generation. A little later in the account, he refers to something occurring “in our generation” (ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, 3.15.1). Similarly, he refers to “my generation” (ἐμὲ γενεᾶς, 5.75.2), and the context indicates that he is speaking of a time period. Finally, one passage refers to the “third generation before our own” (τῆς τρίτης πρὸ ἡμῶν γενεᾶς, 5.77.2).

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<sup>129</sup>For references see Table 4 below.

Therefore, in thirty-nine of fifty-two (75%) instances of *γενεά* in his work, Dionysius uses it in a temporal sense, and the temporal sense is indicated by the context, particularly possessive pronouns, numerical adjectives, and, in one case, a demonstrative pronoun.

However, Dionysius also has qualitative uses of *γενεά*. First, he uses it nine times for children. Romulus is said to have required parents to raise “all male children” (*ἅπασαν ἄρρενα γενεάν*, 2.15.2), but only the first-born daughter. Lucius Tarquinius died without male offspring (*γενεᾶς ἄρρενος*, 3.65.6) and Junius Brutus left behind neither male nor female offspring (*γενεάν οὔτε ἄρρενα καταλιπὼν οὔτε θήλειαν*, 5.18.1). Similarly, Romulus left behind no offspring (*οὐδεμίαν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γενεάν καταλιπὼν*, 2.56.7).<sup>130</sup> However, two lines later, Dionysius uses *γενεά* with a different sense when he relates that Romulus died in the fifty-year from his birth (*ἀπὸ γενεᾶς*, 2.56.7).

Additionally, Dionysius uses *γενεά* to refer to families. He relates a speech in which the speaker refers to *βίους καὶ οἴκους καὶ γενεὰς καὶ πάντα τὰ πλείστου*, which Cary translates as “our fortunes, our houses, our **families**, and everything that means most to us.”<sup>131</sup> Similarly, another passage refers to “our persons, our lives, and our **families**” (*σώματα καὶ ψυχὰς καὶ γενεὰς*, 6.84.2) given as pledges. He later speaks of the rituals carried out to honor the Appian family (*τῆς Ἀππίου γενεᾶς*, 11.14.3).

Finally, Dionysius, like earlier writers, uses *γενεά* twice to describe a line of descendants. Specifically, he uses *γενεαί* to refer to multiple descendants of the Trojans who remained to his day (1.85.3). The plural is likely used because he is thinking of at least fifty specific families (*πεντήκοντα μάλιστ’ οἴκοι*, 1.85.3).

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<sup>130</sup>Dionysius also uses *γενεά* for children in 2.25.5; 2.76.5; 4.33.3; 7.9.1; 9.51.6.

<sup>131</sup>Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, trans. Earnest Cary, 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937).

The lemma γενεά appears seventy times in the ten volumes of Philo's (c. 20 BC – c. AD 50) works published by the Loeb Classical Library.<sup>132</sup> All seventy of Philo's uses will be grouped below into either (1) offspring or race, (2) kindred or family, (3) generation or temporal uses, and (4) non-familial qualitative uses.

### Offspring or Race

Γενεά is most commonly used in Philo's writings (twenty-seven instances) to describe people who are descended from a common ancestor. These qualitative uses can range from immediate children, future descendants, and even an entire race or larger people group. This category will also include the few places where Philo uses γενεά for gender and parentage.

#### Offspring and Gender of Children

In sixteen instances, Philo uses γενεά to refer to one's offspring or children. For example, quoting Solon, Philo counsels a thirty-five-year-old man to seek a wife and "offspring" (γενεήν, *Creation* 104.14). In *On the Posterity of Cain*, Philo refers to the offspring or descendants of Anak (γενεὰς Ἐνάχ, 60.2). Γενεά is also used to describe the offspring of Ham (*QG* 2.65.6). Sarah tells Abram to have a child with their slave so that they might not be desolate of offspring (ἔρημος γενεᾶς, *Abraham* 247.3).<sup>133</sup> After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers approach him with trepidation along with their wives and children (γυναῖκας καὶ γενεάν, *Joseph* 261.4). The widowed Tamar married her husband's younger brother because the "elder [brother] had left no

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<sup>132</sup>Unless otherwise notes, all quoted English translation of Philo are from Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, 10 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). The lemma γενεά also appears twelve more times in the fragments of Philo indexed by *TLG*. Some, but not all, of these additional twelve occurrences will be examined.

<sup>133</sup>The same expression occurs in *Spec. Laws* 2.127.1; 2.133.5.

**issue**” (γενεάν τοῦ προτέρου μὴ καταλιπόντος, *Virtues* 222.3). In *On the Decalogue* 128.5, Philo warns that the fruit of adultery may “form an alien and bastard **brood**” (ἀλλοτρίαν γενεάν νοθεύουσι) which threatens the inheritance of the legitimate offspring.

At times, *γενεά* is used in a context that refers to the gender of the child or the child’s parents. In *On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain*, Philo describes the difficulty of producing a “male offspring” (*γενεᾶς τῆς ἄρρενος*, 112.4).<sup>134</sup> Conversely, Sarah is described as not having a mother and thus not having female parentage (θήλειος *γενεᾶς ἀμέτοχος*, *Drunkenness*, 61.3).<sup>135</sup> At times rather than speaking of specific offspring, Philo uses *γενεά* to describe gender broadly (e.g., *Spec. Laws* 1.201.2; 2.56.5).<sup>136</sup> In other words, according to Philo’s usage, male and female represent two separate *γενεαί*.

#### Other Familial Connections

However, at times, Philo uses *γενεά* in a qualitative sense to describe a much larger group of people descended from a common distant ancestor. For example, he argues that priests other than the high priests should marry the daughters of non-priests. His reason is “because the law did not wish that the nation should be denied altogether a share in the priestly **clanship**” (τῇ δ’ ὅτι τὸ ἔθνος οὐκ ἐβουλήθη γενεᾶς εἰς ἅπαν ἱερατικῆς ἀμοιρῆσαι, *Spec. Laws* 1.111.4).<sup>137</sup> In

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<sup>134</sup>Cf. *Flight* 208.1; *Moses* 1.13.31; 2.235.4. Philo uses a similar phrase (*γενεάν ἄρρενα*) in *Worse* 121.2 to describe a metaphorical son produced by justice. See also *Giants* 4.1; *Dreams* 1.200.7.

<sup>135</sup>Philo uses a similar phrase again in *Moses* 2.210.1. The opposite phrase *ἄρρενος γενεᾶς ἀμέτοχον* appears in *Heir* 61.4.

