

The Signs of His Coming

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[0:00] Matthew chapter 16 and really from verse 1 it tells us here about an encounter the Lord Jesus has with the Pharisees and the Sadducees they came tempting desiring him that he would show them a sign from heaven and verse 2 he answered and said to them when it is evening you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red and in the morning it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and lowering.

O ye hypocrites you can discern the face of the sky but can ye not discern the signs of the times. I want to talk tonight about the signs of the times the signs of the end of the age.

The Lord Jesus tells us here it's a parable that we still use today red sky at night is a shepherd's delight and red sky in the morning is a shepherd's warning or a sailor's warning.

So it's the foul you know storming weather is going to be evident by the signs in the skies. And the Lord Jesus says you can see the signs in the skies but think about the signs of the times about the evil and immoral generation.

They seek after a sign he says in verse 4. The signs tell us that a storm is coming. And likewise too we can pick up our newspapers in our day and see the signs all around us about the closeness of our Lord's return.

[1:28] Of the end of the world. Of the world to come. At the end of the world. And you might like to turn to the next passage. Matthew 24. And really the whole chapter talks about the end days of planet earth.

And the Lord Jesus gives us a number of signs here. Someone has sent us 24 signs in Matthew 24. The perils of the end time. And from verse 3 in Matthew 24.

It tells us here that he sat upon the Mount of Olives. And the disciples came unto him privately saying tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming?

And of the end of the world. And Jesus answered and said unto them. Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name saying I am Christ and shall deceive many.

And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you be not troubled. For all these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet. For nations shall rise against nation.

[2:39] And kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places. And all these things are the beginning of sorrows.

Then shall I deliver you up to be afflicted. And shall kill you. And you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended.

And shall betray one another. And shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise. And shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound. The love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end. The same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world. For a witness unto all nations. And then shall the end come.

Just hold it there. The signs of a deception. It says deceive. Some four times there. Just in these verses that we've just read. In this chapter.

[3:40] Talks about deceptions and counterfeits. As I touched on this morning. Signs of the end of the world. Deception is going to be a big sign. It's been said.

That. In about the last 50 years. Over 11,000 people. Have claimed to be God. Or Christ. Lots of people claim to be Christ.

Or a God. Wars and rumours of wars. We know the world is in. A lot of conflict in our day. There's global conflicts. All around us. But the Lord Jesus says in verse 6 there.

Don't be troubled. He says don't let these things distress you. And overwhelm you. Or scare you. It's a sign. In a way it's a good sign.

Because we know it's the Lord's coming. It's getting very close. It's something that should encourage our hearts. It tells us there of these many natural disturbances. Of pestilences and plagues.

[4:38] Of persecution. Of false prophets. It says that lawlessness is going to abound. Iniquity. Or lawlessness. In verse 12. It's going to abound. It's going to be abundant.

There's going to be a lawlessness. A lot of law breaking. And we see that today. As there's so much wickedness in our world. And morals and values are being trodden underfoot.

As we know many just discard the Bible. And God's word for us. And God's way of living. Is just mocked and derided. And turned away from. And tells us there in verse 14.

That the preaching of the gospel is going to be another sign. That missions work is going to be a sign. That this gospel is going to be preached in all the world. For a witness unto all nations.

Then it goes on in verse 23. That there's going to be an abomination of desolation. There's going to be the antichrist in the temple of God. In the renewed temple in Jerusalem.

[5:35] There's going to be an antichrist. An antichristian. An antichrist. Someone said it's anti-meaning standing alongside Christ. So it's like he's pretending to be Christ himself.

In place of Christ. And he's going to come. And he's going to desecrate the new temple. That is going to be in the city of Jerusalem. It's going to be an awful apostasy.

An idolatrous religion. It's going to come about. And verse 23 it says. The Lord tells us there. For there shall arise false Christs. And false prophets.

And shall show great signs and wonders. In so much that if it were possible. They shall deceive the very elect. There's that word deceive again. Great signs and wonders. Powerful signs.

