

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #271

Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: The "Olivet Discourse"

Part V: Only the Father Knows the Day or Hour, So Jesus Commands Vigilance

MT 24.32-44 (Parallel Texts: MK 13.28-32; LK 21.28-33)

32 ^{MT}"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree ^Land all the trees: ^{MT}As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you ^Lcan see for yourselves ^{MT}and know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that ^Lthe kingdom of God ^{MT}is near, right at the door. ^LWhen these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

34 ^{MT}"Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

37 "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore I command you to keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On Mount Olivet, Just Outside Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
	Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: "The Olivet Discourse"
Title	Part V: Only the Father Knows the Day or Hour, So Jesus Commands Vigilance

COMMENT:

In today's reading Jesus made the most important point of his teaching on his final return. There is a constant tension between two truths related to his return. On one hand, Jesus laid out seven conditions that collectively indicate that his return is near when they have all been fulfilled. On the other hand, Jesus was also clear that no one knows the exact day and hour of his coming, and that will never change. God will never reveal the precise

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timing of Jesus final coming; only the conditions that must be in place for it to happen. Thus, we live in the tension of knowing the circumstances, but not the day or hour of our Lord's return.

Many believers have misunderstood these two truths throughout history. Therefore we will give a bit more thought to each of them.

"Even so, when you see all these things, you know that the kingdom of God is near, right at the door."

The seven conditions that Jesus had given are clear enough to be able to know for sure that they have all been fulfilled. Until they are all fulfilled, we can likewise know that his coming is still in the future. There has never been a time since Jesus spoke these words that all seven conditions have been fulfilled. We continue await their fulfillment. Jesus promised that the generation that is alive when all the conditions have been met will be the last generation before his final coming.

"But about that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

In church history, and especially in recent times, many people have claimed to know the exact day of Jesus' return. They were all wrong, because no one knows the exact day. No one will ever know this information. Anytime someone claims to know it, they are acting as a false prophet. We can be certain that their prophecy will be wrong. Jesus was absolutely clear about this truth. Only the Father knows. Period.

Therefore, Jesus will spend the remainder of his discourse giving a series of parables that all make the same point: ***"Be on guard; watch; be ready."*** The fact that no one knows the day or hour of Jesus' final coming means that constant vigilance is required.

APPLICATION:

Modern Christians have been very interested in the *"signs of the times"* in the last generation. Countless books, seminars, and sermons have tried to relate contemporary events to Jesus' description in the Olivet Discourse, and the book of Revelation. Much time has been spent trying to answer the question: *"Are we living in the end times?"* This has been a huge waste of time and distraction. Here's why.

Only two of the seven conditions that Jesus gave us are under our control: the state of our love, and our mission to proclaim the gospel to all the nations. While the love of most people will turn cold in the last days, we need to be on guard that our love for God and others burns white-hot in the power of the Holy Spirit. The command to love is the greatest command of all.

Likewise, Jesus' command to make disciples of all the nations is our major unfinished task. It should occupy our full attention. Until we fulfill this task, we KNOW for sure that we are not in the "end times." There is no need to study the *"signs of the times."* The major task the Lord gave us is left undone! This is crystal clear.

Time spent studying end-time prophecy ought to be spent proclaiming the gospel to the lost world instead. It is all too easy to become side-tracked on the sensationalism of "end times" considerations. That kind of distraction is exactly what Jesus warned us about. We need to listen to Jesus concerning this.

How can you concentrate on increasing your love for God and others, and being involved in world missions and evangelism?

What will you do this week in pursuit of these two primary responsibilities?