

Deeper Applications
“Signs of the Time”
Looking for Jesus Sermon Series #5
Matthew 24:29-31
Cross Community Church, Savannah, Ga.
August 9, 2026

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| • Looking for Jesus #1 “The Great Why” | Matt. 24:1-6/Daniel 9:20-27 | July 12, 2026 |
| • Looking for Jesus #2 “Now and Not Yet” | Matt. 24:1-14 | July 19, 2026 |
| • Looking for Jesus #3 “Peace Has an Enemy” | Matt. 24:15-22 | July 26, 2026 |
| • Looking for Jesus #4 “Seen by Some; Seen by All” | Matt. 24:23-28 | August 2, 2026 |
| • Looking for Jesus #5 “Signs of the Time” | Matt. 24:29-31 | August 9, 2026 |

***24** Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ² But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet...

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Summary

What does it look like when heaven itself announces the return of the King? In this powerful exploration of Matthew 24:29-31, we are drawn into one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring passages in all of Scripture. Jesus describes a moment unlike anything humanity has ever witnessed: the sun darkened, the moon silent, the stars falling, and the powers of the heavens shaken to their core. These are not random catastrophes but deliberate, prophesied signs pointing to the visible, glorious return of the Son of Man. What is striking is how deeply these three verses are woven into the fabric of the entire Bible, echoing prophecies from Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Haggai, Deuteronomy, and beyond. The harmony of Scripture on this point is undeniable. Against the darkest backdrop the world has ever seen, the sign of the Son of Man will blaze in the heavens with power and great glory. Just as the lights of heaven were placed there from the very beginning in Genesis 1 to serve as signs for seasons and appointed times, so too will they serve their ultimate purpose at the climax of history. We are reminded that the gospel diamond always shines brightest against the blackest backdrop, and that truth alone is enough to anchor our souls no matter how uncertain the world around us feels.

Discussion Questions

The pastor describes the signs in the heavens as serving a purpose established by God in Genesis, pointing toward his ultimate plan — how does recognizing that God embedded signs of his return into creation from the very beginning affect the way you view the natural world around you?

Jesus tells his disciples not to be alarmed and not to be led astray, even as he describes catastrophic cosmic events — what does it reveal about the nature of faith that followers of Christ are called to remain steady in the face of such overwhelming upheaval?

The pastor draws a parallel between the darkness that will precede Christ's return and the dark seasons of our own lives, arguing that the gospel shines brightest against the blackest backdrop — can you think of a time when spiritual light became most visible to you precisely because of surrounding darkness?

The sermon emphasizes that Christ's second coming will be visible to all, in stark contrast to false claims that his return has already happened privately or secretly — why do you think Jesus was so deliberate about warning his followers against being deceived by those who would say otherwise?

J.C. Ryle's quote highlights how dramatically different the two appearances of Christ are from one another — what does the contrast between a suffering servant and a returning king tell us about the full character and mission of Jesus?

The pastor connects the regathering of Israel in 1948 to the prophetic promises of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, calling it a miracle — how should the partial fulfillment of biblical prophecy in history shape the confidence with which we anticipate future fulfillment?

The sermon suggests that even if someone holds a pre-tribulation rapture view, they still bear responsibility to prepare others for what is coming — how does belief in Christ's imminent return change the way you engage with the people around you who do not yet know him?

The Shekinah glory of God appears throughout both Testaments in moments of divine encounter and revelation — what does the consistent presence of God's luminous glory throughout Scripture suggest about what it will mean to finally see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens?

The pastor calls on the congregation to call on the name of the Lord regardless of how dark or shaken their circumstances feel, grounding that appeal in Joel's prophecy — what does it mean practically to look up and call on the Lord when everything around you feels unstable?

Hebrews 12 reminds us that what cannot be shaken will remain, and the pastor anchors this to the unshakeable nature of God's kingdom — how does the certainty of an eternal, unshakeable kingdom change the way you hold on to the temporary things in your life that feel most secure?

Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: "Signs of the Time"

Based on Matthew 24:29-31

Overview

In this sermon, Pastor Kevin walked through Matthew 24:29-31, part of the ongoing Olivet Discourse series. The central truth is that **Jesus' return will be visible, glorious, and announced with heavenly signs**. Against the darkest backdrop the world has ever seen, the light of Christ will shine with unmistakable power and glory. This guide is designed to help your group dig deeper into that truth and apply it to everyday life.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus' return will be unmistakably visible to everyone. No one will miss it or need to be told about it secondhand.
- The heavens, which God placed in the sky as signs from the very beginning in Genesis 1:14-18, will signal the return of the King.
- The darkest backdrop humanity has ever experienced will be the very moment the glory of Christ shines the brightest.