Powerful wonders. A great satanic unleashing of powers. That are not of God. So signs and wonders are no telling.

[6:30] They're no definite sign that it's of God. Signs and wonders. Certainly we know that the Lord can do wonderful things. That are wonders. And they're wonderful.

He is wonderful. His name is wonderful. But we know that there's also false signs and wonders. That are going to be unleashed on planet earth. So there's no guarantee that signs and wonders mean that God is at work.

It could be the enemy at work. Because there's a great deception that's going to go on. So let's just think about some of these things. These kind of signs. These kind of telltale signs that the Lord Jesus gives us here through Matthew 24.

We'll just touch on a few of these signs. And think about them as we read our daily newspapers. Verse 6 tells us about wars. Wars. Wars. We know there's some that have been affected by wars even in our fellowship.

People that are fleeing war-torn countries in our world today. It's been said that there's some 68 civil wars that are going on around the world even today.

[7:32] Trouble spots where there's serious conflicts going on within nations. And some of these figures are a bit old actually. But there's been over 60 wars since World War II. Lots of wars going on.

Of course we see all the conflicts in the Middle East. It's an ongoing boiling pot of conflict and hatred and strife.

It's tearing those countries apart with the war that's going on. Another sign in verse 6 we see following on from wars is poverty. There's going to be a great poverty that's taking the lives of many, many people in our world today.

There's a breakdown of the family unit. Verse 6 tells us that there's going to be these signs. There's going to be a lot of destruction and devastation.

The family unit is under attack too. As well as nations being at war. The families are at war amongst themselves too. Verse 7, famines is another sign. I've read that in a certain country there's no dogs, cats or rats.

[8:46] Because they've all been caught and eaten. People are so hungry that they're eating cats and rats and dogs. They're boiling the bark of trees and making it into a paste so that they can survive.

Many, many people around our world today are dying because of hunger. Starving to death. 35 countries will face severe water shortages by 2020.

And we know even our own country. The very vital necessity of water is becoming a scarcer commodity. And it's very serious what's going on.

Verse 7 tells us about pestilences. Pestilences, it means an epidemic. It means awful diseases. Infectious diseases. Horrendous plagues. Thanks to jet travel, they can spread faster than ever before in history.

So we see in our world today the AIDS virus has been called the worst plague in human history. Some close to a quarter of Africa will die of this disease, they're telling us.

[9:57] And there's many millions of people living with HIV, this awful dread affliction, this plague. And it's infecting more and more people regularly.

We know cancer is at work. We know malaria is a deadly disease. And there's some strains that are untreatable. And there's some strains that are untreatable. Affecting hundreds of millions of people. Cholera is another one. Especially in South America and Africa. Yellow fever. Gastroenteritis. Diphtheria. You know, we could go on. It's quite morbid.

When you think about these awful diseases, there's lots of them, friends, that are unleashed in our world today. We've got tuberculosis. It's been said that one third of the world's population is infected with the bug that carries TB.

Tuberculosis. Equine morbillivirus. It's carried by disease-ridden rats. E-bola is a disease that causes fatal internal bleeding from a range of body organs.

[11:06] There's no cure or vaccine. It can wipe out whole towns. Friends, this is serious. This is going on in our world today. We're a bit removed in the Western world. But there's some nations far afield from us where this is a daily occurrence, where there's people that are dreadfully afflicted with these things.

There's one called strep. It's a flesh-eating disease. It disfigures and kills victims in a matter of hours. The Bible tells us about these pestilences. And it's been said that new diseases are appearing at the rate of more than one every year for the past 20 years.

And some, like anthrax, they're actually bottling it up and making it into a chemical weapon. They can put anthrax into, you know, if the baddies wanted to, they could put anthrax into a town's water supply and wipe out whole neighbourhoods of people, whole nations of people, if they unleash some of these dread diseases on a nation.

