

SIGNS OF THE END OF TIME

In the 17th century a young man named Isaac Newton was sitting under an apple tree when an apple fell and hit him on the head. The result of that incident was that Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity. However more complicated the true account probably is, there is no question that Isaac Newton and his discoveries concerning gravity was one of the great events in the history of human thought. It was a major step in what became known to the world as the scientific revolution. In every area of human life, people started to study nature itself, started to seek out the answers to the riddles of nature; laws that would help explain events that happen in the natural world.

And as more of these questions were being answered, a spirit of great optimism took hold in society. Because, you see, people believed that through the discoveries of science and technology, mankind would soon learn through his machines and inventions to overcome disease, natural calamities, even hatred and war. World War I, followed by World War II, with their combined 58 million dead, laid that optimism to rest. Many now call the age we live in the “Age of Fear.”

However, this is not a time to despair. Jesus predicted two thousand year ago that these things would happen before His second coming. Let us look at an astounding prophecy spoken by Jesus Himself regarding the signs that would herald His second coming. The prophecy is found in Matthew 24.

KEY POINTS

Let's go back almost 2,000 years ago, to the ancient city of Jerusalem, where Jesus ended His ministry. Jesus is with His disciples and He points them to the magnificent buildings of the ancient Jewish temple, the pride and joy of the nation. And then He says something very strange to them: “And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’” (Matthew 24:2).

This had to be astounding news to the disciples, for the temple was the center of worship and culture for the Israelite nation. And now Jesus was saying it would be destroyed? And sure enough, about 40 years later, just as Jesus said, the Temple was destroyed by the Romans. When the disciples heard that the temple would be destroyed they asked the questions, When? How? What will be the signs that this is about to take place?

Right after saying these things to His disciples, Jesus started to tell them about the signs of the end of the world, the signs that would precede his second coming. In other words, Jesus linked together the destruction of the temple with the signs of His second coming. He linked these two events, both filled with suffering and devastation, because He wanted them—and us—not to be discouraged.

What were the signs that Jesus said would precede His coming? Here they are: (see next page.)



Jesus, predicted two thousand year ago, many of the things that we see happening around us as sure signs that His second coming is near.



Jesus linked together the conditions surrounding the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 with the signs of His second coming.

- Matthew 24:11, 24: False Christ's and false prophets.

Some of these false Christ's would deceive many, and lead them astray.



- Matthew 24:6-7: Wars and rumors of wars.

It has been estimated that in the 20th century 160 million people have been killed directly as a result of war.

Despite wars, Jesus said: "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." (Matthew 24:6)



- Matthew 24:7-8: There would be famines.

Famine in Bangladesh, 1970-1974

Famine in Ethiopia, 1984-85

Famine in Somalia, 1990-1991

Famine in North Korea, 1995-1998. Estimates are that 2 million people died in North Korea's famine.



- Matthew 24:7-8: There would be pestilences.

Pestilences or epidemics have increased in intensity, mainly due to the increased population around the world. The Spanish Influenza epidemic that killed an estimated 20-40 million people from 1918-1919 is considered to be the worst epidemic the world has ever seen. HIV AIDS is estimated to afflict 40 million people world-wide, 37 million adults and 2.5 million children under 15.



- Matthew 24:7-8: There would be earthquakes.

Devastating earthquakes are killing scores around the world. Here are just a few of the recent major quakes:

Algeria – October, 1980. Killed 2,590.

Mexico – September, 1985. Killed 9,500

Turkey – August, 1999. Killed 17,000

Indonesia and Pakistan in 2005 – Killed 250,000

Japan – major quake and tsunami, 2011.



- Matthew 24:14: The gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to all the world, then the end will come. This sign of the end is being fulfilled even as you read this paper and attend the Gospel meetings night after night.



TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Luke 21:28: "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." What does this mean? It means that Jesus wants us to have hope and to trust Him. Jesus is telling us that none of these terrible things have taken Him by surprise, and we shouldn't be surprised either. We shouldn't lose faith in Him when tragedy strikes. Instead, we should seek help from above.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

What about you, what about your own life? Are you struggling with things that just seem too big for you to handle? There's probably not a person in the world, no matter how rich, or powerful, or smart, who hasn't struggled with things too great for them to handle. Because no matter how rich, powerful, or smart someone may be, no one escapes the ultimate challenge we all face. And that is death! But Jesus beat death! And He wants you to know today that you can beat death too, through faith in Him as Savior and Lord of your life.