- Old Testament prophecies from books including Isaiah, Joel, Deuteronomy, and Amos all point forward to this moment, demonstrating the harmony and reliability of Scripture.
 - The regathering of God's people, partially fulfilled in 1948 with the establishment of the nation of Israel, will find its ultimate fulfillment at Christ's return.
 - No matter how shaken the world becomes, the kingdom of God cannot be shaken. Hebrews 12 reminds us that what cannot be shaken will remain.
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Icebreaker

Pastor Kevin opened the sermon by asking the congregation about things that, if a younger version of themselves had been told about, they never would have believed.

Share with the group: What is one thing happening in the world today that you never would have imagined seeing in your lifetime? How does that make you think about the pace of change in the world?

Discussion Questions

Section 1: The Shaking of the Heavens (Matthew 24:29)

1. Jesus describes the sun being darkened, the moon not giving its light, and the stars falling from heaven. Pastor Kevin noted that God placed the lights in the heavens specifically to serve as signs, pointing back to Genesis 1:14-18. What does it mean to you that God designed creation from the very beginning with these future moments in mind?
2. Pastor Kevin said, "Figures are the shadow of the literal. Even if this is figurative, it is pointing to the literal." Whether you interpret these cosmic events literally or figuratively, what does the image of the heavens being shaken communicate to you about the magnitude of Christ's return?
3. Has there been a season in your own life when something you relied on was suddenly shaken, a relationship, a job, a sense of security? How did that experience affect your faith, and what did you learn about where your stability truly comes from?

Section 2: The Sign of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:30)

4. Pastor Kevin emphasized that the sign of the Son of Man will appear against the darkest backdrop humanity has ever seen, and that this is consistent with how the gospel always works: it shines brightest in the darkest places. Where in your own life right now do you need the light of Christ to shine into a dark place?
5. The sermon referenced the Shekinah glory of God throughout Scripture, from the burning bush to the pillar of fire to the transfiguration. What does this thread of God's visible glory throughout the Bible tell you about his character and his desire to be known by his people?
6. All the tribes of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming. Pastor Kevin described this as every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. How does the certainty of that moment shape the way you think about sharing your faith with people who do not yet know him?

Section 3: The Angels Sent to Gather (Matthew 24:31)

7. Matthew 24:31 describes angels gathering God's elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Deuteronomy 30:1-4 spoke of this regathering hundreds of years before Jesus referenced it. What does this fulfillment of prophecy do for your confidence in the reliability of God's Word?
8. Pastor Kevin mentioned that the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 is a partial fulfillment of the prophecy of regathering. How does seeing prophecy fulfilled in history strengthen your trust that the prophecies yet to come will also be fulfilled?
9. The trumpet in Scripture is a bold, unmistakable announcement. It is not subtle. It is not quiet. What does it tell you about God's character that he has no intention of returning quietly or secretly?

Section 4: Personal Response

10. Pastor Kevin closed with two action points: do not be shaken by what the future holds, and call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Joel 2:32 promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Is there someone in your life right now who has not yet called on that name? What is one step you could take this week to point them toward that hope?
 11. Hebrews 12 reminds us that we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and therefore we should offer God worship with reverence and awe. What would it look like practically for you to live this week with a greater sense of gratitude for an unshakeable kingdom, especially in moments when circumstances feel unstable?
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Practical Applications

For individuals this week:

- Spend time reading through some of the Old Testament passages referenced in the sermon: Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:10-11 and 2:30-32, and Deuteronomy 30:1-4. Notice how each one points forward to what Jesus describes in Matthew 24:29-31. Let the harmony of Scripture build your confidence in God's Word.
- Identify one area of your life where you have been more shaken by circumstances than anchored in Christ. Bring that area to God in prayer and ask him to reorient your focus upward.
- Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know Jesus. Commit to praying for them daily this week and ask God to open a door for a conversation about the hope you have.

For the group together:

- Consider spending time as a group reading Psalm 19:1-6, which speaks of the heavens declaring the glory of God. Reflect together on how creation itself is a constant witness to the character and coming of God.
 - Encourage one another with the truth that the kingdom of God cannot be shaken. If members of the group are walking through difficult or uncertain seasons, take time to pray specifically over those situations, anchoring your prayers in the unshakeable nature of God's kingdom and promises.
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Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together around these three themes drawn from the sermon:

1. **Gratitude** for a kingdom that cannot be shaken and for the certain hope of Christ's return.
2. **Courage** to live as lights in a darkening world, knowing that the gospel shines brightest against the darkest backdrop.
3. **Compassion** for those who do not yet know Jesus, that they would call on his name and be saved before that great and final day.