And it's a very real reality in our world today. World-wide epidemics. world-wide epidemics. And we know that even our state government, our Commonwealth government is planning contingency planning for, what do I call it?

Desalination plan. Well, that's one thing that they need, yeah. But I'm thinking of the dread pandemics, they call them. Pandemics. They've got to be prepared for a pandemic, like a bird flu that can wipe out massive numbers of people and be able to have plans that people can be put in hospitals in massive numbers or treated in massive numbers that's going to really strain the health system.

[12:48] And so the authorities of our world today know this is a very real thing. This is not make-believe, science fiction. This is something that could happen within a matter of days when something breaks out.

And so worldwide pestilences, epidemics are foretold in the Bible. It's something that we can prepare for. Verse 7 tells us about earthquakes. It's another sign of the end of the age.

Earthquakes. They've calculated that there's an increasing intensity of earthquakes over the last few decades that they've been measuring these things. For example, in the first decade, 1930 to 1940, there was only three earthquakes.

1950 to 1960, it was up around nine. 1970 to 1980, it was around 51. 1980 to 1990, 86.

And already there's been certainly over a hundred over the last decade that have jolted the planet. And some are saying that maybe this is actually the Russian military who are using weather warfare and seismic warfare.

[14:00] There are actual such things at work in the world today where they're actually harnessing these things as a kind of a warfare, of putting nuclear shockwaves through the ground as a weapon to unleash

earthquakes and tidal waves against enemies.

Now, some of that, I'm not sure, some of that might be just speculation. But certainly there are some very real things that are going on where they're trying to harness that kind of stuff against other nations.

Verse 9, it tells us there's going to be an unleashing of an antichrist spirit. Some 160,000 Christians can be martyred each year.

There's been more Christians who have died for their faith in the 20th century than in all the previous centuries combined. And believers are sneered at as being fundamentalists.

Believers, Christian people, are sneered at and mocked. And they're selling anti-Christian bumper stickers. This is what the world is about today.

[15:08] Verse 12 tells us about the moral degeneracy of the world. It says that the love of many shall wax cold because iniquity or sin shall abound.

Sin is abounding. We see the moral degradation where we're being bombarded with vile things constantly. That we're almost like it's just not shocking anymore.

We've lost the ability to blush anymore. And there's a corruption, there's a violence, there's an immorality. We see that at the touch of a button. You can see the most gross things right in your face today.

And this is the world we're living in where these things that would have been hard to come by are seen and witnessed by our children as a matter of course.

And so we know that the world we're living in is in a dreadful state. And it's an awful trend that is occurring. The Bible talks to us about a one world government that is going to happen in the end of the world.

[16:14] A one world economy, a one world religious system. It talks about that in Revelation 13. Where there's going to be a total world control. Where the world parliament, a constitution for federation of earth, a global governance.

Now some of these things, it kind of sounds good. It sounds good having a coordinated, having good government, having everything just so.

And everything, all of good police force and lots of laws that protect the average citizen. But really and truly, there's the sinister powers at work that are behind some of these things.

Pulling the streams. And it makes you wonder when you look in the news lately of the race for the American presidency. The candidates that they've got to choose from. And you start doing some searching about what they actually stand for.

Even the one who's professing to be a Christian. You wonder where they're at really. I mean they're all kind of professing to be Christian with a small c.

[17:17] You know, they're all professing to have some kind of faith in the Bible. You know, give or take a few bits and pieces that they might not go by. But you wonder what choices has the American people got as their next president.

And one of them is a real, you know, wonderful public speaker, Barack Obama. And you wonder really when you're here and you actually scratch beneath the surface what he stands for.

It's quite alarming. And these are the people that are going to be governing our world soon. In effect, because we know the American president has got such a powerful role. And it's all leading that push towards a one world government.

We see another trend is the ecumenical movement. Where the Pope of Rome, the Roman Catholic Pope, is being praised by many evangelical leaders today.

