

# Do You Know What Time It Is

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Matthew 24

My message title this morning is a question. **Do you know what time it is?** Last weekend we turned our clocks ahead, so we would know what time it is, so we wouldn't be late for church.

Not being aware of the time can get you into trouble. I remember my mom yelling up the stairs in the morning. "**Do you know what time it is?**" She didn't want us to miss the school bus.

My question this morning is not about being late for church, school or work but about **being aware of another clock that is ticking.** There is a set time when Jesus is going to return, and **Jesus wants us to know when that time is getting close.**

**So, Jesus has given us indicators or signs to watch for.** That way he doesn't find us spiritually asleep when he returns. But he finds, us alert, watching for him and on mission.

Jesus said we will **not know** the **day or hour of his return,** but he did say **we can know which generation is - the last generation.** Jesus said when you see these certain signs happening around you will know this is the generation of my return.

**Matt 24:32-34 "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. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.**

Jesus said the end time generation is tied to the blossoming of the fig tree which is thought to **represent Israel.** And is thought to refer to the **birthing of Israel** as a nation. **This happened in 1948 and Jerusalem came under their control in 1967.** So, either of these dates could represent the beginning of the last generation that Jesus referred to here, - **which would be our generation.**

A generation is described as being 40-100 years. **So, 100 years would take us to 2048 or 2067. Any time between now and then the tribulation could begin and the return of Jesus could occur. If this opinion is correct it will either be in our life time or that of our children.**

At **Billy Graham's funeral** a few weeks ago, his daughter Anne, stood up and declared to the listening world – **“Jesus is coming soon”**.

After studying the signs of the times that Jesus listed for us, **Mike Bickel** who is the leader of **Kansas City House of Prayer** made this statement: **“It is my opinion that we are in the early days of the generation in which the Lord will return. In other words, I believe there are people alive today that will see the return of the Lord with their eyes. It may be the twenty-year olds; it may be the two-year olds; I don't know. I don't know if I will see him in my life time. I might.”**

Jesus wants us to be alert and discerning of the time clock of his return. He doesn't want us caught off guard. **No, we are not to set dates of his return**, but we are to **know how to interpret the signs of the times**. **He wants us to know when it is getting near.**

While rebuking the religious leaders for missing the signs of his first coming, Jesus said this in **Mathew 16:2-3**, **“He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.**

So just like we can make weather predictions by signs we see in the atmosphere. So, Jesus has given us signs to interpret the end times. **He wants us to know what time it is on the earth in relationship to his return.**

So, let's look at the signs Jesus gave to us in **Matthew 24**.

As we look at these signs we recognize that most of these things have been happening for 2000 years. But Jesus said in the last days **they will intensify like a woman with birth pains.**

- They will **increase in frequency and intensity on a global level.**
- And these events and trends will all begin to **happen around the same time.**
- They will begin to **make headlines around the world** as a sign to the nations.

Some of these things Jesus speaks of happened in **70 AD** with the destruction of the temple but that was just a **foreshadowing of what is to come in the last days.**

There has not been any time in history where we see the frequency, intensity and synergy of all these events happening together as we are seeing today.

The birth pains are definitely increasing which is a sign Jesus gave to us to indicate the closeness of his return.

**Read Mathew 24:1-36**

### **Signs of the Times:**

#### **Sign 1 - Deceptive leaders and teachings will increase. Vs.4-5**

Be careful of people who claim they have a new revelation that nobody else has.

Be careful of people who criticize the church and want to form their own group and want you to come under their leadership.

Two examples: A popular deceptive teaching today is a new revelation people claim they have on grace, which gives them the freedom to continue in their sin.

Another is seminaries, churches and leaders drifting away from the authority of God's word and embracing pro-choice and pro-gay teachings. They are deceived.

This is an end time sign.

And by the way, miracles and testimonials are not a basis for discernment. WORD

#### **Sign 2 - Wars and conflicts between nations and kingdoms will increase. Vs.6-7**

The word "nation" in the Greek is "ethnos" which means ethnic. What Jesus is saying is there will be an increase of ethnic fighting within countries as well as wars among the countries. This likely includes economic and cyber warfare.

We see this happening all over the world right now. In fact, most wars are between ethnic groups. 150 million people in recent decades have been murdered by their own government. Ethnic cleansings are on the rise.

In the last days, the world will become more and more dangerous. Which eventually will lead to the world embracing the Antichrist who will be known as the man who can bring peace to the world.

This peace will last only a few years and then he will proclaim himself as God and bring the **wrath of God** upon himself and the world that worships him. This then will be the great tribulation period on earth.

### **Sign 3 - Famines and earthquakes will increase in the world. Vs.7-8**

5 million people die of starvation every year in our world. 500 million don't have sufficient drinking water. They predict by 2025 there will be 2 billion people without sufficient drinking water. The birth pains are increasing.

- This is a sign we are to take note of so we know what time it is.

There is debate about whether earthquakes activity is increasing but that debate might be about to change.

**In a recent 2018 online Newsweek article by Dana Dovey she states:** “The new year could bring an increase in massive and devastating earthquakes. About four years ago, the Earth’s rotation slowed slightly. Although the decrease was not enough to notice, the Earth’s slower rotation may spark an increase in severe earthquakes for 2018, researchers from University of Colorado Boulder predicted in the fall. According to the team’s research, which they presented at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Seattle this (past) October, there may be a trend between slower Earth rotations and more global earthquakes. Over the past 100 years, there was a 25 to 30 percent increase in the number of significant earthquakes associated with a slowdown in the Earth’s rotation.”