<sup>136</sup>This is especially obvious in a passage in *Spec. Laws* 3.37.5 where Philo describes homosexuals, specifically those who are effeminate and adorn themselves like women, as those who “leave no ember of their male **sex-nature** to smoulder” (μηδὲν ἐμπύρευμα τῆς ἄρρενος γενεᾶς ἐδόντες ὑποτύφεισθαι). In the same context, Philo uses *φύσις* as a synonym for *γενεά*: “the transformation of the male nature to the female is practiced by them as an art and does not raise a blush” (τὴν ἄρρενα φύσιν ἐπιτηδεύσει τεχνάζοντες εἰς θήλειαν μεταβάλλειν οὐκ ἐρυθριῶσι, 3.37.10). *Φύσις* refers to one’s “condition or circumstances as determined by birth.” BDAG, s.v. “φύσις,” 1069. Philo discusses the same subject using the same collocation of *γενεά* and *φύσις* in *Virtues* 18.5–6. An additional metaphorical use of *τῆς ἄρρενος γενεᾶς* in *Dreams* 2.15.4 will be discussed below.

<sup>137</sup>Yonge translates *γενεᾶς... ἱερατικῆς* as “the order of the priesthood.” Yonge, *Works of Philo*, 544.

other words, in this case, the *γενεά* could be entered through marriage. Philo also uses *γενεά* in a metaphorical sense to describe the familial connection, or “birth-tie,” between the human mind and reasoning (*Special Laws* 2.31.1).<sup>138</sup>

## Nation or Race

In at least one place, Philo uses *γενεά* to describe all the offspring of Israel, that is, the entire nation. In *On Rewards and Punishment* 158.4, Philo describes a coming day when the land of Israel, restored and at peace, will be “young once more” and “will be fruitful and bear a blameless **generation** to redress the one that went before” (πάλιν δὲ νεάσασα εὐφορήσει καὶ τέξεται **γενεάν** ἀνεπίληπτον, ἐπανόρθωμα τῆς προτέρας).<sup>139</sup> Philo cites Isaiah 54:1 for support (ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον, “because more are the children of the desolate woman”), thus indicating that he sees *γενεά* and *τέκνον* as synonyms in this context. For this reason, Yonge appears correct to translate *γενεάν ἀνεπίληπτον* here as “irreproachable offspring.”<sup>140</sup> This reference also demonstrates that at least one other Jewish writer in the first century AD used *γενεά* to describe Israel as I am arguing Matthew does in his Gospel.

Another example could fall under this category. In *On the Embassy to Gaius*, Philo describes the infamous emperor’s plan to erect an image in the Jewish Temple (188). Philo concludes that this event has been sent to “try the present **generation**, to test the state of their virtue” (ἵσως ἀπόπειρα ταῦτα τῆς καθεστώσης **γενεᾶς** ἐστὶ, πῶς ἔχει πρὸς ἀρετὴν, 196.1). While

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<sup>138</sup>Yonge translates *γενεᾶς* here as “guardianship of a parent.” Yonge, *Works of Philo*, 571.

<sup>139</sup>It is debated whether Philo linked Israel’s restoration with a coming Messiah. He seems to have put more emphasis on Israel’s need to dedicate herself to the Mosaic Law, and he believed that her faithful obedience would lead to a utopian age in the near future. Cristina Termini, “Philo’s Thought within the Context of Middle Judaism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 109–11. However, he did believe that “Miracles like those of the exodus will again take place: the adversaries will be stricken by panic, or will be pursued by swarms of hornets. God will send a warrior who will lead the army of the just to victory.” Termini, “Philo’s Thought,” 111.

<sup>140</sup>Philo, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. Charles Duke Yonge, Rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 679.

it is not possible to be certain, it seems likely due to the context that Philo is using γενεά to refer to the entire Jewish nation that is being put to the test by Gaius' proposed sacrilege.<sup>141</sup> In other words, not everyone in that time is facing this test, but only those who are Jewish *and* desire to protect the sanctity of the sanctuary in Jerusalem.<sup>142</sup>

In at least one place, Philo seems to use γενεά in its broadest possible sense to refer to the entire human race, or at least all people living at a particular time. In *On Rewards and Punishments* 23.2, Noah is described as chosen by God to “end the condemned and begin the innocent **generation**” (τέλος γενέσθαι τῆς κατακρίτου γενεᾶς καὶ ἀρχὴν τῆς ἀνυπαίτιου). This could be understood as a reference to two particular groups of contemporaries, one before the Flood and one immediately after. Still, by using ἀρχή it is more likely that Philo views Noah as the beginning of a new humanity or race, a replacement for the one that was destroyed in the Flood. All future humans would be descended from Noah, and this new race is called a γενεά.

### Kindred or Family

In some references, it is difficult to know whether Philo is using γενεά to refer to children or, more broadly, to one's family. In either case, it is used in a qualitative sense for a close familial connection.<sup>143</sup> However, in at least ten places, Philo uses γενεά to refer to contemporary family members who are not necessarily one's children. For example, in *On the Special Laws* 3.159.4, he refers to a debtor's extended family as “their womenfolk and children and parents and their other **relatives**” (γύναια τούτων καὶ τέκνα καὶ γονεῖς καὶ τὴν ἄλλην γενεάν). During

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<sup>141</sup>Jöris, *Use and Function*, 104.

<sup>142</sup>Philo also refers to the people of Israel as “the migrant generation” (ἡ ἀποικισθεῖσα γενεά, *QE* 2.49a.2) during their wilderness wandering. However, the context seems to indicate that Philo is limiting γενεά to that specific group of contemporaries who sojourned for forty years.

<sup>143</sup>E.g., in *Spec. Laws* 2.138.5 there is a reference to a woman and her “family” (γενεάν). However, the relevant word could also be translated as “offspring.” So Philo, *The Works of Philo*.

the Alexandrian riots of AD 38, “whole [Jewish] **families**, husbands with their wives, infant children with their parents” (**γενεάς** ὅλας, ἄνδρας μετὰ γυναικῶν, τέκνα νήπια μετὰ γονέων, *Flaccus* 68.2) were burned to death in the city.<sup>144</sup>

Using the same collocation of αἷμα and γενεά that was seen in earlier Greek literature, Philo refers to those who have left their “**kinsfolk** by blood” (**γενεάν**... ἀφ’ αἵματος, *Virtues* 102.2), and the context indicates that he is referring to those who have left their homeland. In the same passage, he uses συγγενής in a parallel fashion (103.2). A foreigner coming to join Israel was leaving behind his γενεά, but he was to be welcomed and loved by the Israelites as their συγγενής. Philo seems to view the two words in this context as synonymous.<sup>145</sup>

Abraham is the paradigmatic example of one who left his γενεά, something that one cannot do if γενεά can only mean a temporal generation. He was told to leave his “fatherland and **kindred** there” (πατρίδος καὶ **τῆς γενεᾶς** ταύτης, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.83.2). Philo is using γενεά to render הַגֵּרָה in Genesis 12:1.<sup>146</sup> The demonstrative ταύτης modifies γενεᾶς and is better translated as “this.” Nevertheless, the pronoun does not point to the generation to which Abram belongs but to his family.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, Philo describes the patriarch as one who left his “his native country, his **race**, and paternal home” (πατρίδα καὶ **γενεάν** καὶ πατρῶον οἶκον, *Virtues* 214.2). When Pharaoh heard that Josephs had a father and a large family (καὶ πατήρ ἐστὶν αὐτῷ καὶ **ἡ γενεά** πολυάνθρωπος, *Joseph* 251.2), he urged that the family settle in Egypt.

