



# ARE WE IN THE END TIMES?

An Examination of Matthew 24

“The signs are there ... the blood moons, the attempts at peace in the Middle East, increased apostasy in the Church. All of these add up to make us think this could be the generation—the generation of the rapture, the tribulation, and the second coming. Again, to be clear, I don’t know. No one knows. But shouldn’t we read the signs?” (Max Lucado, 2020).

# Shouldn't We Read the Signs?

- Those who have been influenced by premillennialism often claim that recognizable signs will precede the end – Matt 24:4–14; cf. Mark 13:5–13; Luke 21:8–19.
- A “typical” end-times timeline includes the Rapture, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, Armageddon, and the 1000-year (millennial) reign of Christ.
- Is this a correct reading of the so-called Olivet Discourse of Jesus (Matt 24:1–25:46; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 21:5–36)?

# What Jesus Says About the End

- Rather than analyze all the Gospel accounts of the Olivet Discourse, we will focus on Matthew's record of it.
  - Setting: The focus is on the temple – 24:1–3; cf. 23:34–39.
  - Prelude: The signs do not signal the end – 24:4–14.
  - Tribulation: The definitive “sign” was the Roman army, not a future antichrist – vv. 15–28; cf. Luke 21:20.
  - Judgment: The “end” was AD 70 – Matt 24:29–35.
  - Shift: The second coming of Christ will differ from his “coming” to destroy Jerusalem – 24:36–25:46.

# What Jesus Says About the End

- What does the Olivet Discourse teach us about the end?
  - Jesus has been and will be the judge of his people.
  - God has rejected national Israel and chosen a new “Israel.”
  - Jesus comes invisibly in time to judge nations, but he will come visibly at the end of time to judge all nations.
  - No one, other than God, knows (or can know) when Jesus will return to judge the world.
  - Be ready!

# How Can We Help Our Friends?

- We can start by showing our friends that much of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem – Matt 24:2, 34; cf. 23:36.
- We can also teach them that Jesus said the so-called “signs of the end” did not signal the end – 24:6, 13, 14.
- We can then remind them that though discernable signs preceded the end of Jerusalem, no one can know when the end of world will come – 24:36–25:46.



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