



When Shall These Things Be?

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There are many who are concerned and even worried about the coming of the end of all things. They often speak of the “signs of the times” and the events that are to follow. One reason for many of the fears about the end of time is due to an improper understanding of God’s Word.

There are many who believe that there will be “signs” that will indicate the coming of the end of this world. This is based on a misinterpretation of Matthew 24 (also Mark 13 and Luke 21). In this passage, Jesus and His disciples depart from the temple in Jerusalem and His disciples show Him “the buildings of the temple,” or in other words, how beautiful it was. Jesus responded to this by saying, “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” (Matthew 24:2). In the minds of these disciples, they connected such destruction of their holy temple with the end of the world, so they asked two questions, “...when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (verse 3). Although in the minds of these disciples these events were connected, there are two separate questions; Jesus makes this distinction in His answer.

The first question concerned the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, which He answered in verses 4-35. To interpret and apply the things said in these verses as signs of the coming end of the world is to improperly interpret God’s Word. The things said in these verses deal with events that were fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Roman army came against Jerusalem and destroyed it and the temple. Notice what Jesus said in verse 34, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Jesus was not speaking to the

generation now living or that will yet live sometime in the future; rather, Jesus is speaking about the generation that was living at the time He spoke these words.

In verse 36, Jesus makes a subject change and answers their second question concerning the end of the world when He said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” You see, Jesus said that concerning the end of the world, there will be no signs. Peter compared it to “a thief in the night” (II Peter 3:10).

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