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<sup>144</sup>The same use can be found in *Embassy* 230.1; 308.5.

<sup>145</sup>Συγγενής refers to people “belonging to the same extended family or clan” or “belonging to the same people group.” BDAG, s.v. “συγγενής,” 950.

<sup>146</sup>The LXX translates הַגֵּרָה with συγγένεια in Gn 12:1. Philo seems to treat γενεά and συγγένεια as synonyms when speaking of kin or relatives. E.g., a sage has no οἰκία καὶ συγγένεια καὶ πατρίς (“house or kinsfolk or country”) except virtue (*Abraham* 31.5). Philo uses γενεά similarly in *Drunkenness* 40.5 where he is quoting the Greek text of Nm 10:30 directly. In *Migration* 27.2, he does the same when quoting Gn 31:3.

<sup>147</sup>So e.g., the translation of Yonge in Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 59.

## Kind of Persons

In two passages, Philo appears to use *γενεά* to describe people who are grouped not by descent or time but by some other characteristic. First, in *On Flight and Finding*, Philo describes a man who, while partaking in public life, does not seek fame but instead desires a “better **family**, which the virtues have taken as their heritage” (τῆς ἀμείνωνος *γενεᾶς*, ἣν ἀρεταὶ κεκλήρονται, 126.4). He goes on to describe this “better **family**” as having “an eye only for what is morally excellent” (τῆς ἀμείνωνος καὶ πρὸς τὸ καλὸν μόνον ἀφορώσης *γενεᾶς*, 129.3). There is obviously some overlap between this use and the familial categories examined above, but what sets this example apart is that the *γενεά* or family is not biological but is united by a common virtue; furthermore, one is not born into this *γενεά* but can instead choose to become part of it, something that cannot be done if *γενεά* is used only in a temporal sense.

Second, in another example of metaphor, Philo also refers to individuals who displayed reason and self-control as belonging to “the masculine **family**” (τῆς ἄρρενος *γενεᾶς*, *Dreams* 2.15), while those who were of the motherly race (μητρῶν γενεῇ, *Dreams* 2.16) displayed irrationality. This usage demonstrates that not only could *γενεά* be used for a group of people characterized by certain behaviors, behaviors that Philo, in this case, attributed to genders, but it also demonstrates that *γενεά* and *γένος* were still used in the first-century in a parallel fashion.<sup>148</sup>

## Generation

The categories above represent 38 uses of *γενεά* in Philo. In the remaining 42 occurrences, *γενεά* is used to refer to a period of time. These can be (1) multiple future generations, (2) specific generations, (3) discussions regarding the length of *γενεά* when used as a time measurement, and (4) a segment of time within a person’s lifetime.

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<sup>148</sup>Yonge translates τῆς ἄρρενος γενεᾶς as “the masculine kind.”

## Future Generations

At times Philo is quoting the Greek OT and using γενεά to refer to future generations.<sup>149</sup> He also uses γενεά with this sense when not quoting the OT. Each generation following the first man has degenerated (*Creation* 140.9; 141.11). In the same work and with the same sense, Philo refers to men who were born many generations later (οἱ τοσαύταις γενεαῖς ὕστερον φύντες, 148.8).<sup>150</sup> Similarly, he refers to the many generations which followed David (οἱ πολλαῖς γενεαῖς, *Confusion* 149.2; cf. γενεὰς πολλάς in Polybius, *History* 29.21.3). In *Who is the Heir?* 260.3, Philo speaks of Moses' subsequent generations.<sup>151</sup>

## Specific Generations

Philo refers to specific generations in at least eleven places, usually by referencing a well-known member of that generation or using a numerical adjective. For example, Philo refers to the generation in which Noah lived (*Unchangeable* 117.3; *Abraham* 31.7; 36.2).<sup>152</sup> Quoting Genesis 15:16, Philo relates God's promise that Abram's descendants would return to the Promised Land in the "fourth generation" (*Heir* 293.1, 4). Moses was seven generations removed from Abraham (*Moses* 1.7.3). In discussing Deuteronomy 23:7–8, but not quoting the Greek OT, Philo refers to the practice of admitting the Egyptian into the assembly of Israel in the third generation (τρίτην γενεάν, *Virtues* 108.4). In defending circumcision, Philo refers to the "thousands in every **generation**" (μυριάδας καθ' ἐκάστην **γενεάν**, *Spec. Laws* 1.3.5) which have practiced it. The historical portion of the Pentateuch details the rewards and punishments given

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<sup>149</sup>E.g., *Drunkenness* 127.4

<sup>150</sup>Philo uses a similar phrase to describe the passing of multiple generations in *Moses* 1.242.7; 2.29.5.

<sup>151</sup>Cf. *Spec. Laws* 4.175.2; *Rewards* 169.6. Here could likely also be added *Names* 12 where Philo's use of γενεαῖς, although it is a single word, seems by the context to be a quotation of Ex 3:15 and thus a reference to the generations who will call God by the name revealed to Moses.

<sup>152</sup>In citing Gn 6:9 Philo is here using γενεά where the MT uses דור. So also in *Abraham* 32.7; 36.2; *Question and Answers on Genesis* 2.11.2, 12; 2.15.6.

to the good and the bad “in each **generation**” (ἐν ἐκάσταις **γενεαῖς**, *Rewards* 2.2). In *On the Life of Abraham* 38.4, Philo extols the virtuous man who stands apart from his γενεά, and here γενεά seems to be used to describe the man’s contemporaries. Finally, Philo quotes from Deuteronomy 32:5 and its γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη (*Sobriety* 10).

