

Prophetic Road Signs

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Signs, Times and Seasons

**Text: 1 Peter 4:7-11, 2 Peter 3:10-14, Matt. 24:3-14. 36-37, 1 Thess. 5:1-11, Luke 21:25-28
Acts 1:7(NLT), Matthew 16:1-3**

Just like the early disciples, Christians today want to know if we are in fact living in the **last** days. God never leaves His children in the dark. He gives us signs to know where we are in **prophetic** history. When you start talking about the last days there are too many Christians running around yelling “the sky is falling” – what we need to be joyfully proclaiming is that “Jesus is **coming**!”

This word signs that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 24 is the same word used to let travelers know where they are in their **journey**. In the same way we encounter signs on the highway when we are traveling, the signs that Jesus gives us help us to know where we are, what to expect and how long we have to get where we are going.

Many of the signs that we encounter on our modern roadways are **informational**. They tell us what we need to know. For example, how many miles we have to the next town.

Other signs are **invitational** -

- ‘Welcome to Florida’ and ‘The best BBQ and gas next exit’.

Many of the most important signs we encounter are **warning** signs. They alert us to possible dangers like falling rocks, winding roads or slippery bridges and detours.

Each sign on our road trips have the same purpose as our prophetic journey, they are designed to move us from where we are to where we want to be. The conventional definition of a Biblical sign is somewhat broad. It can be a symbol, object, an **event** or person whose existence or occurrence indicates something important in God’s plan for history.

Jesus talked about signs verifying His **return**, signs telling of His second coming back to earth and signs that outline specific elements of the end of the age.

As Christians we do not need to **fear** the future. What causes fear in people is a lack of understanding and knowledge about what is happening. This is why God gives us signs.

2 Timothy 3:1- But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come

Paul said these events will occur in the “last days.” The word ‘last’ is from the Greek word eschatos. This word always points to the ultimate **end** of a thing - such as the last month of the year, the last week of the month, the last day of a week, or the very extreme end of an age. In other words, eschatos doesn’t merely describe the last days in general, it depicts the very last of the last days. It was used in classical Greek literature to depict a place furthest away, such as the very ends of the earth. It also signified something that is final. It is from this Greek word eschatos that we get the term eschatology — which is a theological term for the study of last times.

By studying the Scriptures, we can **identify** where we are on God’s timeline.

* A translation of 2 Timothy 3:1 could read like this. - “*You emphatically must know what I am about to tell you. In the very last part of the last times — at the very end of the age and at the very last of the last days — hurtful, harmful, dangerous, unpredictable, uncontrollable, high-risk periods of time will come....*”

Every era of human history has had a beginning and an ending. The same will be true of the era we are in. Matthew 24:3 (NKJV & AMP) Understanding the ‘last days’ means we need to understand when they actually began and when they will officially end. To understand this, we need to answer three questions.

- 1) When did the last days begin?
 - 2) What does the Bible really say? Is it the end of the world or something else?
 - 3) Will the world really end?
- a) In Biblical terms ‘The Last Days’ began on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:17-18
 - b) In Matthew 24:3 the KJV has the disciples asking when will be the ‘end of the world’. ‘End of the World’ in this verse does not refer to the termination of the world. The word ‘world’ is translated from the Greek word aignos which refers to an ‘age’. We are currently living in the church age or the age of grace which was made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - c) The disciples were not asking when Jesus would wipe out the world as we know it. The disciples were wanting to know when He was coming back and the ‘end’ (completion, culmination and closure) of this age would come and He would reign as the Messiah and Deliverer of the Jewish people and the world. Remember that for true disciples of Jesus, He is both Savior and King.

In Matthew 24 we are given a list of signs that would confirm the end of the age and that His return would be soon. Matthew 24:4-7 Paul gives us a description of what the culture will be like at the end of the age. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 One of the things that is clear from the beginning of creation is that God created the heavens in part to be for signs.

Genesis 1:4, Psalm 19:1-3

Jesus tells us that the signs are occurrences that would happen with greater frequency and intensity as we approach the final moments of the ‘end of the age’. He says that these events would signify the beginning of sorrows. Matthew 24:8 The word sorrows is the same word in the Greek that is used to describe the contractions a women experiences as the time of her delivery draws near. In the beginning labor pains come sporadically, irregularly and with unpredictability. The closer that a woman gets to the due date the greater the regularity, frequency, intensity and predictable they become. The same will be for the coming of the Lord and the end of the age. Romans 8:22-23

Jesus clearly stated that no one knows the exact date and hour when He will return. Matthew 24:36-44 The Bible says that the day will come like a thief in the night. In no uncertain terms we are told to be ready.

Luke 21:34-36, Luke 12:39-40, Matthew 25:1-13 Although we do not know the exact day and time, we are taught to know the season. Acts 1:6-7 (NKJV, AMP)

The King James and the NKJV use the word ‘seasons’, in the Greek the word is epoch, which means a specific date, so the better term is dates and times. There are many indicators that clearly let us know that we have entered into the closing season of history.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to show us things to come so that we will know what to expect as we move forward in time and history. **John 16:13**

If the day of Pentecost is the beginning of the ‘end of the age’ then the rapture of the church is the moment that this ‘age of grace’ will be closed. **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**

The rapture or the “catching away of the saints” will immediately be followed by seven years of intense tribulation on the earth. The tribulation will be God judging the earth but will also be redemptive in nature. The Bible clearly teaches a pre- tribulation rapture of the Church.

1 Thess. 5:7-10 Because the Bible describes the signs of the last days in terms of contractions it is certainly conceivable that the times leading up to the rapture of the church may feel like we have already entered the tribulation period.

One of the things that will mark the last days is that they will look very similar to the days of Noah. **Matthew 24:37-39** It took Noah 100 years to build an ark four-hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, forty-five feet tall, water-proofed with tar, three stories high with three decks with stalls, each stall sloped for easy cleaning at the rear, an opening eighteen inches high all the way around the boat for ventilation; all in preparation for a worldwide flood at a time in history when it had never rained. God made a way of escape for those who are righteous.

In the days of Noah, people went about life as normal as if nothing of significance was going to happen despite the warnings. Many even mocked Noah for what He was doing. The Bible says that in the last days scoffers will come saying that people have been talking about the rapture for 2,000 years and nothing has happened. **2 Peter 3:3-8**

As we near the end of the age it is important that as Christians we are to ‘make the most’ of the time we have left. Just like Jesus we are to be about the Father’s business. We are called to strengthen the weak, mend the broken, heal the sick and win the lost for whom Jesus died. We must be fully engaged in our culture for such a time as this. We must do the work we were created to do. Just like Moses, Esther, and Nehemiah were strategically born for their time we have been placed right where we are for this time in history.

If we were in a football game, we are at the moment when the two minute warning has been given. Things are not slowing down, as a matter of fact things are speeding up and the intensity to win or lose has increased. The battle of Good and Evil is at hand. The good news is we have already read the end of the story; we win! No matter how difficult or how many trials we face, no matter how uncertain the times that we live in there are, things that we can be certain of - God has not given us a spirit of fear. **Romans 8:37-38** We are more than conquerors in ALL things. The Greek word for ‘more than’ means – greater, higher, better and superior conquerors. The Greek word for conqueror describes an overcomer, champion, victor or master. We are more than a match for anything we may face in these last days.