

Lesson 48

Signs

Introduction:

Jesus has been laying out an end-time roadmap for His disciples to follow so they aren't misled. The rest of the world is not privy to their inside information and will be surprised when the end comes.

Knowing that His return was yet distant, Jesus began placing route markers the apostles were able to identify in their lifetime. He assured them not to be frightened, as the end was not near. Then He placed another set of markers so that future disciples would become aware that the end was approaching. He called them the beginning of birth pangs. The next set of markers directs His disciple's attention to the things that will be happening to them prior to His return: tribulation, apostasy, false prophets and lawlessness. While the signs indicate a difficult period of time they also provide hope of His soon coming return.

Jesus was not a date setter. He knew there would be many different calendars in use at the time of His return. He also knew that the earth was round and that there were twenty-four hours and two days coexisting on the planet at any given time. So the signs Jesus leaves His disciples concerning His coming don't involve dates but they are **unmistakable!**

Reading The Scripture:

Matthew 24:3, 15-31, Mark 13:14-27, and Luke 21:25-28

The Abomination of Desolation

Matthew 24:3, 15-22 and Mark 13:3-4, 14-20

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a Journey with Jesus)

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" "Therefore when you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11

False Christs and False Prophets

Matthew 24:23-28 and Mark 13:21-23

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Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. If therefore they say to you,

'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

The Son of Man is Coming
Matthew 24:27-31, Mark 13:24-27, and Luke 21:25-28

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"For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. But immediately after the tribulation of those days there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL** from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the **SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY** with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with **A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Isaiah 13:10 and Joel 2:30-31. THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL.

Daniel 7:13. SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY.

Isaiah 27:12-13. A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER.

Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27

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And He will send forth His angels with **A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Group Discussion:

In order to understand a road map what do you have to do?

In order to understand Jesus' roadmap to the future what do you have to do?

The Commands:

1. Let the reader understand.
2. Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
3. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house.
4. Let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.
5. Pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on a Sabbath.
6. Do not believe him.
7. Behold, I have told you in advance.
8. Do not believe them.
9. Straighten up and lift up your heads.

The Lesson:

- **Route Marker #10** - The Abomination of Desolation. Jesus said, *“Let the reader understand.”*

Up to this time the signs that Jesus used tended to be general in nature. However the Abomination of Desolation is very specific and when it occurs it marks a series of apocalyptic events leading to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Jesus, this single event must be understood.

The Scripture passages referring to the Abomination of Desolation are Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11. They read as follows:

“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week (period of seven¹), but in the middle of the week (period of seven) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” (9:27)

“Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.” (11:31)

“From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. (12:11)

In order for the Abomination of Desolation to take place either a Tabernacle (tent) or Temple has to be in **existence**. The abomination occurs when something is placed, erected or established within it. In the original Tabernacle (tent) only five furnishings were permitted: The golden altar (altar of incense), the seven-branched golden lampstand, the table of showbread with its twelve loaves of bread, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat. The prophecies in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 also indicate that the regular² sacrifices and offerings to God will be stopped.

A **type**³ of this abomination occurred once before but not for the full duration indicated in the prophecies of Daniel (8:9-14 and 12:11-12). In 167 BC, Antiochus IV - Epiphanes (God Manifest) set up a likeness of himself in the Temple, stopped the sacrifices and sacrificed a pig on the altar of burnt offerings. The Temple was cleansed and rededicated to God a little over three years later in 164 BC. The original story is found in book of 1 Maccabees 4:36-61. The eight-day Jewish feast of Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Temple.

The Apostle Paul also refers to the Abomination of Desolation in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. *“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [The Day of the Lord⁴] will not come unless the apostasy comes*

¹ This is probably referring to the “Shemittah” or “week of years”.

² The Hebrew word for “regular” is Tamid, which means eternal or continuously ongoing. These sacrifices consist of the sin offering (sins against God), the trespass offering (sins against others), the burnt offering (service or devotion to God), the peace offering (praise and thanksgiving to God), the incense offering (prayer), and the meat and drink offerings (bread and wine).

³ Since both, Jesus and Paul, discussed the Abomination of Desolation as being futuristic, the abomination committed by Antiochus IV who preceded them by 200 years could not have been any part of the fulfillment of this event.

⁴ The Day of the Lord is a 1000-year period of time that commences with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and reign on the earth. At that time Jesus’ disciples will be gathered to Him (raptured) and the wrath of God will be poured out on the wicked. The Thessalonians, to whom Paul was writing in 51 AD, were concerned that the Day of the Lord had already come in their time. Though some of Jesus signs had come to pass by then, such as the rise of false prophets and tribulation, Paul said that their gathering to Jesus could not happen until after the Abomination of Desolation had occurred.

first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat⁵ in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God”

Jesus’ disciples will know beforehand that the Abomination of Desolation is going to occur because Jesus commands them to pray that it will not occur in the wintertime or on a Sabbath.⁶ And once it does occur He commands that the disciples living in Judea⁷ flee to the mountains immediately.