### Length of a Generation

Philo assigns two different lengths to a γενεά when used to measure time, demonstrating again that there was not a consensus in the ancient Greek-speaking world on how long a generation lasted. First, in *Life of Moses* 1.238.2, he describes forty years as “the span of a generation of human life” (γενεᾶς βίον ἀνθρωπίνης). Similarly, he refers to “forty years” as “the life of generation” (γενεᾶς βίον ἔτη τεσσαράκοντα, *Spec. Laws* 2.199.3). However, in *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, he cites Heraclitus who assigned thirty years to a γενεά because that was the time it took a man to go from his birth to becoming a grandfather (2.5a.5). It is possible that the two different lengths represent Jewish and Greek traditions respectively,<sup>153</sup> but what is striking is the reason why Heraclitus, according to Philo, associated thirty years with a γενεά. It was because after thirty years, with the birth of children and grandchildren, “a generation complete in its offspring is produced.”<sup>154</sup> Therefore, even in this instance, γενεά primarily referred to a family unit and then only by extension to the time period needed to form a complete family unit.

### Times within a Person’s Life

Philo also uses γενεά five times to refer to a shorter period of time within a person’s lifetime. In *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, the first seven years of a person’s life are called the

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<sup>153</sup>Jōris, *Use and Function*, 102.

<sup>154</sup>The English translation is from Yonge, *Works of Philo*, 816.

first γενεά (295.2). In describing the second age, Philo explicitly states that he using γενεά figuratively (συμβολικῶς, 296.3).<sup>155</sup>

### Post-Classical Period: Flavius Josephus

The lemma γενεά appears eighty times in Josephus' late first-century works *Wars of the Jews*, *Antiquities of the Jews*, *Against Apion*, and *Life of Josephus*.<sup>156</sup> All eighty of Josephus' uses will be grouped below into either (1) kindred of family, (2) offspring or descendants, and (3) generation or temporal uses.

#### Kindred or Family

The most common way that Josephus uses γενεά is to refer to a family unit. This use represents at least forty-five of Josephus' eighty uses of γενεά.<sup>157</sup> For example, following the Flood, Noah feasted with his family (μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς, *Ant.* 1.92). When Jericho fell, Rahab was saved along with her family (τὴν γενεάν αὐτῆς, *Ant.* 5.26). At the massacre of Scythopolis, Simeon committed suicide after killing "his own **family**" (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ **γενεάν**) which consisted of his "wife, children, and aged parents" (γυνὴ καὶ τέκνα καὶ γηραιοὶ γονεῖς, *Wars* 2.467).<sup>158</sup> In this passage, the γενεά is not limited to one man's immediate family, but it is also inclusive of individuals of various ages. To cite one more example, entering Jerusalem, Titus' army found "whole **families** dead" (**γενεάς** ὅλας νεκρῶν, *Wars* 6.40; cf. 5.512) in homes due to famine during the siege.

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<sup>155</sup>Philo goes on to describe a third (297.1) and fourth (298.2, 4) γενεά in a person's life.

<sup>156</sup>This number does not include those instances in *TLG* where γενεά is used in tables of contents added later to Josephus' works.

<sup>157</sup>For a breakdown of Josephus' uses including references for these 45 uses see Table 4 below. Beyond these 45 occurrences, there are others where it not clear whether Josephus is referring to an entire family or specifically to a person's children. These references will be examined below.

<sup>158</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all English translation of *Wars of the Jews* are from Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. Martin Hammond, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

In some of these forty-four occurrences, a larger family unit is described as a *γενεά*. For example, in relating Saul's destruction of the priestly family of Abimelech, Josephus four times uses *γενεά* to describe the extended priestly clan (*Ant.* 6.255, 260, 262, 378). In Josephus' version of Mephibosheth's words to David, also found in 2 Samuel 19:28, Mephibosheth refers to Saul's whole family as *τῆς ὅλης ἡμῶν γενεᾶς* even though the LXX has *πᾶς ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρός μου* ("all the house of my father") in its version of the account. Similarly, Josephus twice refers to Ahab's extended family with *γενεά* (*Ant.* 9.109, 129) and the Hasmonean family as the *τῆς Ἀσσαμωναίων γενεᾶς* (*Ant.* 14.491).

### Offspring or Descendants

In twelve other instances, Josephus uses *γενεά* to refer to one's immediate children.<sup>159</sup> To these can be added seven instances where Josephus is referring to descendants beyond one's children. When combined with the forty-four places that *γενεά* is used to describe a family unit, these twenty occurrences bring the total number of familial usages to sixty-six occurrences or eighty-three percent of Josephus' usage of *γενεά*.

To cite some examples, Josephus uses *γενεά* for the Hebrew children threatened by Pharaoh in the days of Moses (*Ant.* 2.207). Twice he uses it to refer to the children of Aristobulus as distinct from his wife (*Ant.* 13.424, 426). When Aristobulus is later taken in chains with his family (*μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς*), we are told that his *γενεά* consisted of "two daughters and as many sons" (*δύο γὰρ ἦσαν αὐτῷ θυγατέρες καὶ τοσοῦτοι υἱεῖς*, *Ant.* 14.79).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>This number includes some instances where it not clear whether Josephus is referring to children or an entire family unit. E.g., "Antipater would make sure that no member of the family (*μηδένα τῆς γενεᾶς*) was left alive" (*Wars* 1.563) could also be translated, as does Whiston, "not one of his posterity should remain." Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987). This number also includes one instance where *γενεά* refers specifically to grandchildren. *Ant.* 5.274.

<sup>160</sup>The other examples of this usage are *Ant.* 14.410; 15.184; *Wars*, 1.552, 588; 2.25; 2.222; 7.338, 368.

In seven places, Josephus appears to be describing, not one's immediate children, but one's more distant descendants. An obvious example is *Antiquities* 1.183 where Josephus, relating God's promise to Abram recorded in Genesis 15:5, says that the patriarch's "posterity would be so great as to be comparable in number to the stars" (πολλὴν ἐκείνου γενεάν, ὥς ἀραπλησίως αὐτῇ τοῖς ἄστροις ἔσεσθαι τὸν ἀριθμόν).<sup>161</sup> Josephus' recounting of the famous event uses *γενεά* where the LXX uses *σπέρμα* and the MT uses *נַחֲלָה*. Abram's posterity can be described, by at least one first-century Jewish writer, as a singular *γενεά* (cf. *Ant.* 4.4). Similarly, Jacob prophesies that each of his twelve sons' "descendants" (τῶν ἐκ τῆς γενεᾶς αὐτῶν ἕκαστος) will find a home, not immediately but one day, in Canaan (*Ant.* 2.194). In Josephus' version of David's words found in 2 Samuel 24:17, the king petitions God to let his anger fall "upon him and all his line, but to spare the people" (εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν γενεάν αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν ἀποσκήπτειν, φείδεσθαι δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ, *Ant.* 7.328).<sup>162</sup>