And it's as if he's, you know, they don't think about the Inquisition. And what the Roman Catholic Church did to the people of God in past history.

[18:21] And yet they've not denied any of that and they've not taken back any of the doctrines or any of the stands that they've made. Including the Inquisition, it's still in there what they stand for as much as their hide back.

Another fact is there's a rebuilding of the temple. A rebuilding of the temple is fully planned and being prepared at this time. There's a movement amongst the Jews to rebuild the temple where

they're actually preparing the vestments and the ornaments.

And the priestly clothing and vessels are being prepared for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. And this is another sign. Violence is another sign of the end of the world.

We know that it's been said that up to 5,000 Australian women and children a night are seeking emergency shelter from violence in the home. There's an awful violence.

There's an awful lawlessness that's breaking out across our world. Perilous times. 2 Timothy 3 tells us. It tells us that there's going to be perilous times. Times of peril.

[19:29] Times of awful, fierce times. Difficult times. Savage times. You could translate that word perilous. Times that are difficult and dangerous.

Times of stress. Times that sap away the strength. And it goes on to describe that in 2 Timothy 3, verse 1. It tells us about men that are going to be lovers of their own selves, covetous, lovers of money.

They're going to be boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient. Disobedient means no respect for parents. That's another sign where there's a lack of respect in the home.

Without natural affection. Affection, sorry. Unloving. Unforgiving. Uncontrollable. These are all signs of these characteristics where it's going to be evident even in the home life of our nation.

Where people are going to be, as it says, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Perilous times. And these are very distinctive features that are evident in God's word.

[20:29] There's many scriptures we could cite. 2 Thessalonians 2 talks about a falling away. Here's a sign that we should look out for. It says in 2 Thessalonians 2, Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except they come a falling away first.

A falling away. There's going to be a falling away, a moving away from the truth into error. It's going to be like an imperceptible thing, I think, where it's almost gradual.

An incremental change. And we see that often in church circles, there's like all these fans that come through, these waves of different things that go through. And each wave, they seem to get further and further away from the fundamentals of the faith.

And it says in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, that there's going to be an Antichrist come. He's going to be after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. There we have it again. Miracles. There's going to be a miracle worker, the Antichrist. And people are going to follow him. Maybe he's just going to be one other tele-evangelist who's just going to take over. He's just going to be such a miracle worker, such an amazing speaker, and such a great talker, that he's going to sway multitudes to follow him into this lie, this strong delusion, as it tells us there in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, that they should believe a lie.

[21:59] In 1 Timothy 4, it tells us that some shall depart from the faith. This is 1 Timothy 4, verse 1. Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits.

It's going to be a terrible apostasy and deception. And we see that sadly in our world today, for example, amongst the Church of England, the Anglican Church, where some of these spokesmen are preaching and teaching outright falsehood.

And it tells us in the Word of God to expect that. False prophets shall rise and shall deceive many, the Lord tells us, in Matthew 24, verse 11. But we've said all the bad stuff.

Now let me leave you with something encouraging. I don't want you to feel that it's hopeless, because there is a great hope, a blessed hope. And that's in a great contrast to all of that that we've just been talking about.

The Lord Jesus tells you in John chapter 14, He tells you, each one of you, take this personally now, He says, Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

[23:01] In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. He says, I go to prepare a place for you. Young people here tonight, if you're a Christian, listen now, if you're a Christian, the Lord Jesus says when he left, when he was about to leave, he says, I'm going to leave, and I'm going to prepare, I'm going to get ready, a place for you.

He was talking about heaven. He was talking about a mansion. He was talking about a place of residence, a place to live. And he says, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

So there's a wonderful promise of his coming. In the midst of all that promise, in the midst of all that prophecy of the end of the age, there's a wonderful promise of his coming, that he will come.