**According to an 2012 Op-Ed in the Digital Journal,** - the map by the America Daily Herald and the U.S. Geological Survey’s shows that earthquakes are becoming more common worldwide due to the Earth’s increased seismic and geophysical activity. Seismic charts show a clear upward trend in large global earthquakes over the past few years,

Read more: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/322997#ixzz59kDyMxCD>

### **Sign 4 - Persecution, wickedness and turning from the faith will increase. Vs.9-13**

The number of martyrs is increasing dramatically. There are more Christians being killed for their faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than in any other time in history. The rage in the nations is increasing. 200 million will exp some type of persecution this yr.

We can just look at our own nation. Wickedness and intolerance to Christian values is rapidly increasing.

Sensuality and violence is ingrained in our culture. 100 billion is spend on pornography each year worldwide and increasing. 10-12 billion from the US.

People are turning away from the Christian faith to something of their own making. A false gospel. A secular gospel that is compatible with the culture.

Jesus said the love of people will grow cold. Intolerance will increase. Many are saying; *“If you don’t agree with me then you are my enemy”*. Christianity and the Bible are seen as hateful and harmful to the goals of a secular humanistic society.

This is happening big time all over the earth – Another generational sign.

### **Sign 5 - The spread of the gospel to the nations will increase. Vs.14**

Jesus is saying before the end comes every nation will have been reached with the gospel in some way.

With both technology and the rising missionary movement coming out of Asia this could happen shortly. The church must stay focused on missions.

### **Sign 6 - When the Antichrist defiles the temple, God’s wrath will be released, and the heavens and earth will be shaken. Vs.15-29**

This sign happens during the 7-year tribulation period. This is what is called the abomination that causes desolation. At this point the Antichrist will have been ruling for 3 ½ years but now turns against Israel and sets up an altar to himself in the new temple. This will trigger the last part of the tribulation where God pours out his wrath on the earth. People are going to try to run and hide from what is to come on the earth. It will be a terrible time.

Some feel Christians will be raptured out of the world at this point and some feel they will stay in the world but be protected from God’s wrath like the Israelites were in the land of Goshen during the plagues of Egypt. No one knows for sure.

The wrath period is a 3 ½ year period.

### **Sign 7 - After this tribulation period, Jesus returns to earth and destroys the enemies of Israel and sets up his rule. Vs. 30-31**

There are many other teachings on the end times in the Bible, but these are the main ones Jesus tells us to be alert to.

**The reason Jesus gives us these signs is, so we live our lives in a serious way and live in a way that expects and invites his return.**

He gives many warnings in the rest of this passage and also in the next chapter with the **parable of the 5 foolish virgins** who thought they could wait until the last minute and get right with God. It didn't work. He came unexpected.

**Jesus said today is the day of salvation! Now is the time to get right with God.**

I am aware that many of us **interpret the bible from an American view and mindset**. To me it doesn't seem like the tribulation is upon us yet. But if you lived in Syria, Iran, or Iraq right now and the radical Muslims were hunting down you and your family to kill you because of your faith. If you had to flee your homes and had family members betray you. You would probably interpret these passages as the tribulation having already begun.

**What if the Middle East is the key to interpreting these passages and we really are much closer to the return of Christ than what we realize.**

Jesus emphasizes we don't know the day or hour. I don't know when Jesus will return but as I look at the signs, I believe we could see the return of Jesus in our generation.

**Someone has said live as Jesus could come today but plan as if it might be in a future generation.** Good advice.

Jesus said there are some hard times ahead. We need to be strengthening our hearts and our faith now for what may lie ahead. **I believe the church will go through at least part of the tribulation. Maybe all of it.**

**It is not a time for fear but anticipation.** Some of the other signs I didn't mention have to do with an **increase of power, miracles, healings, and boldness on the church**. As evil increases the power of The Holy Spirit will increase upon the church in even greater measure.

**The greatest days of the church are ahead of us.** God is raising up an army of saints for these end times. **The stage is being set for the greatest harvest of souls this world has ever seen.** All these things will be happening at the same time.

**What time is it?** It is time to lift up our heads and pursue God like never before.

**Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."**

### ***Closing:***

Are you awake and alert to the signs of the times? Do you know what time it is?  
Wouldn't it be great if Jesus came back in our life time? It's very possible.

God wants us to be able to put 2 & 2 together when we listen to the news and hear of these event in our world.

These are the last days. It's very possible you are the last generation living before Jesus returns.

Are you ready for the days ahead? Are you growing strong spiritually? Now is the time to get God's word into you, to develop spiritual disciplines.

Now is the time for full surrender to Jesus. The fact is today could be the last day on earth for any one of us.

Are you ready to meet Jesus?

### **Prayer Ministry .....**

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Open our eyes and give us spiritual understanding and discernment.

Help us interpret the events happening around us.

Help us not to respond to these times with fear or compromise.

Instead let us rise up and put on the full armor of God and stand strong.

Prepare our hearts for mockery and persecution and whatever lies ahead.

May each of us be part of your end time army, walking in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for revival, for a great outpouring and a great harvest of souls.

Thank you for not leaving us clueless. Thank you for giving us these signs so our hearts are encouraged as the world grows darker.

We lift up our heads and we eagerly wait for your return.

(Last two verses) **Revelation 22:20-21 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.**