## Generation

In only fourteen of Josephus' eighty uses (eighteen percent) is *γενεά* possibly used in a temporal way to refer to people who live as contemporaries. In eight of fourteen the usage is clearly indicated by a numerical adjective such as "the seventh generation" (τὴν ἑβδόμην... *γενεάν*, *Ant.* 1.58).<sup>163</sup> The remaining six include the account of Samuel storing his scroll in the

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<sup>161</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of *Ant.* are from Flavius Josephus, *Josephus*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray et al., 10 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

<sup>162</sup>The remaining examples of this usage are in *Ant.* 8.266 and *Wars* 3.374. Two other examples do not fall into any of these categories, but are clearly non-temporal uses, i.e., they do not refer to specific generation(s). First, the phrase *γενεᾶς ἐν ἀκμῇ οὔσης* (*Ant.* 13.417) refers to sons who were "in the prime of life." It is not clear whether *γενεά* is being used for the sons or for their lives. Second, in *Ant.* 20.92, Izates is said to die "having completed fifty-years of his life" (πεντηκοστὸν μὲν καὶ πέμπτον ἀπὸ γενεᾶς πληρώσας). However, this might be better translated as "fifty-five years from birth." Jöris, *Use and Function*, 107. Josephus appears to be using *γενεά* to describe one's age in relation to one's birth as was the case in earlier Greek literature. E.g., Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.2.8.16; 1.2.13.13.

<sup>163</sup>The 8 instances where the numerical adjective is used include *Ant.* 1.58, 72, 158; 5.336; 7.102; 9.139; 10.269; *Against Apion* 1.300.

tabernacle as a witness for future generations (ταῖς μετέπειτα γενεαῖς μαρτύριον, *Ant.* 6.66), and *Against Apion* 1.253 where Josephus uses the phrase “many generations earlier” (πολλαῖς... γενεαῖς πρότερον). In all of these passages, the context indicates a temporal sense.

In the *Wars of the Jews* 5.408, Josephus says that, if God had “judged our generation [τὴν ἡμετέραν γενεάν] deserving of freedom,” he could have spared the people and visited judgment on the Romans as he had once done on Assyria. Josephus may be speaking of his countrymen as temporal contemporaries. However, since the focus is on Jewish versus Roman people, the relevant phrase should likely be translated, as does Whiston, “our nation.”<sup>164</sup> God had not chosen to spare the nation.

Similarly, when speaking of the evils within Jerusalem during the war, Josephus says, “no **generation** in human history has spawned more prolific wickedness” (μήτε **γενεάν** ἐξ αἰῶνος γεγονέναι κακίας γονιμωτέραν, *Wars* 5.442). Like the previous reference, this could be understood as a temporal reference. Still, due to the parallel manner Josephus uses ἔθνος a few lines later (5.443), it is more likely that γενεά is being used to refer to the nation or specifically those of the nation who lived in Jerusalem. This reading becomes even more apparent in 5.556 when Josephus describes the people of Jerusalem as a godless “generation” (γενεάν ἄθεωτέραν) because of their desecration of the temple. In 6.408, he again uses γενεά when he says of Jerusalem:

This was a city whose catalogue of sufferings during the siege was such that, if she had enjoyed that same number of blessings spread over the whole history since the foundation, she would have been regarded as the envy of the world; a city, moreover, that did not deserve such total disaster for any reason other than her own production of this particular generation [τὸ **γενεάν** τοιαύτην ἐνεγκεῖν] which caused her ruin.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, 718.

<sup>165</sup>The phrase τὸ γενεάν τοιαύτην ἐνεγκεῖν might be better translated, as does Thackeray, as “a generation such as that.” Josephus, *Josephus*, 3:495. Hammond’s translation makes it appear as if Josephus has used οὗτος in which case this would be parallel to Mt 24:34. However, by using τοιοῦτος, Josephus appears to be stressing the

This passage warrants further attention in Chapter 5. For now, it is enough to note that Josephus was more likely to use *γενεά* in a qualitative sense, and, like earlier writers, his temporal uses of *γενεά* are indicated as such by the context.

#### Post-Classical Period: Plutarch

Plutarch's (c. AD 46 – after 119) complete works contain forty-four occurrences of *γενεά*.<sup>166</sup> Plutarch frequently uses *γενεά*, at least sixteen times, to refer to generations or time periods. Half of these are indicated by the presence of a numerical adjective such as “five generations” (*πέντε γενεαῖς*, *Numa* 1.2).<sup>167</sup> It is noteworthy that he also used *γένος* in the same way (*ἄχρι γένους τετάρτου*, *Comp. Aristid. Cat.* 3.5.1), demonstrating once again that the two words often overlapped. In one important passage, Plutarch creates a conversation between two persons who debate the length of a *γενεά* as they attempt to decipher a cryptic passage attributed to Hesiod. In their discussion, the word *γενεά* appears eight times (*De Defect.* 11–12). Among the options discussed are one year (the view attributed to Hesiod by Plutarch's character, Cleombrotus), thirty years (i.e., the time necessary for a man to become a grandfather, a view attributed to Heraclitus), and one hundred and eight years (the total length of man's life).<sup>168</sup> This passage demonstrates that *γενεά* could be used as a measurement of time, but there was debate

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character of this *γενεά*. As Hammond notes, “Josephus is at pains to lay the blame for the disaster squarely on the Jewish rebels (see also 7.253–74).” Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 471.

<sup>166</sup>TLG contains one additional reference from a fragment which quotes from Hesiod, *Work and Days* 284 to refer to offspring.

<sup>167</sup>The 8 occurrences are *Numa* 1.2; *De E apud Delphos* 16; *Delays* 12 [2x], 21; *QC* 4.5.2; *De Herod.* 22; *Bruta* 5.

<sup>168</sup>For a discussion of this passage and the antiquity of the one hundred and eight year-long *γενεά* and its possible use in Ex 12:40 see esp. John C. Poirier, “Generational Reckoning in Hesiod and in the Pentateuch,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 (2003): 193–99. Poirier suggests that most in Plutarch's day would have understood a *γενεά*, when used to measure time, as the length required for a man to become a grandfather. However, he notes that there was not a uniform length assigned to the period with 33 1/2 and 40 years both being options. *Ibid.*, 196.

over how much time a γενεά measured.

