

1. Mt. 24, Mk. 13 and Lk. 21 tell us about Christ's final coming (Advent and the signs which precede that coming. Signs are judgments of God on the sins of man. Some are in the heavens (eclipses, shooting stars etc.), some are on the earth (the nations in distress, society roaring like the sea, people despairing because of the future). These signs are found in all areas of life: political, economic, religious, the family. They warn that the time of grace and mercy will suddenly come to an end. Even the coming of Christ (Mt. 24:30) is called a sign. When He comes to judge the living and the dead, the time of mercy (to repent) will cease. Therefore we must have the proper attitude toward the signs.
2. God made the powers of the heavens to endure. But when man fell into sin God warned that these powers would be shaken. Eclipses, earthquakes, etc. frighten mankind. In this way God warns mankind to prepare for Christ's second coming.
3. The coming of the Son of man on a cloud with great power and glory will be visible all over the world. Why? Since Christ's Ascension, His human nature has assumed the full use of the qualities of the divine nature. All power and glory has been given to His human nature. His human nature knows all things. His human nature is everywhere. Ps. 8:4-5 is a clear prophecy of the Son of man in the state of humiliation. Dan. 7:13-14 is a clear prophecy of the Son of man in the state of exaltation.
4. How should Christians react to the signs of Christ's second coming? Read vs. 28. Unlike the fearful unbelievers, he must lift up his head because his deliverance is coming. Wars, revolutions, economic depressions, the fears of man, troubles in the church etc. are all signs and should cause us to say: "He is coming soon. Look up, not down." As the end approaches the confident unbelievers become fearful and the fearful believers become confident.
5. Vss. 29-31 involve us in a wonderful illustration. In spring when the trees begin to bud, people instinctively realize that summer is coming. Likewise, Christians (because of their knowledge of God's Word) realize that the signs show that the Kingdom of God, everlasting life, is near. The church is never told to preach signs. But it is told to preach the Gospel. The signs don't save. They only warn. The Gospel saves.
6. Vs. 32 can mean only one thing: The Jews will remain as an identifiable people until the end of time. We know from Rom. 9-11 that some Jews will be saved. God's elect are found also among them. But the greater part of the Jews will continue to reject Christ and be lost. Their unbelief is a warning to us. Jesus says "Verily I say to you." God did not break His covenant with the Jews. They broke His covenant.
7. The expression "heaven and earth" in vs. 32 means the whole creation. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Because of man's sin this heaven and earth will pass away. In its place there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which dwells righteousness. II Pet. 3:13. Christians will undergo a great change. I Cor. 15. The only thing which will not change is the Word of God. Christ's Words, the whole Bible, will not pass away. By the way, if they are Christ's Words, then He must be true God.
8. Read also vss. 34 to 36. At vs. 31 Jesus said: "Realize that the Kingdom of God is near." In vs. 34: "Take heed to yourselves." And in vs. 36: "Be watchful at all times." Do not live this life in such a way that the last day catches you unaware. Do watch and pray that you live through the ordeal of the second coming and so that you might stand before the Son of man.
9. The Bible ends (Rev. 22:20) with Jesus saying: "Yes, I am coming soon. And the Christian answers: "So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!" When he sits down to eat the Christian says: "Come Lord Jesus be my Guest." in church he prays: "Come Lord Jesus. Teach me." And he is always saying: "So be it. Come Lord Jesus!"

Theme: THE SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction: While Jesus was on earth He performed many signs (Jn. 20:30 so that we would believe that He was the Christ and so that we would be saved. Since He has ascended Jesus has and still does send many signs to warn all people that He will come again for judgment. These signs help to bring unbelievers to faith and are a warning to believers to endure to the end in faith and love.

I-THE SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH

A-They are everywhere and inescapable. In vs. 25 Jesus speaks about signs in the heavens and signs on the earth. He quotes Haggai 2:6.11 "The powers of the heavens will be shaken." Eclipses and shooting stars frighten man. They are judgments of God on sin. They remind us that heaven and earth will pass away, vs. 33. We find signs on earth in many forms: universal distress and worry, people don't know where they are going, life is like the roaring sea, people are out of breath for fear of the future. Signs are all the phenomena in nature, society, theology, economics and politics over which man has no control. No man can escape these signs. They are everywhere in all countries and among all peoples.

B-There will be special signs. One sign is the coming of the Son of man, Jesus. Mt. 24:30 calls His coming a sign. That means that when He comes the time for repentance and mercy will be gone. Another special sign is found in vs. 32. The Jews will remain to be an identifiable nation until the end. Their rejection of Christ is a constant warning to us.

C-The signs are unmistakable and clear. Vss. 29 and 30 tell us that the signs are like the buds on trees in spring. When the trees begin to bud no one needs to tell you that summer is coming. Even children know that. Likewise, when Christians see the many signs of the end no one needs to tell them that the end is drawing near. We do not need to preach signs, but we do need the Gospel which prepares us. When Christians see these signs they think of the Kingdom of God, heaven.

II-THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE SIGNS

A-For people who do not believe in Jesus. Vss. 25 and 26 speak of universal distress, hopelessness, people fearful of what is coming to the world. Why is that? Because they have no one to whom they can turn. They try to forget about the signs. Sometimes they take drugs to forget. Sometimes they even commit suicide in despair. They realize too that these signs point to the end but they despair of any help. They are unprepared.

B-For people who do believe in Jesus.

1. Jesus says in vs. 28: "When these things begin to happen look up and lift up your heads because your deliverance is near." When unbelievers despair, believers rejoice. Believers say: "He is coming soon to deliver me from all the griefs and pain of this life."
2. Jesus says in vs. 31: "When you see these things happening, realize that the Kingdom of God is near." Here Kingdom means the Kingdom of glory, everlasting life.
3. Jesus says in vs. 33: "Heaven and earth will pass away but My Words will never pass away." Is. 40:8 and I Pet. 1:24 says: "The Word of the Lord endures forever." We cannot see Jesus now, but we have His enduring Word. That Word gives us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.
4. Jesus says in vss. 34-36 that we should avoid gluttony and drunkenness and earthly cares so that we might always be prepared. He tells us to pray at all times so that we might be standing firm when the Son of man comes again.

Conclusion: The signs and their significance are very clear. Apply them!