

### **WILL THERE BE SIGNS INDICATING THE END OF THE WORLD?**

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There are many so called “prophets” in the world today that claim to know when the world will end. On more than one occasion, one of them has declared the time when the world would end, based upon the “signs” of the coming destruction. The most often used section of scripture to support this theory is Matthew chapter twenty-four. Hal Lindsey wrote, “Jesus also told us that once this chain of events got started, that generation would see all of the end time events fulfilled: ‘Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until these things take place.’ And this section of Matthew is not the only place in Scripture that describes this sequence of events” (Planet Earth-2000 A.D. pg. 130). The latest supposed end of time, according to Harold Camping, was May 21, 2011, until he changed it to October 21, 2011, when he was wrong again! However, to his credit Mr. Camping acknowledged his sin in trying to predict the end of time and quoted Matthew 24:36 as evidence!

As Jesus left the temple for the last time, His disciples came to Him pointing out the magnificence of the great structure (Mt. 24:1). Jesus responded by stating, “**See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down**” (Mt. 24:2). The disciples “assumed” that He was talking about His second coming and the end of the world. Why would they think that? Josephus described the stones of the temple walls as being nearly seventy feet in length, twelve feet in height, and eighteen feet in width. As far as the disciples were concerned, only the destruction of the world could level such a massive structure as this.

As He sat upon the Mount of Olives, they came asking that He elaborate on His earlier statement. Their question was two-fold: when will it take place, and what are the signs that will accompany it? Christ had said nothing to His disciples concerning His return or the end of the world; they only inferred this because of the strength of the temple. There was so much wrong with their assumptions that He set forth to correct them within His answer. Within his instruction He made a clear distinction between His second coming and the destruction of the temple.

He began by giving signs for which they were to watch. There would be many deceivers which would come claiming to be Christ. There would be wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. However, this whole discourse is about the trouble the Jews would be facing in **their** not too distant future, not nations thousands of years into the future and thousands of miles away, as the premillennialists teach. History supports that these events have already occurred, and non-believing writers have attested that they happened. Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius all wrote about them.

Included in these historical records are three threats of war made against the Jews by three different Roman Emperors, three uprisings by Gentiles which resulted in the death of many thousands of Jews, an indefinite number of famines referred to by Roman writers, at least one pestilence during which thirty thousand persons perished in Rome alone, and at least five earthquakes. All these signs would directly affect the peace of Judea, not some foreign nation half way around the world!

Verses seventeen through twenty-two mention the very events that were to signal the flight from Jerusalem to the mountains. In A.D. 70, Jerusalem fell to Titus and the destruction of the Temple took place. Daniel referred to this as the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). If Christ were speaking of the end of the world, what good would it do to flee to the mountains? However, since He was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, it would be very beneficial for Christians to flee

to the mountains. Historians have recorded that not one Christian lost his or her life in the fall of Jerusalem, because they heeded the signs and fled the city.

Notice how the Lord changed subject matter in verse 35, “**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only**” (Mt. 24:35-36). He then began to describe the events of the final day and used the account of the flood as an example of His surprise return.

He gave no signs that would usher in the end of time, only those that would mark the end of Jerusalem and the Jewish religion. The destruction of the temple and the Jewish records ended the Jewish religion. The arrogance of those that claim to know the time of the end of the world is amplified as we read the words of Jesus again, “**But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.**” How can any man claim to have the divine knowledge that only the Father in heaven has?