However, γενεά as “generation” or “age” is not the most common use by Plutarch. Instead, γενεά is used at least twenty-five times in a qualitative manner, frequently with the familial or biological meanings that were seen in earlier writers. First, it can refer to one’s lineage (*Camillus* 15.3.4). Second, it can refer to one’s descendants.<sup>169</sup> Third, and most commonly, it refers to one’s children.<sup>170</sup> Fourth, in several places Plutarch uses γενεά for an immediate family which may or may not include more than children.<sup>171</sup> Fifth, in at least three instances, Plutarch uses γενεά in its broadest qualitative sense to describe nations or races of men from a particular region (e.g., Τρώων γενεά, *De Pyth.* 11).<sup>172</sup> Plutarch even speaks of a “very wretched **brood**” of frogs (μάλα δειλῆλαι **γενεαί**, *Aetia physica* 2 quoting Aratus). Finally, in the context of discussing Plato’s *Philebus*, Plutarch uses γενεά to describe a “class” (*De E apud Delphos* 15), that is, things grouped by common characteristics.

#### Post-Classical Period: Strabo

Strabo (c. 64 BC – c. AD 24) produced his *Geography* during the first quarter of the first century. His work contains only nine uses of γενεά, which are a mixture of the qualitative and temporal uses seen earlier. When Strabo uses γενεά temporally, it is clearly indicated by the

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<sup>169</sup>3 occurrences appear to fit into this category: *Comp. Aristid. Cat* 3.6; *De Frat.* 6 (quoting Homer); *De Herod.* 42.

<sup>170</sup>10 occurrences: *Them.* 10.3, *Cato Ma.* 27.5; *Alc.* 8.2; *Ant.* 87.1; *Dem.* 53.4; *Dion* 3.6; *Otho* 16.2; *Septem.* 3; *De Frat.* 18; *Delays* 20 (quoting Hesiod).

<sup>171</sup>6 occurrences: *Them.* 10.5; *Camillus* 15.2; *Tim.* 34.1; *Pomp.* 28.1; *Caesar* 20.4; *De Herod.* 34.

<sup>172</sup>So also *Them.* 8.3, Plutarch is admittedly quoting from an older inscription. The inscription is speaking of the nations that came from Asia and were defeated in battle. Plutarch quotes from the same inscription in *De Herod.* 34. To this could likely be added three occurrences in Section 6 of *Cons. Apoll.* where Plutarch quotes Homer’s famous passage in *Il.* 6.145 comparing the “races” or “generations” of men to leaves on a tree. Although, this widest qualitative sense is not frequent in the first century, examples of it can be seen into the second century. E.g., the second-century writer Oppian in his *Halieutika* uses it for a race of men (2.674) and a “race of heaven” (οὐρανίης γενεῆς, 4.34). This last expression is set parallel to a φύτλης ἀνδρομένης, “a race of men.” It appears from the context that the οὐρανίης γενεῆς is the race of gods.

context in ways that approximate the pattern of earlier writers. For example, Ephorus founded cities in Sicily “in the tenth **generation** from the Trojan War” (**γενεᾷ** μετὰ τὰ Τρωικά, 6.2.2). The same event is described as “in the tenth **generation** afterwards Elis” (δεκάτη δ’ ὕστερον **γενεᾷ** τὴν Ἑλιν, 10.3.2). Other numerical adjectives modifying γενεά include “four generations” (τέτταρσι... γενεαῖς, 13.1.3) and “five generations” (πέντε γενεαῖς, 10.4.18). Similarly, if he wants to refer to the passing of many generations, Strabo uses πολλὰς γενεάς (6.4.2).

Strabo quotes Homer’s famous words, “As are the leaves, so is the **race** of men” (οἷη περ φύλλων **γενεή**, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν, 14.2.3).<sup>173</sup> Strabo refers to “a people of Scythian **race**” (**γενεῇ** Σκύθαι, 7.3.9). In a passage where he is admittedly quoting from an ancient inscription, Strabo refers to Oxylyus, “the son of Hæmon, the tenth scion of that **race**” (τῆς δ’ αὐτῆς **γενεᾶς** δεκατόσπορος Αἴμονος υἱός, 10.3.2). And, this time quoting again from Homer, Strabo says, “the son of Saturn hated the **family** of Priam” (ἦδη γὰρ Πριάμου **γενεῇν** ἤχθηρε Κρονίων, 13.1.53; cf. Homer, *Il.* 30.306).

#### Post-Classical Period: Clement of Rome

Clement’s (c. AD 35 – 99) letter to the church of Corinth was written at the very end of the first century. In the letter, this early Christian uses γενεά in eight passages for a total of eleven occurrences. Of the eleven occurrences, all but two are clearly temporal uses. First, in *Clement* 5.1, he moves from discussing “ancient examples” (ἀρχαίων ὑποδειγμάτων) of followers of God who were persecuted to considering “athletic contenders in quite recent times” (τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητάς).<sup>174</sup> The examples chosen from “recent times,” or what

<sup>173</sup> All English translation of Strabo are from Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, trans. H. C. Hamilton and William Falconer, 3 vols. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1903).

<sup>174</sup> All quotations from the Apostolic Fathers are from Bart D. Ehrman, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 24–25 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Clement calls his own “generation” (τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν), include the Apostles Peter and Paul (5.4–5) who by a usual reckoning of a generation would have both been considered members of the generation previous to Clement’s own. Either Clement is using generation for a more extended time period than usual, or he is referring to the early church as one γενεά in contrast to the people of the pre-Christian era. As Lindemann suggests, “perhaps this is simply referring to the—still young—Christianity, not a specific generation.”<sup>175</sup> Second, Clement quotes from Isaiah 53:8 as it appears in the LXX (16.8), but he does not comment on the text, so there is no indication as to how he understood γενεά in that LXX passage other than he believed the Servant to be Jesus.

In the other nine occurrences, Clement is using γενεά to refer to past generations in a manner that approximates the LXX usages. In 7.5, he uses the phrases εἰς τὰς γενεὰς πάσας (see also ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς in 60.10) and ἐν γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ (see also εἰς γενεὰν γενεῶν in 61.3) to refer to multiple generations stretching into eternity. Similarly, he refers to future generations warned by the example of Lot’s wife (πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς, 11.2). In 19.2, he refers to multiple generations which occurred before his time (τὰς πρὸ ἡμῶν γενεὰς), and in 50.3 he states, “all the generations from Adam till today have passed away” (αἱ γενεαὶ πᾶσαι ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἕως τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας παρήλθον).

#### Summary of First Century BC and First Century AD

Combining the works of the seven authors who use γενεά more than nine times during this period (see Table 4 below), the most common way (99x) that γενεά is used is (1) with a numerical adjective which indicates the relationship of the generation(s) to a specific person, place, or event, or (2) with an adjective such as πολὺς indicating that many adjectives are being

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<sup>175</sup>“möglichlicherweise ist damit einfach die—noch junge—Christenheit gemeint, keine bestimmte Generation.“ Andreas Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 37.

described at once. This is a temporal use, and it is the largest category, but it does not match the usage in Matthew 24:34. In addition to these occurrences, γενεά is used twenty-three times to refer to future time in a manner that approximates the common use seen in the LXX. In eight additional places, γενεά refers to past time not identified with a specific person, place, or event. These two categories also do not appear to clarify the meaning of Matthew's ἡ γενεά αὕτη.

