

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To demonstrate the imminence of Jesus' return, and to urge the importance of preparing for that time.

TEXTS:

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| 1. MT 24:3 | 8. 2TI 3:1-4 (MT 24:12) |
| 2. MT 24:36 | 9. LK 17:26-27 |
| 3. LK 21:29-31 | 10. DA 12:4 |
| 4. MT 16:1-3 | 11. MT 24:14 (REV 14:6) |
| 5. MT 24:4-7 | 12. RO 13:11-14 |
| 6. MT 24:8 | 13. LK 21:28 |
| 7. JAS 5:1-3 (EZE 7:19; RV 18:17) | |

THE STUDY:

- 1. What question did Jesus' disciples ask about His coming? MT 24:3**
The disciples wanted to know the sign of Jesus' coming and the end of the world.
- 2. Does the Bible tell exactly when Jesus is coming again? MT 24:36**
No.
- 3. Is it possible to know when the end is near? LK 21:29-31**
Yes, by observing the signs around us.
- 4. What did Jesus call believers who didn't consider it important to know the signs? MT 16:1-3**
Jesus called them "hypocrites."
- 5. What are some of the signs Jesus told us to watch for? MT 24:4-7**
 - a. False christs and false prophets (vs. 4-5, 11, 23-24)**
In recent times we have seen such impostors as Jim Jones, David Koresh, Marshall Applewhite and Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda. However, I think we find a more direct fulfillment when we consider that the quotation marks in verse were not in the original text. In other words, what Jesus was most likely saying was "Many will come claiming to believe in Me – saying that I am the Christ – calling themselves Christians, and then teaching things that are contrary to my word, and they will get many people to believe them, thinking they are following Me."
 - b. Wars and rumors of wars (v. 6)**
The twentieth century was the bloodiest century that has ever existed in terms of war, with over 180 million deaths. We've had WWI and II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Iran-Iraq war (with continued and constant Middle East conflicts), Tribal War in Africa, and International Terrorism, to name a few.
 - c. Famines (v. 7)**
According to one U.N. report, one sixth of the world population suffers from chronic hunger, resulting in 3.5 million deaths per year.
 - d. Pestilences (v. 7)**
We are plagued with many relatively new diseases like AIDS, Avian Bird Flu, SARS, West Nile Virus, Swine Flu (H1N1) and Mad Cow Disease. There is also an increasing number of new strains of life-threatening diseases, some of which had at one time almost vanished, like Tuberculosis.

e. Earthquakes (v. 7; LK 21:25-26)

This seems to refer to other natural disasters as well. In very recent history we have witnessed two of the most violent storms ever – the Asian Tsunami (caused by an earthquake in the ocean), and Hurricane Katrina (“The sea and the waves roaring”). Hurricane Katrina is the costliest storm to ever hit American soil, with over \$86 billion in damages and an economic impact (loss of jobs, industries, etc.) of over \$250 billion.

6. What did Jesus say these events could be compared to? MT 24:8

Just as a woman’s pains in giving birth increase in frequency and intensity, so Jesus pointed out that there would be an increase in frequency and intensity of these religious, political and natural occurrences.

7. Will there be signs in the world economy at the end of time? JAS 5:1-3 (EZE 7:19; REV 18:17)

Speaking of the “last days,” James talks about riches being corrupted and gold and silver being corroded. In other words, the time is coming when money will lose its value overnight.

8. How does the Bible describe the social condition of the world in the last days? 2TI 3:1-4 (MT 24:12)

Human passions would be uncontrollable, with increasing violence and a decrease of genuine love and compassion. As a result, divorce rates and domestic violence cases are higher than ever, and according to a 2002 by the WHO on Violence and Health, “Each year, more than 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence...”

9. What do the people of the last days have in common with the people in Noah’s day? LK 17:26-7

There is certainly nothing inherently wrong with eating, drinking or weddings. Jesus is speaking of people becoming so absorbed in life that they overlook the essential preparation for His coming. They assume that things will go on the same as they always have, and they scoff at the idea of Jesus coming soon.

10. How does modern technology prove that Christ’s coming is soon? DA 12:4

The Bible said that one of the signs of the end would be the increase of knowledge. While this has primary application to a knowledge of the Bible, it may also apply to the technological understanding that has seen a phenomenal breakthrough in the past 200 years.

11. What message must precede the coming of Jesus? MT 24:14 (REV 14:6)

One of the greatest signs of the nearness of Christ’s return is the rapid spread of the gospel throughout the world. In the twenty-first century our world has become a “global village.” The gospel is now going to all the world with a speed that would have left the apostle Paul amazed. Sophisticated satellite communication systems such as the Internet, satellite technology, interlinking computers, the World Wide Web, and mass media television and radio communications are, in reality, a gift that God is using to communicate the gospel with incredible speed to the world. The twentieth-century technological revolution has provided a setting to rapidly spread the gospel.

12. What does the Bible urge us to do in order to be ready? RO 13:11-14

The Bible urges to “awake out of sleep” and to live our lives in light of the reality of Jesus’ soon return, choosing to put away those things in our lives that would distract us from serving God with our whole hearts and being ready to meet Jesus when He comes.

13. Does Jesus want people to feel frightened and uptight about His coming? LK 21:28

Absolutely not! He wants us to “lift up” our heads in hopeful anticipation. That’s why He wants us to be ready.

APPEAL:

Most people believe that Jesus will come, and they say they would live differently if they knew He was coming tomorrow. Isn’t it high time for us to awake out of our sleep? Jesus is coming, and soon! Are you ready? Isn’t it time to put off the works of darkness, and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ? Jesus is inviting you right now to repent of your sins and to put your trust in Him, so that when He comes again, He will find you ready and waiting. Don’t you want to be ready when Jesus comes again? Is that your desire?