He says, let not your heart be troubled. He says, don't let all that worry you. He says, I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I'm going to come again, and I'm going to receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

And it's a wonderful comfort. It tells us also, in 1 Thessalonians 4, it tells us about how one day, it says that the Lord shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together, with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[24:32] So comfort one another with these words. Friends, it tells us then, that one day the Lord's going to descend from heaven, with a shout. He's going to say, whoa! Whatever he's saying, I'm not sure what he's going to say.

I'm being a bit so creative there. Who knows what he's going to say, but he's going to shout. Something loud, something that's going to wake us up, and he's going to say, right, time's up. Planet Earth.

Come up here. Come up here. There's something like that. And whoosh! It says that all the dead in Christ also, in other words, all those that have passed away, and have died, and have been buried in the ground, those that have trusted the Lord Jesus, the dead in Christ, those that have passed away and believed in him, are going to rise.

They're going to come out of the ground. And then it says, we which are alive, so if we're still alive at that time, at that moment, we're going to be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air.

And it's a wonderful comfort, isn't it? It's an encouragement for us. And Titus 2, verse 13, tells us to be looking for that blessed hope. Be looking for it.

[25:43] Be scanning the horizon. Be waiting, prepared, ready for it. It's a blessed hope. It's a happy hope. It's a glorious hope. A wonderful hope that gives us real joy and peace, that one day we shall be with him, and we shall be like him.

There's reservations that can be made for heaven tonight. You know, if you've got to go, I know Brother Don's always jet-setting, and he's got to make a reservation for his next overseas trip. And he's got to phone that travel agent, and book himself in for the next plane, off to Scotland to get there on time. And likewise too, you can make a reservation today, if you're not already a Christian, the Bible says, and I don't mean to make this flippant, or, you know, irreverent about this, but really and truly, we can make a reservation for heaven.

We can have a reservation, where it's stamped on our passport, we're ready to go, and when the time comes, we're assured of that. It tells us that there's a reservation.

I'm trying to think of a scripture I'm basing that on. It talks about, that we've got a treasure that's reserved in heaven for us. It's a place that's reserved. So there's a set-aside place.

[27:00] It's like, if you had a meal time, and you've got a certain number of guests that you're preparing for, and mum cooks that lovely meal, and you can smell that, you know, you can hear that sizzling, and smell that beautiful aroma, as my lovely wife makes me tea tonight, I can have that wonderful knowledge.

There's a place set at the table for me, to enjoy that meal. There's a reservation that's been made, and likewise too, we can have that wonderful reservation made in heaven for us, that is prepared for us.

I know it's, I've got the scripture there, I'm not sure which one it is. 1 Peter, I should refer to it, in case you don't believe me here. It says, 1 Peter 1 verse 5, tells us about the Christians, it says that, we've got an inheritance, incorruptible, it can't be corrupted, and undefiled, it can't be made dirty, or defiled, and it fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

It's reserved, who are kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed, in the last time. We've got a wonderful reservation, that's been made, and, we can know for sure, now how do we get that reservation?

How do I know for sure, that there's a place, at God's table? How do I know, that there's a place, a room, a place to be with him, for eternity?

[28:32] The only way to know, is to trust him, is to put your faith in him, is to ask him, to take away your sin, to be your saviour, to make certain, that you trusted him, and to trust, means it's like the chair, that you're sitting on, you're trusting that chair, to hold you up.

Okay? Hopefully that's not, you're not too heavy for it. No, but seriously, hopefully that chair, will hold you up. You can trust it, it's been designed, to hold you, to carry you.

And likewise too, we can trust the Lord, we can put our whole weight, on him. We can put our whole, reliance on him, to hold us, to keep us, to take us, to receive us, as he promises to.

And that's a wonderful, reservation, a wonderful trust, we can have. And it says, there's a wonderful, reward that we can have, that, as we await, his coming.

Now the Christians of old, they used to have, a saying, when they met one another, and that saying was, Maranatha, our Lord cometh. They used to greet, one another like that.

