

SIGNS OF THINGS TO COME

New Testament Lesson #231

It is very late in the day and Jesus and his disciples have just left the area around the Temple and make their way out of the city. They cross over the Kidron valley and go up the Mount of Olives. It is there that Jesus teaches his closest disciples about the coming judgments upon the city of Jerusalem (see Matthew 24:1-3).

Earlier in their conversation, some of his disciples were discussing how beautiful the Temple building was. It was “adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ‘As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; everyone one of them will be thrown down’” (Luke 21:5-6).

This troubled his disciples. They asked him, “Teacher, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place” (Luke 21:7)? From that point in the chapter forward, Jesus answers his disciples’ questions.

As Jesus goes through his explanation, he describes his future appearing. It will be a time when there will be a lot of turmoil and unrest in the world. He said, “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Luke 21:25-27).

Jesus tells them to be on the watch for such things to happen. They needed to be prepared for it to occur. He says, “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28).

To emphasize this lesson, Jesus tells them a parable about a fig tree. He tells them, “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Luke 21:29-33).

Judgment was coming upon the Jewish people, and Jesus wants his disciples to be ready when it happens. He doesn’t want them to be distracted and unprepared when it happens. He warns them, “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation,

drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36).

Jesus loved his disciples. He knew that he’d be going away in the near future. He wanted his disciples to be prepared to cope with all that was going to happen after he left. There is a message for us today as well. We need to be careful not to get distracted by the things of the world, to be prepared for His return and to look to Him for comfort when times get hard.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- This teaching that Jesus gives is often called the Mount Olivet Prophecy. There are parallel accounts found in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. It can be very helpful to read all three versions of the teaching to get the whole picture of what Jesus is describing.
- The coming judgment that is the subject of Jesus’ teaching and warning is associated with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70.
- The Apostles often spoke about the return of Jesus after he ascended to heaven. The Apostle Paul also taught about it in 1 Thessalonians 5. Here Paul writes, “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

ANSWER KEY:

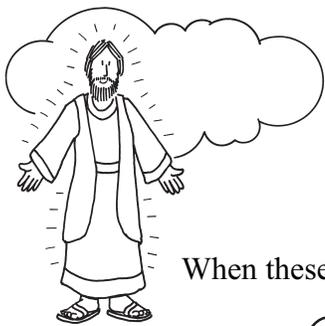
At that time they will see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Jesus said that near the end there will be many signs and many will be afraid. But it is the time to lift our heads because Jesus is coming back.

Match the cloud shapes and write in the words to find a wonderful future event that will follow frightening signs in the earth and sky.

- heads
- near
- cloud
- things
- time
- son
- glory
- stand
- see
- take
- redemption
- lift
- man
- power



At that _____ they will _____ the _____ of _____ coming in a _____ with _____ and great _____ .

When these _____ begin to _____ place, _____ up and _____ up your _____ , because your _____ is drawing _____ .

Follow the arrows to discover God's comforting promise.

H	A	V	I	L	A	Y
N	E	R	W	L	A	W
D	T	H	P	A	S	A
Y	M	U	B	Y	S	P
W	D	S	I	N	E	R
O	R	W	L	L	V	E

H _____

_____ ,

_____ .

Name _____

Jesus said that near the end there will be many signs and many will be afraid. But it is the time to lift our heads because Jesus is coming back.

Jesus said that the signs will be in the sun, moon and the stars.
In each group circle the 1 that doesn't match.

The kingdom of God is near. Use the code to fill in the missing letters.

☀ = A ☾ = C ★ = D ☁⚡ = Y

W	_____	T	_____	H	_____	N	_____
	☀		☾		☀		★
	P	R	_____	_____	.		
			☀	☁⚡			

Name _____