When speaking of a single generation or period, that is, when used in a manner that would approximate the manner some argue Jesus uses γενεά in Matthew, the writers surveyed used γενεά twenty-nine times. Philo's writings also contain five instances where γενεά is used for a period within someone's life. In total, there appear to be 164 instances where the temporal sense of γενεά appears to be primary. This number includes a few examples discussed above that could plausibly be considered qualitative uses (e.g., the quotations of Homer's "generation of leaves" or Clement's quotation of Is 53:8).

Sixty-eight times γενεά appears to be used for children, offspring, descendants, or one's gender. And sixty-eight additional times it is used for a family, either immediate or extended. In this last category, it appears that the γενεά includes those who are not biological descendants, such as one's spouse or sibling. There is at least one example where γενεά is being used in the older sense of lineage or ancestry (*Camillus* 15.3.4), and in five places γενεά is used for one's birth or to refer to another familial/biological connection. Eight times γενεά appears to be used to describe a large group of people or race descended from a common distant ancestor. Finally, there are six examples of γενεά used in contexts where the glosses *type* or *kind* would be appropriate. In total, there appear to be at least 156 instances where γενεά is used in a qualitative sense.

TABLE 4

USES OF GENEALOGY IN THE FIRST CENTURY BC AND FIRST CENTURY AD<sup>176</sup>

Usage	Number	References
Offspring/Descendants /Gender	68	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 8.17.1; <i>Rom. Antiq.</i> 1.85.3; 2.15.2; 2.25.5; 2.56.7; 2.76.5; 3.65.6; 4.33.3; 5.18.1; 7.9.1; 9.51.6; <i>Creation</i> 104.14; <i>On the Posterity of Cain</i> 60.2; <i>Abraham</i> 247.3; <i>Joseph</i> 261.4; <i>Joseph</i> 261.4; <i>Virtues</i> 222.3; 18.6; <i>Decalogue</i> 128.5; <i>Sacrifices</i> 112.4; <i>Spec. Laws</i> 1.201.2; 2.56.5; 2.127.1; 2.133.5; 2.138.5; 3.37.5; <i>Flight</i> 208.1; <i>Moses</i> 1.13.31; 2.210.1; 2.235.4; <i>Worse</i> 121.2; <i>Drunkennness</i> 61.3; <i>Heir</i> 61.4; <i>Giants</i> 4.1; <i>Dreams</i> 1.200.7; <i>Antiq.</i> 1.183; 2.194, 207; 4.4; 5.274; 7.328; 8.266; 13.424, 426; 14.410, 491; 15.184; <i>Wars</i> 1.552, 588; 2.25, 222; 3.374; 4.260; 7.338; <i>Comp. Aristid. Cat</i> 3.6; <i>De Frat.</i> 6; <i>De Herod.</i> 42; <i>hem.</i> 10.3; <i>Cato Ma.</i> 27.5; <i>Alc.</i> 8.2; <i>Ant.</i> 87.1; <i>Dem.</i> 53.4; <i>Dion</i> 3.6; <i>Otho</i> 16.2; <i>Septem.</i> 3; <i>De. Frat.</i> 18; <i>Delays</i> 20
Nation/Race	8	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 3.74.6; <i>Rewards</i> 23.2; 158.4; <i>Embassy</i> 196.1; <i>De Pyth.</i> 11; <i>Them.</i> 8.3; <i>De. Herod.</i> 34; <i>Geog.</i> 7.3.9
Ancestry/Lineage	1	<i>Camillus</i> 15.3.4
Birth/Other Familial Uses	5	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 2.56.7; <i>Spec. Laws</i> 2.31.1; <i>Antiq.</i> 13.417; 20.92
Kindred/Family/Clan	68	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 18.56.7; <i>Rom. Antiq.</i> 6.56.2; 6.84.2; 11.14.3; <i>Spec. Laws</i> 1.111.4; 3.159.4; <i>Flaccus</i> 68.2; <i>Embassy</i> 230.1; 308.5; <i>Virtues</i> 102.2; 214.2; <i>Alleg. Interp.</i> 3.83.2; <i>Joseph</i> 251.2; <i>Drunkennness</i> 40.5; <i>Migration</i> 27.2; <i>Life</i> 18; <i>Antiq.</i> 1.92; 2.174; 4.48; 5.26, 73; 6.255, 260, 262, 378; 7.254, 270; 8.301, 309; 9.109, 129; 11.280; 12.387; 14.79; 17.220; <i>Wars</i> 1.157, 301, 311, 359, 473, 562, 563, 625; 2.38, 99, 467, 474, 476, 508, 624; 4.106, 133, 488; 5.406, 418, 512; 6.104, 385, 405; 7.368; <i>hem.</i> 10.5; <i>Camillus</i> 15.2; <i>Tim.</i> 34.1; <i>Pomp.</i> 28.1; <i>Caesar</i> 20.4; <i>De Herod.</i> 34; <i>Geog.</i> 10.3.2; 13.1.53
Type/Kind	6	<i>Flight</i> 126.4; 129.3; <i>Dreams</i> 2.15, 16; <i>Aetia physica</i> 2; <i>De E apud Delphos</i> 15
Past Generation(s)	8	<i>Antiq.</i> 6.6; <i>Against Apion</i> 1.254; <i>1 Clem.</i> 7.5 [3x]; 11.2; 19.2; 50.3
Future Generations	23	<i>Creation</i> 140.9; 141.11; 148.8; <i>Confusion</i> 149.2; <i>Heir</i> 260.3; <i>Moses</i> 1.242.7; 2.29.5; <i>Spec. Laws</i> 4.175.2; <i>Rewards</i> 169.6; <i>Names</i> 12; <i>On Drunkennness</i> 127.4; <i>1 Clem.</i> 7.5; 60.10; 61.3 [2x]
Specific Generation/Time Period	29	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 1.24.2; <i>Rom. Antiq.</i> 3.10.3; 5.75.2; 5.77.2; <i>Unchangeable</i> 117.3; <i>Abraham</i> 31.7; 36.2; 38.4; <i>Moses</i> 1.238.2; <i>Spec. Laws</i> 1.3.5; 2.199.3; <i>Rewards</i> 2.2; <i>Wars</i> 5.408, 442, 566; 6.408; <i>De Defect.</i> 11–12 [8x]; <i>Cons. Apoll.</i> [3x]; <i>Geog.</i> 14.2.3; <i>1 Clem.</i> 5.1; 16.8
Numbered Generation(s)	99	<i>Bib. Hist.</i> 1.45.2; 1.51.5; 1.53.1; 1.58.4; 1.60.1; 1.62.1; 1.63.1; 1.68.1; 1.91.7; 2.21.8; 2.28.8; 2.32.2; 2.38.6;

<sup>176</sup>This chart includes the works of Diodorus of Sicily, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus, Plutarch, Strabo, and Clement of Rome.