[29:38] 1 Corinthians 16, verse 22, it refers to it there. 1 Corinthians 16, verse 22, Maranatha, it means, the Lord cometh. It means, the Lord Jesus is coming.

It's a frequent greeting, that they used, and it's also, a triumphant cry, of the martyrs. As they were there, in the, Coliseums, and in the amphitheatres, as they were about, to face their deaths, for their, trusting in Christ, they used to cry out, Maranatha, our Lord cometh.

As a triumphant cry, of victory. Friends, it's later than you think. You know, it's getting late. It's getting late. The storm is coming. You see the signs, in the sky, about the weather, for tomorrow.

Think about the signs, of his coming. The signs, that we read, in the newspapers, the signs, that we've read, of pestilences, of troubles, of falling away, of false prophets, of earthquakes, of an antichrist spirit, of world government, of the ecumenical movement, of the rebuilding, of the temple, of the escalating, famines, poverty, wars, epidemics.

Friends, the signs are all around, an escalating, increasing day by day. But yet, for you, it's a blessed hope. Don't let these things, disturb you.

[30:56] Don't let these things, let not your heart, be troubled. He says, I go to prepare, a place for you, and I'm going to come again. He's certainly, going to be coming again, back to planet earth. Not coming as a baby, in a manger, as the first time he came, but coming as the triumphant, glorious, all conquering king, to take victory, and vanquish, the enemy.

Christ is coming, to planet earth. And he tells us there, in Luke 19, verse 13, he says, occupy, till I come. We should occupy, planet earth.

We should take planet earth, and put, a stamp on planet earth, for kingdom, for the kingdom of heaven. Occupy, till I come. Make, use of your day.

Make, use of your time. Make, use of your life. Tell another, of the saviour. Make, your life count.

Occupy, till I come. Watch, and work. It tells us, the Lord, gives many stories, about, how, he's going to go away, and, he's expecting us, to be working, when he comes back.

And he talks about, how, he tells us parables, of some who had, abilities, that they, just buried away, and they did nothing with.

[32:11] And, when he comes back, he's going to want to see, that you've made, your life count. Use every opportunity, that you can, to, be a Christian, in your workplace, in your life, in your home.

Live the life, and be a light. Shine, God's light, to others, while you have opportunity. Occupy, till I come. And it says, in the last, really the last verse, of the Bible, or close to it, Revelation 22, verse 20.

The very last book, I know, I've said this before, you know, when you read the Bible, and you read the end of it, it tells us there, that who's going to win. The Lord Jesus, is going to win.

And it tells us in, the second to last verse, in Revelation 22, the Lord Jesus tells us, surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Friends, just one closing quote, is Luke 21, verse 28. Now, when these things, begin to happen, it's like the, signs of Matthew 24, in Luke 21, verse 28, he says, when you see these things happening, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption, draws near.

[33:30] There's a redemption, there's a deliverance, that's coming soon. And the Lord Jesus, is going to come, he's going to take, that conquering, rightful place, as the master, of this planet. Friends, are you ready, for his coming?

Are you ready, for Christ? Are you going to know him? When he comes, will he be your saviour, or your judge? I pray, that each one, will know what it is, to ask the Lord Jesus, to take your life, and make it count, for him.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you tonight, for your great love, that you came in Christ, to bear our sin, to pay a penalty, for it there, that we might trust you, and know your eternal life.

Help us Lord, to see the signs, that show us, that you're, going to be coming soon, back to this planet. And Lord, we want to know you, as king and saviour. Help us Lord, each one, that they might, put their trust in you.

And as Christians, that we can know, that our hearts, need not be troubled, but we can be assured, and we can be confident, we can have that blessed, that wonderful, happy hope, to know that you're, coming back, to take us to yourself.

[34:36] And we long for that day, we look forward, to that Lord Jesus. Help us Lord, to be found faithful, watching, and working, and waiting, serving, occupy until you come, that you can be glorified, by our lives we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.

God bless you everybody, thanks so much, for coming tonight. God bless you.