

Living Word Fellowship Church

Pastor Paul Cannings, D.Phil.

The Sign of the Times as Explained by Christ in the Gospels

Matthew 24:4-41; Mark 13:5-37; Luke 21:5-38

A. Birth Pains Before Christ Return:

1. Many false prophets will come and will mislead many people (Matthew 24:5,11; Mark 6:6, 21-22).
 - a) Some of the false prophets will call themselves Christ (Matthew 24:5; Mark 13:21; Luke 21:8; The Moonies leader says that he is the second Christ).
 - b) These false prophets will show signs and wonders and mislead even the elect (Mark 13:22; those who are truly saved; Ephesians 1:4).
 - c) Some false prophets will seek to predict when Christ will return (Luke 21:8).
 - d) They will challenge people to follow them out into the desert to prepare for Christ's return (Matthew 24:26; happened in Kenya).
2. There will be "wars and rumors of wars." Nations will rise against nations (Matthew 24:6,7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10).
3. There will be many natural disasters in various places (Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).
 - a) Earthquakes, famines, various plagues, terrors, and signs from the heavens (Luke 21:11).
4. Believers will begin to experience various forms of persecution (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13: 9,11,13; Luke 21:13). This will provide us the opportunity to share our testimony (Luke 21:12-13). So, we must be ready to defend ourselves (Luke 21:14), as Christ provides us with what to say (Luke 21:15). Our response, led by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, will prevent our opponents from refuting what is being said. Some believers will experience the following:
 - a) Imprisonment
 - b) Will have to defend ourselves before governors and kings.
 - c) Some will be put to death.
5. Family members will turn against each other (Mark 13:12-13; Luke 21:16-17).
6. Some believers will lose heart and will turn away from God for the following reasons:
 - a) Because of the increase in wickedness across the face of the earth (Matthew 24:9-12), "the love of most will grow cold."
 - b) The signs and wonders of the false prophets (Matthew 24: 24; Mark 13:22).
 - c) Many believers will hate and betray each other because of the increased difficulties of the end times (Matthew 24:10).
7. The gospel must be preached to the whole world before the end comes (Matthew 24:14).

B. Signs and Wonders at the Return of Christ:

1. There will be strange occurrences in the sky (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25).
2. Nations will be in dismay at all the strange things occurring with nature (Luke 21:25).
3. The sea and the waves will roar (Luke 21:25).

4. At the point of Christ's return, it will appear as a massive stroke of lightning that will be seen by everyone on the earth (Matthew 24:27), and the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21:26). Stars will fall out of the heavens (Mark 13:25). This will cause them to mourn (Matthew 24:30).
5. People will faint with fear at all these happenings (Luke 21:26).
6. Christ will appear in the skies, visible to the whole world. His angels will gather His elect from the four corners of the earth (Matthew 24:30-31; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 21:27).

C. Conclusion:

I know I have stated this before, but I will repeat it. Christ has revealed to us all the events that will occur leading up to God establishing His kingdom on earth (Matthew 24:33; Mark 13:23,29; Luke 21:28). The only thing He has not revealed is the day and the hour (Mark 13:32).

As believers, we must remain focused (Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 12:1-3) and not grow weary and lose heart. *“And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”* (Galatians 6:9-10)

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:3-7; NASU)