

TWELVE GREAT SIGNS OF THE RETURN OF JESUS

Introduction In this lesson we will study "The Signs of Christ's Coming", and the obvious place to begin is with the pointed question which the disciples asked Jesus about this subject.

Matt. 24 : 2: "What shall be the SIGN of Thy coming?"

Discussion When we open the Bible to look for the answer to this question, we discover three significant facts about the Signs of the coming of our Lord.

FACT 1—JESUS WANTS US TO "WATCH" FOR THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

How do we know this? Because, immediately following the disciples' question in Matt. 24 : 2, Jesus devoted nearly 100 verses to the "Signs" of His coming, and the attitude His people should adopt towards these Signs (see Matt. 24 and 25). These two chapters are punctuated by the solemn warnings "WATCH" and "BE READY" (see Matt. 24 : 42, 43, 44; 25 : 13). Obviously, these warnings would be pointless if there were no Signs, or if we could not recognise them!

FACT 2—JESUS EXPECTS US TO "DISCERN" THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

Matt. 16 : 1-3: "Can ye not discern the Signs of the times?" (To "discern" means to see, to perceive, to recognise, to interpret, to understand.)

Heb. 10 : 25: "As ye see the day approaching."

Matt. 24 : 32, 33: "Know that it is near, even at the doors."

FACT 3—JESUS HAS MADE IT AS EASY TO TELL WHEN HIS COMING IS NEAR AS IT IS TO TELL THE TIME OF DAY

(See Chart No. 9—*Signs of Christ's Coming*)

When we see the minute hand, "World Conditions", coming nearer and nearer to the point of agreement with the hour hand, "Bible Signs", we can know by that sure token that our Lord's return is near! Consider these twelve great signs of the return of Jesus, which are being fulfilled in our day:

The "Scoffers" Sign (II Pet. 3: 3, 4)

Peter predicted that the prevailing mood of the "last days" would be one of open scepticism about the signs of Christ's coming. This is certainly true today. Every modern scoffer is a walking, talking sign of the coming of the Lord. The Christian can say to the scoffer: "Friend, Peter made a prediction about you. You are the latest sign I've seen!"

The "War" Sign (Matt. 24 : 6, 7)

The 20th century has witnessed the two greatest wars of all history (1914-1918; 1939-1945. Total of over 70 million killed, wounded or missing). The years 1900-1970 have been the most bloodstained 70 years on record.

The "Famine" Sign (Matt. 24 : 7)

Our century has witnessed four of the greatest famines of all history (Russia 1921, 1933; China 1928-1930; Bengal 1943-1944. Estimated deathroll totalled over 20 million).

The "Pestilence" Sign (Matt. 24 : 7).

Our century has witnessed one of the greatest pestilences of all history ("Spanish Influenza" epidemic, 1918. Estimated 21 million victims).

The "Earthquake" Sign (Matt. 24 : 7)

Our century has witnessed two of the greatest earthquakes of all history (China, 1920. Killed 180,000 people. Japan, 1923. Total casualties 1,500,000, of whom 200,000 perished). The Japanese earthquake was described at the time as "The greatest single disaster since the Flood!"