

The Signs Of The Times

Matthew 24:1-8; 32-42

²⁴ Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Matthew 24:32-42

³² “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁴ Truly I tell you; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³⁶ “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of

Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

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A. The Disciples' Questions

In the final days before His crucifixion, Jesus speaks to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, predicting the destruction of the temple, stating that "not one stone will be left on another." The disciples, bewildered by this prophecy and seeking understanding, ask Jesus about the timing of this destruction and the signs of His coming and the end of the age. This question has echoed through centuries, reflecting a deep human concern about the end times.

B. Jesus Answers The Question Of The Ages

Jesus warns the disciples about the rise of false messiahs who will deceive many by claiming to be the Christ. He describes signs that will precede the end, including widespread wars, famines, and natural disasters such as earthquakes. In modern times, these signs are exacerbated by advanced weaponry and global conflicts. Jesus characterizes these events as "the beginning of birth pains" and warns of deceptive false prophets and false Christs. He emphasizes the importance of discerning true signs from false ones and assures that His return will be evident to all, marked by cosmic disturbances and the gathering of God's elect from around the world.

C. Jesus Warns Of The Persecution To Come

Jesus foretells intense persecution for believers, including betrayal, hatred, and death, leading many to fall away due to false prophets. Despite this, He promises that the Gospel will be preached worldwide as a testimony to all nations before the end comes. The prophecy includes a time of great trouble and the "abomination of desolation," urging immediate action and highlighting the urgency of the situation. Jesus warns against false claims of His presence and reassures that His return will be unmistakable and visible to everyone.

D. The Call to Watchfulness

Jesus uses the fig tree parable to illustrate that just as one can discern the approach of summer by observing the tree, so too can the signs of the times indicate the nearness of the end. While speculations about Israel being the fig tree exist, Jesus emphasizes that no one knows the exact time of His return except the Father. He compares the unexpectedness of His coming to the days of Noah, urging preparedness and vigilance. The parable of the faithful and wise servant stresses the importance of being diligent and faithful in one's duties.

E. Applying the Signs to Today

Today's conditions, marked by moral decay and increasing violence, mirror those in Noah's time and Sodom. Believers are called to prepare for the end times by living in accordance with Christ's teachings, spreading the Gospel, and remaining vigilant. The sermon encourages personal reflection on one's faith and readiness for Christ's return, emphasizing the urgency of living a faithful and proactive Christian life.

In summary, Matthew 24 presents a comprehensive view of the signs of the end times, highlighting the importance of discernment, preparedness, and faithfulness. It calls believers to remain vigilant, live out their faith actively, and share the Gospel as they await Christ's return.