The Abomination of Desolation marks the beginning of a period of **great** tribulation⁸, known in the Old Testament as the time of Jacob’s trouble. Messianic fervor will be in vogue, as many people will be expecting the Messiah. That is why Jesus warns His disciples that false Christs and false prophets will appear during this period of time. And they will even be performing great signs and wonders. Jesus cautions His disciples not to go after them because His coming will be obvious to everyone.

- **Route Marker #11** – Signs in the Heavens. Jesus said, *“But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”*

According to Jesus these heavenly signs begin to occur **after** the great tribulation. They mark events that immediately precede the Day of the Lord, are well documented in the Old Testament and consist of:

1. The sun will be darkened.
2. The moon will not give its light.
3. The stars will fall from the sky.
4. The powers of heaven will be shaken.

“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger.” (Isaiah 13:9-13)

*“I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood **before** the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.” (Joel 2:30-31)*

- **Route Marker #12** – The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.

⁵ There was only one seat in the Tabernacle or Temple and that was the Mercy Seat. It was where the presence of God dwelt above the Ark of the Covenant. Will this man be so bold as to actually sit on the Mercy Seat himself?

⁶ This could indicate the weekly Sabbath (about 6 pm Friday evening until about 6 pm on Saturday evening or any one of the seven Sabbaths within the feasts of the Lord (the Appointed Times of the Lord).

⁷ The area of Judea lies within a thirty-five mile radius of Jerusalem.

⁸ Tribulation is affliction or suffering endured by the saints in this world at the hands of men. (Ref: John 16:33)

The sign of the Son of Man is the **final** sign that the disciples of Jesus are looking for. We know they will be looking for this sign because Jesus had commanded them to straighten up⁹ (be prepared) and lift up their heads (look into the sky) when the heavenly signs begin to appear.

Many people are confused as to what this sign is but from Scripture it is quite clear. The term "Son of Man" is derived from Daniel 7:13-14. It is a direct Hebraic reference to the Messiah and Jesus continually used it in referring to himself.

"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, **with the clouds of heaven** One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

The sign that Jesus' disciples are looking for are "the clouds of heaven". As Christians we should be aware of this because it was written in the book of Acts 1:9-11 concerning the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

"And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and **a cloud** received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, **will come in just the same way** as you have watched Him go into heaven."

This is no ordinary cloud. It is the Sh'khinah or cloud of glory. It is the same cloud that led the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings, became a pillar of fire at night and filled the Temple of God. It always indicates the presence of God. Jesus said that at this time the earth would be darkened. So the appearance of this cloud cannot be mistaken for any other as it is filled with light. Jesus also said that His coming would appear as a lighting flash across the heavens. It's going to be obvious!

Then the Lord will send forth His angels with a Great Trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. The great trumpet is also called the "trump of God" in 1Thessalonians 4:16 and the "last trump" in 1Corinthians 15:52. The trumpet itself is a *shofar*. It is made from the horns of a ram because God provided a ram in the place of Isaac when Abraham was about to offer him as a sacrifice. So when it is sounded, the people of God are reminded of His provision for them.

The *shofar* is sounded at two of the Feasts (appointed times) of the Lord.

- *Yom Teruah* – Day of Blowing (*the horn*) or Day of Warning is the biblical name of the first feast. Jews also refer to this day as *Rosh Hashanah* or "head of the year" since it is the 1st day of the seventh month. They also refer to it as *Yom Hazikaron* – Day of Remembrance and *Yom Haddin* – Day of Judgment. (See Joel 2:1-14)
- *Yom Kippur* - The Day of Atonement is the second feast. (See Joel 2:15-17)
- These two feasts mark the beginning and end of a ten-day period of people's repentance towards God called *Yamim Noraim* – The Days of Awe.

⁹ Perhaps His people have been bowed in prayer up until this time as the Scripture indicates. "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

When Jesus referred to the great trumpet some translate those words to mean “with a great sound of a trumpet”. The “great sound” translation works well because it refers to the last note that is played on the shofar: “*Tekiah Gedola*”- the extended blast. The note **begins** at the end of the Day of Blowing. It is **completed** during the “closing of the gate” ceremony at the end of the Day of Atonement in the year of Jubilee. This trump is blown for an extended amount of time insuring that anyone desiring to repent of his sins will be given opportunity to do so. Since no man can play a note for that length of time (10 days) it is also considered the trump of God.

When the Apostle Paul refers to the “last trump” he has three things in mind.

- The last note being played.
- The last Jubilee: when people are released from bondage, their debts are canceled and their land is returned.
- The Hebrew tradition: that the Lord preserved the two horns from the sacrificial ram given in the place of Isaac. He sounded one horn (the first) at Mount Sinai and will sound the other (the last) when He redeems His people by the coming of Messiah at the end of the age.

The Point Of The Lesson:

Understand the signs of the times.