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### **Inner Growth - Jesus 12**

**The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**

**Matthew 1:1**

**Journey** - Luke 9:3

**Enlighten** - Job 33:30

**Saves** - Psalms 18:31, 1 Timothy 1:15

**Unity** - Ephesians 4:13

**Sinners** - Luke 5:32

Jesus continues His ministry in Matthew twenty-four, in the **signs of the end of this age** section, where the prophecy of Jesus was primarily a reply to the disciples' question: "What will be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus gave general signs of the course of the age leading up to the last days, as in verses four through fourteen of this chapter. These distinctive signs that indicate the final days of the age, the Great Tribulation, are in verses fifteen through twenty-eight. These spectacular signs to occur at His triumphant coming with power and great glory, as in verses twenty-nine through thirty-one.

The warning of tribulation saints is to be alert, as in verses thirty-two through thirty-five, to the signs leading up to Christ's expected coming immediately after the tribulation. The caution to believers before the tribulation is to be

spiritually ready for the unexpected coming and unknown time of Christ's coming for His faithful, as in chapter twenty-four, verses thirty-six through fifty-one. A description of the judgment of nations after His return to earth, as in Matthew twenty-five, verses thirty-one through forty-six.

Many details of Christ's coming are undisclosed in Matthew twenty-four. Furthermore, no one has deciphered all the prophecies concerning the end of time with complete certainty. In Jesus' discourse, there remains an element of mystery requiring humility and a heart fixed on the Lord Jesus Himself. We can expect additional unfolding of the revelatory understanding at the time of the end.

The words of Jesus in verses four through fifty-one of Matthew twenty-four to His disciples and all of God's faithful people until the end of the age and His triumphant return to reign on earth concerning believers before the tribulation period. Christ tells them they cannot calculate or even estimate the time of His return for them, as in verses forty-two to forty-four. Therefore, they must be ready at any time, for He will return to take them to heaven, which is His "Father's house." at a time when they do not think He will.

Those converted to Christ during the Great Tribulation can know the time of His coming for them with a high degree of certainty, for God gives them signs by which to expect and know that His return is very near, as in verses fifteen through twenty-nine. They see the sign that will "know that it is near, even at the doors," as in verse thirty-three.

Jesus continues in the **Signs of the End of the Age** section, where in verses four to fourteen, Jesus gives the signs, as in verse three, that will characterize the whole course of the last days and intensify as the end draws nearer. False prophets and religious compromisers within the

visible church will increase and deceive many, as in verses four to five and eleven. In verses six through seven, the increase of wars, famines, and earthquakes will be "the beginning of sorrows," as in verse eight of the new Messianic age.

As the end draws nearer, the persecution of God's people will become more severe, as in verse nine, and many will forsake their loyalty to Christ, as in verses nine through ten. Violence, crime, and disregard for God's law will increase rapidly, and natural love for family affection will decrease, as in verse twelve, Mark thirteen, verse twelve, and Second Timothy three, verse three.

Despite the intensification of trouble, preaching of the gospel will continue in the whole world, as in verse fourteen. The saved will stand firm in their faith through all the end-time distress in verse thirteen. However, the faithful will see the intensification of these signs and know that the day of the Lord's return for them is "approaching," as in Hebrews ten, verse twenty-five.

Jesus continues His teaching in verse five of Matthew twenty-four, teaching that the enemy will use religious tactics to deceive many. This first sign has importance. Near the end of this age, religious deception will be rampant on the earth. Christ is so concerned that His followers are aware of the coming worldwide spiritual deception to occur just before the end that he repeats His warning twice in the Olivet discourse.

Jesus continues teaching from verse nine of Matthew twenty-four that all believers in Christ may expect trouble during their pilgrimages on earth. Suffering for Christ because of our loyalty to Him and His Word is an intrinsic part of the Christian faith, as in John fifteen, verse twenty, chapter sixteen, verse thirty-three, Acts fourteen, verse twenty-two, and Romans five, verse three.

Jesus continues His teaching in verse eleven of Matthew twenty-four as the last days draw to a close, false teachers and preachers will be exceedingly prevalent. Professing believers will accept "new revelation" even though it conflicts with the revealed Word of God. The result will lead to opposition to Biblical truth within the churches. Those who preach a distorted gospel may even gain strategic leadership positions in denominations and theological schools, enabling them to deceive and mislead many within the church, as in Second Peter three, verses three through four.

Throughout the world, millions will keep associations with the occult, astrology, witchcraft, spiritism, and satanism. The influence of demons and evil spirits will multiply greatly. The protection against being deceived is a discovery of enduring faith and love for Christ, a commitment to the absolute authority of His Word, and thorough knowledge of that Word.

Jesus continues in verse twelve of Matthew twenty-four that an unbelievable increase in immorality, shamelessness, rebellion against God, and a throwing off of moral restraint will characterize the last days. Sexual perversion, immorality, adultery, pornography, drugs, ungodly music, and lustful entertainment will abound. It will be "in the days of Noe," as in verse thirty-seven, with the thoughts of human hearts continually being evil. It will be as "in the days of Lot" as in Luke seventeen, verses twenty-eight, thirty when lesbianism and all kinds of sexual perversion permeate society. Jesus goes on to indicate that true love will be in short supply.

Jesus continues in verse fourteen that the end shall come only after the "gospel of the kingdom" has been adequately preached in the world. This "gospel of the kingdom" refers to the apostolic gospel preached in the power and righteousness of the Holy Spirit and accompanied by the

signs of the gospel. Only God knows when the fulfillment of the task is complete according to His purpose. The believer must faithfully and continually press on to "all nations" till the Lord returns to take His church to heaven.

Christ speaks to His disciples as though everything He predicts could be within their generation. The hope of the New Testament church must be the hope of all who believe in Jesus Christ throughout the ages. We hope that the Lord will return and that the end of the age will occur in our generation. We must live in the tension between the imminence of Christ's coming and Christ has commanded us to keep spreading the gospel.