		2.39.4; 2.46.3; 2.55.3 (2x); 3.52.2; 4.12.3; 4.21.1; 4.23.3; 4.79.3; 4.83.4; 5.6.3; 5.8.3; 5.15.6; 5.54.4; 5.57.5; 5.78.1; 5.80.1; 5.81.3; 7.1.1; 8.1.2; 9.20.4; 10.18.6; 15.1.5; 17.38.7; 19.53.8. 31.10.1; <i>Roman Antiq.</i> 1.2.2; 1.2.3; 1.3.5; 1.4.1; 1.9.4; 1.11.1, 2; 1.17.3 [3x]; 1.22.3; 1.26.1; 1.44.3; 1.45.3; 1.72.1; 1.73.3; 2.2.1; 2.10.4; 2.24.1; 2.59.2, 3; 3.10.6; 3.11.9; 3.69.6; 4.21.3; 4.29.2; 4.73.4; 6.74.1; 7.1.6; 7.70.5; 8.26.3; 12.14.1; 15.6.4; 15.8.3; <i>Heir</i> 293.1, 4; <i>Moses</i> 1.7.3; <i>Virtues</i> 108.4; <i>Antiq.</i> 1.58, 72, 158; 5.336; 7.102; 9.139; 10.269; <i>Against Apion</i> 1.300; <i>Numa</i> 1.2; <i>De E apud Delphos</i> 16; <i>Delays</i> 12 [2x], 21; <i>QC</i> 4.5.2; <i>De Herod.</i> 22; <i>Bruta</i> 5; <i>Geog.</i> 6.2.2; 6.4.2; 10.3.2; 10.4.18; 13.1.3
Period of Time within a Lifetime	5	<i>Heir</i> 295.2; 296.3; 297.1; 298.2, 4

### Conclusion

In his commentary on Isaiah, Motyer notes that the noun דֹּר, when applied to people, “suggests a group held together by some common factor.”<sup>177</sup> In other words, according to Motyer, a דֹּר can be visualized as a circle of people with the boundaries of those circles being drawn by various factors. Without getting into the arguments over the origin of the word דֹּר and whether its etymology is relevant to understanding its meaning in the OT, Motyer’s observation is valuable for illustrative purposes. Like דֹּר, the uses of γενεά shown in the above survey can, for the most part, be visualized as circles of people (and sometimes animals and things) grouped by some common factor.

First, the most common way that γενεά was used, especially in the older Greek literature, was to describe a circle of people descended from a common ancestor, that is, a lineage. So if a contemporary person was in this circle with you, he was your relative or kinsmen, and there are many examples of γενεά being used in this manner. Of course, an entire nation or what we might call a race could be descended from one common ancestor, as was the case with Israel, and there are sufficient examples of γενεά being used in this broadest sense throughout the corpus of Greek

<sup>177</sup>Motyer, *Prophecy of Isaiah*, 434.

literature. Furthermore, the context of Deuteronomy 32 indicates that this is the best way to understand the uses of *γενεά* in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20. As there are in Deuteronomy 32, when *γενεά* was being used in this way, it was common to see it collocated with other familial terms.

Second, especially in later literature, *γενεά* was often used for offspring or children. If you referred to your children as a *γενεά*, you were saying that the circle of people shared having you as a parent. This is obviously related to the sense of lineage. Not entirely fitting neatly into the picture of circles are the various uses where the gloss *birth* is appropriate. However, if *γενεά* could refer to those who were generated, that is, children, it was likely not a stretch to also use it for the place of generation, the order of generation, and the status or right gained by one's generation.

Third, and particularly relevant for this work, in a few instances, the circle called a *γενεά* was sometimes not merely related to familial ties but was used to describe people, animals, or even inanimate objects which could be grouped based on some other shared characteristic. For example, the male and female genders could be described as *γενεαί*. This type of use is present in the LXX and the post-classical writers surveyed above. When *γενεά* was being used in this way, it was common to see modifying adjectives which described the characteristic(s) that created the circle into which the members of the *γενεά* were assigned.

Finally, *γενεά* was used to describe a circle of people living at roughly the same time. Each lineage or family tree could be examined in horizontal cross-sections, and these cross-sections could be counted. As we have seen, various lengths of time were assigned to the cross-sections or cycles within a lineage. Still, a *γενεά*, when used to refer to a time period, was usually understood to be the length of time from a man's birth to when he became a grandfather. When *γενεά* was being used to describe this type of circle, the context usually made this very clear by

including a numerical adjective or, if multiple ages were intended, the plural form of the word.

This paper has argued that *γενεά* into the late first century AD had a wide range of meanings. *Γενεά* was used of temporal contemporaries, but this was not its only meaning or its most common meaning. As always, context ultimately decides how a word is being used. The context of Deuteronomy 32 indicates that *γενεά* in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 is best understood in a qualitative sense which contains both familial (descendants of Jacob brought into existence as a nation by Yahweh) and moral aspects (a nation that has tragically rebelled against her Creator). Israel had been brought into existence, generated by God, but in her rebellion would bring on herself the covenant curses that would require God to act to bring her out of exile. Further research could seek to demonstrate that Matthew's readers would have been prepared by the time they got to ἡ *γενεά* αὕτη in 24:34 to expect a reference to Israel's exile and subsequent new exodus (i.e., her regathering and restoration as a nation) at the end of this present evil age, the same story also present in Deuteronomy 30–32 and which forms the backdrop for Jesus' saying.

In one of the *γενεά* sayings in Matthew leading up to the OD, Jesus described the nation as a *γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς* because of the request for a sign (12:39). We have an example of one early Greek-speaker who understood this adulterous *γενεά* in Matthew 12 more broadly than one generation. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin says to the Jewish Trypho that Jesus by giving the “sign of Jonah” demonstrated that “your generation” (τὴν *γενεάν* ὑμῶν) was more wicked than Ninevah (107.2). Thus, Justin includes his second-century dialogue partner in the *γενεά* addressed by Jesus. The connection between Trypho and Jesus' *γενεά*, at least in Justin's thinking, seems to be ethnicity and attitude toward Christ rather than temporal contemporaneity. Justin, living a century after Jesus, sees Trypho's opposition as evidence that the *γενεά* which received the “sign of Jonah” still existed. I would argue that Justin understood Jesus' words well.