"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." -- Hebrews 12:28-29

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on "Signs of the Time" — Matthew 24:29–31

Day 1: The Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

Reading: Hebrews 12:25–29

Devotional: Everything around us is subject to change. Jobs disappear. Relationships fracture. Health fades. Even the most reliable structures of life can be removed in a moment. Jesus warned that one day the very lights of heaven will go dark. Yet in the middle of that cosmic shaking, one thing remains unmoved — the kingdom of God. The throne is not rattled by earthly chaos. Because you belong to that unshakeable kingdom through faith in Christ, you do not have to be defined by what trembles around you. Anchor your heart there today. Offer God worship with reverence and awe, for He is a consuming fire.

Reflection: What in your life right now feels unstable? How does the permanence of God's kingdom change the way you face that instability today?

Practical Application: Write down one area of your life where you have been placing your security in something temporary. Pray specifically, surrendering that thing to God and declaring your trust in His unshakeable kingdom.

Day 2: Look Up — The Sign Is in the Heavens

Reading: Genesis 1:14–18; Luke 21:25–28

Devotional: From the very beginning, God placed lights in the heavens as signs. He has always been communicating through creation, pointing humanity toward Himself. Jesus told His followers that when the days grow darkest, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky — luminous against the blackest backdrop the world has ever known. That is the nature of God's glory. It does not compete with earthly brightness. It shines most brilliantly when everything else has gone dark. Whatever darkness surrounds you today, look up. The God who set the stars in place has not abandoned His post.

Reflection: When has God's presence felt most real to you during a dark season of life? What does that reveal about how He works?

Practical Application: Spend five minutes outside today, day or night, and simply look up. Let the sky remind you that God designed creation to point to Himself. Thank Him for one specific sign of His faithfulness you have witnessed in your own life.

Day 3: Everyone Who Calls Shall Be Saved

Reading: Joel 2:28–32; Romans 10:9–13

Devotional: Joel wrote it centuries before the cross. Paul proclaimed it to the nations. Jesus confirmed it in His own teaching. The promise is breathtaking in its simplicity and staggering in its scope — everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Not the educated. Not the religious. Not the morally superior. Everyone. Against the darkest backdrop of personal failure, grief, shame, or fear, that promise holds. The gospel shines brightest when life is at its bleakest. You do not have to clean yourself up before you call. You call, and He saves. That is the glory of grace.

Reflection: Is there any area of your life where you have been trying to approach God on your own terms rather than simply calling on His name in faith?

Practical Application: Share the promise of Romans 10:13 with one person this week who needs to hear that salvation is available to them. Pray for that person by name before you go to sleep tonight.

Day 4: His Glory Is My Good

Reading: Romans 8:28–39; Isaiah 53:3–5

Devotional: The hymn sung in this service declared a profound truth — God's glory and our good are not competing interests. They are the same pursuit. Jesus came the first time in suffering, betrayed, mocked, crowned with thorns, and crucified. He will come the second time in power and great glory. Both appearances serve the same purpose: the redemption and restoration of those He loves. The road that leads to His glory often runs through valleys we would not have chosen. But the shepherd who leads us beside still waters is the same one who walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death. Trust the shepherd.

Reflection: Where in your life are you struggling to believe that God's purpose is working for your good? What would it look like to surrender that struggle to Him today?

Practical Application: Read Romans 8:28 slowly three times. Then write a one-paragraph prayer telling God specifically about the circumstance you are struggling to trust Him with, and close by declaring that you believe His glory and your good are inseparable.

Day 5: As Confident in His Coming as in His First Arrival

Reading: Acts 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Revelation 1:7

Devotional: The same Jesus who ascended from the Mount of Olives will return to that very place. The angels told the disciples not to stand staring at the sky — He would come back just as He left. The promise of His return is not a distant theological footnote. It is the living hope that shapes how we walk today. Just as surely as the star over Bethlehem announced His first coming, the sign of the Son

of Man in the heavens will announce His second. The confidence we have in the historical fact of His incarnation is the same confidence we carry into every tomorrow. He is coming. Live accordingly.

Reflection: How would your daily choices look different if you lived with a genuine, active awareness that Jesus could return at any moment?

Practical Application: Identify one relationship in your life — a family member, neighbor, or coworker — who does not yet know Christ. Commit to praying for that person every day this week and ask God for one natural opportunity to share the hope you have in Jesus before the week ends.