

## ***Session #21 Is This the End of the Age?***

*“The friend of the Bridegroom...rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” (Jn. 3:29)*

### **I. JESUS COMMANDED HIS PEOPLE TO KNOW THE GENERATION**

- A. The Lord gave “signs” to clearly indicate two unique generations—of His first and second comings. The prophets foretold of Messiah and He was in their midst, but they could not discern it. Jesus rebuked His generation for not being able to read the “signs of His first coming” (Mt. 16:2). Asking for a sign was a biblical request since Joel prophesied that Messiah would give signs (Joel 2:30). Their hypocrisy was in testing Jesus by asking for more signs while rejecting those He gave.

*<sup>1</sup>The Pharisees...testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven...<sup>3</sup>Hypocrites! You know how to discern the...sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times... (Mt. 16:1-3)*

- B. Israel’s unresponsiveness to God was partly related to them not knowing the time of their visitation. There is a relationship between the measure to which people are informed of coming prophetic events and the measure in which they respond to God in context to those events.

*<sup>42</sup>If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace...*

*<sup>43</sup>For days will come upon you when your enemies will...surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and level you...because you did not know the time of your visitation. (Lk. 19:42-44)*

- C. Jesus commanded one generation of believers to “know” that His return was near—the generation that who are alive when *all* the signs that He prophesied in Matthew 24 come to pass. Some confuse not being able to know the day and hour (24:36) with not being able to know the generation (24:34).

*<sup>33</sup>When you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! <sup>34</sup>...This generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place... <sup>36</sup>Of that day and hour no one knows. (Mt 24:33-36)*

- D. Jesus connected the timing of His return to specific events and trends that He prophesied. There is only one generation in which God’s people will see *all* the signs prophesied in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 occurring at the *same* time making headline news on a global basis. When “all” these signs accelerate at the *same time*, they are to know that they we are living in the generation in He returns. He would not tell us of the circumstances around His coming and then say no one could know it.

### **II. THREE TYPES OF BIBLICAL SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

- A. ***Sign events:*** These are actual events predicted in Scripture that alert us to the timing of Jesus’ return. These include events like the rebirth of the state of Israel, the abomination of desolation and the revealing of the Antichrist. Sign events are the most convincing.
- B. ***Sign trends:*** These trends will happen in society and creation, and thus signal the final generation. There are positive and negative sign trends that signal the generation of Jesus’ return. An example of a positive trend is the harvest in all nations (Mt. 24:14). Examples of negative trends include those in society (civil disorder), in the earth (famines, earthquakes) and in the heavens (sky).
- C. ***Cosmic Signs:*** Highly unusual phenomena will happen in the sky, that includes severe weather.

### III. BELIEVERS ARE TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- A. Jesus, the NT apostles and the OT prophets prophesied of the signs of the times. When we combine all of these prophetic signs we are able to gain more understanding. There is much information on this in the Scripture because the Lord wants His people to be prepared for His end-time purposes.
- B. Paul taught that the Church should know the times and seasons related to Jesus' coming. Paul told them that they were not in *darkness* related to this time. The darkness speaks of the prevailing spirit of unawareness concerning the season associated with Jesus' second coming.

<sup>1</sup>*Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*

<sup>2</sup>*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night [those unaware suffer loss]. <sup>3</sup>For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them... <sup>4</sup>But you...are not in darkness [ignorance], so that this Day should overtake you [come on you unexpectedly] as a thief...<sup>6</sup>*Therefore...watch and be sober.* (1 Thes. 5:1-6)*

- C. The day will come like a thief to those who are *unaware* thus, resulting in them experiencing *loss* (Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thes. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:14-15). The thief analogy underlines being unaware results in suffering loss—a loss that could have been avoided by watching. Some will be taken *unaware* by world events and pressures that will continue to increase in the last days.
- D. Daniel prophesied of people in the end times *who would understand* God's end-time plan, season, and signs and will give instruction to many—believers and unbelievers—hungry to understand.

<sup>33</sup>*And those of the people who understand shall instruct many... (Dan. 11:33)*

### IV. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE—JESUS' LONGEST END-TIME PROPHECY (MT. 24)

- A. Jesus' most in-depth teaching on the end times is called the *Olivet Discourse* (because Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem when He gave this prophecy). The most complete record of this prophecy is in Matthew 24-25. Mark and Luke gave a shorter account of it (Mk. 13; Lk. 21). They included a few more details. Jesus also taught on the end times in Luke 17. These four passages (Mt. 24-25; Mk. 13; Lk. 17; 21) give us a foundation for Jesus' end-time teaching.
- B. Jesus gave *12 negative sign trends* that will bring distress to the nations and indicate the generation of His return (Mt. 24:4-14; Lk. 21:11, 25). These trends include *deception* by false christs/prophets (Mt. 24:4-5, 11), *ethnic conflict* (Mt. 24:7), *economic warfare* (Mt. 24:7), *famines, pestilences*, and *earthquakes* (Mt. 24:8), *hatred of believers* (Mt. 24:9), *relational breakdown* in society (Mt. 24:10), *lawlessness*, or increased sin and rebellion (Mt. 24:12), *fearful sights* (Lk. 21:11), great signs in the *sky* and disturbances in the *sea* (Lk. 21:11, 25).
- C. The gospel will be preached in all nations in context to the pressures of the Great Tribulation. The Lord is coming back for a victorious Church that relates to Him as a mature Bride (Rev. 19:7).

<sup>14</sup>*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations...*

<sup>21</sup>*There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world... (Mt. 24:14-21)*

<sup>7</sup>*...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.* (Re 19:7)