



The signs of the times

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Then **the**
sign of
the **Son** of Man
will *appear* in
heaven, ..., and
they will see
the **Son** of
Man coming
on the
clouds of
heaven *with*
power and
great
glory.

SIGN
— OF THE —
TIMES

Alive Ministries South Africa

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Dear friends,

The word "**signs of the times**" is only appearing in Matthew 16: *You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3)*. This is only dealing about the sign of Jonah: *A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matthew 16:4)*. This is about the dying and resurrection of Jesus: *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:39-40)*. **We always thought this sign was close before Jesus second coming, however it is about His first coming.**

We automatically made a link with the signs in Matthew 24:1-31 (false messiah's, wars and rumors of wars), but "*the signs of the times*" is not appearing at all here.

Matthew 24:1-31.

The disciples are asking Jesus three questions:

1. *Tell us, when will these things be? (Matthew 24:3a).*
2. *And what will be the sign of Your coming? (Matthew 24:3b).*
3. *and of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:3c).*

Answer question 1 (Matthew 24:4-28):

Jesus predicts **the destruction of the temple** in Matthew 24:1-2 and answers their question: *Tell us, when will these things be?* The answer is: *Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place (Matthew 24:34)***. We all know this actually happened in their generation: Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed in A.D.70, **in their generation.**

Answer question 2 (Matthew 24:29-35):

And what will be the sign of Your coming? When people read that question today, they have a very different mind-set than the disciples had 2000 years ago. They were not thinking of the second coming of our Lord. In fact, at that time in their lives they were not even convinced that Jesus was going to die (Matthew 16:21-23), let alone return to earth someday. Let's have a look on what means His "coming". At that time in history, the Jews were looking for a Messiah. That was there primary hope. They were looking for a Messiah to come and set up a Kingdom in which the Jews would have dominance on earth and reign forever (Matthew 20:20-23). So, there question was meant: When will You come into your Kingdom, when will You take Your position and reveal yourself as king! When did that happen? After Jesus died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, He sat down on a throne at the right hand of God. All authority was given to Him, both in heaven and earth. Jesus came into His Kingdom the moment He ascended into heaven and sat down next to the Father. It happened almost 2,000 years ago, **in the generation in which the disciples lived** as written: *And I tell you the truth, **some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom (Matthew 16:28)*** and *Jesus went on to say, I tell you the truth, **some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power! (Mark 9:1)***. **This is all about the sign of His coming in His Kingdom!**

The kingdom of God has come upon us with Jesus first coming (Matthew 12:28). The Kingdom of God is spiritual and not of this world (John 18:36). Jesus became King with His first coming as written: He would raise up the Christ to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:29-34), to fulfill the prophesy of the prophet Zechariah: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming to you (Matthew 21:5). With Jesus second coming His reign and Kingdom will end and be handed over to the Father: Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:24).

*Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). Some more words about 'the clouds' with Jesus ascending into heaven here. The prophet Daniel is also speaking about this happening: ***I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).*** Daniel is clearly speaking about the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven, which means coming to God the Father, to sit on the throne and have dominion, glory and a Kingdom. This is about the ascending into heaven during Jesus first coming and the start of the spiritual Kingdom. Next verse confirms that 'coming on the clouds': *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9).**

Answer question 3 (Matthew 24:36-44):

What will be the sign of the end of the age? Well, this is about Jesus return, His second coming. *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming (Matthew 24:36-42).* As we see here **no signs precede the second coming of Jesus!**

Final word.

*Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that **summer is near**. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (Matthew 24:32-33).* Jesus is explaining His disciples here that these warning signs would signal the beginning of a new spiritual season – the end of the old age and the flourishing of a new one with a new covenant. Jesus was answering His disciples questions about His coming Kingdom – an event that they would see in their lifetime. Look at Jesus, the new High Priest: *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (Hebrews 8:1).* In Matthew 24:36 Jesus speaks about His second coming and that **with His second coming there will be no signs** to indicate His second coming. The obvious, simple lesson of the fig tree was to watch all the signs listed in Matthew 24:4-29.

All the signs in Matthew 24:4-29, including the great tribulation, **took place** during the start of the 'end of ages', 2000 years ago, **in the first century**. This all during their lifetime as written: *Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away **till all these things take place** (Matthew 24:34).* The 'end of ages' started with Jesus first coming: *but now, once **at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26).***

Yours in His service,

Kees

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