

Matthew 24:9-14 Signs Within Christianity of the Destruction of the Temple

Introduction: Jesus has give five signs which would indicate the coming destruction of the temple. These are outward signs – from outside Christianity. They were what Jesus called “the beginning of sorrows,” verse 8. The whole period would be forty years.

In our text today He gives five inward signs – from within Christianity itself.

I. The five new signs.

A. Sign #6: persecution, verse 9.

1. The persecution originated from without but it could be seen within.
2. Mark says that the persecution would first arise from the Jews, Mark 13:9.
 - a. This would start within a few days (Peter and John arrested, Acts 4; the apostles arrested, Acts 5; Stephen stoned, Acts 7; Saul made havoc, Acts 8; James killed, Acts 12; Jews make trouble for Paul).
 - b. It would continue through the years unto the end.
3. Matthew and Mark say that it would also eventually come from the Gentiles.
 - a. The Gentiles made trouble for Paul (Riot at Ephesus).
 - b. It reached its peak under Nero.

B. Sign #7: a wholesale forsaking of Christianity, verse 10.

1. Many had joined Christianity who were not true believers.
2. When the pressures of persecution grew strong, many renounced their Christianity.
3. They then betrayed the Christians to the authorities.

C. Sign #8: false prophets, verse 11.

1. The false prophets differed from the false Christs in that they sprang up within Christianity. (The false Christs were without.)
2. They claimed to be called of God to preach or teach.
3. Although they spoke some truth, what they preached was not from God.
4. Those in Galatia are classic examples, Galatians 1:6-8. (See also I Timothy 1:6-7.)

D. Sign #9: love for Christ cools off, verse 12.

1. These are saved people and were once dedicated to Christ.
2. But now they are either driven off by fear of persecution or lured off by the pleasures of worldly sin.
3. Like one lady: “I am a Christian, but I am not fanatic about it.”

E. This verse does not contain a sign, but a prophecy, a promise, verse 13.

1. Jesus had been talking about some who would renounce their Christianity, some would turn to false doctrine, the love of some would wax cold.
2. “The end” that Jesus speaks of is the same as in verse 6 and verse 14. (The destruction of the temple.)
3. Jesus does not promise the faithful that they will live to see the destruction of the temple, but promises that if they live until then He will preserve them through the Roman invasion.

F. Sign #10: the preaching of the gospel to the world, verse 14a.

1. The world is the world as known to them.
2. The gospel was preached to the world before the death of Paul (Africa, Asia, Europe, far east).
3. Paul died before the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.
4. In spite of the persecutions, the traitors forsaking Christianity, the false prophets weakening it, and the love of many waxing cold, Christianity had a phenomenal growth in that forty year period.

G. Then came the end and the temple was destroyed, verse 14b.

II. Some lessons for us.

A. About persecutions.

1. If we live godly we will suffer persecutions.
2. Our faith should not be shaken when it comes.

B. About people forsaking Christianity.

1. The thing that generally accounts for this is that they were never saved to start with.
2. We need to make sure that our profession is genuine.

C. About false prophets within Christianity.

1. We need to be careful who we listen to.
2. We need to be careful who we watch on television and whose books we read.

D. About one's love for Christ growing cold.

1. We would like to say, "That will never happen to me."
(Maybe we have said that at one time or other.)
2. But it has happened to many and it can happen to us.
3. Let us pray God that it will never happen to us.

E. About remaining faithful to the end.

1. We did not live in the time when the temple was destroyed.
2. But we do have the challenge to be faithful until the end of our lives.
3. Don't let hardships or hard feelings or worldly pleasures or anything cause you to be unfaithful to Christ.

F. About the preaching of the gospel to the world.

1. That is our task – our assignment.
2. Let us witness to the unsaved.
3. Let us support the church with our presence, prayers, work, and finances.
4. Let us support missions throughout the world.

G. About Christianity.

1. Christianity is going to win: the Devil cannot wipe it out.
2. He can kill Christians by the thousands, cause many to renounce it, pollute it with false prophets and false doctrines, cause the love of many to wax cold, but Christianity is going to survive – and win.
3. It will win because we have a real living Savior who is the Son of the very living God.

Conclusion:

1. Won't you trust Him as your Savior?
2. Won't you serve Him as your Lord?
3. Won't you be faithful, loyal, true to Him?
4. Don't you want to be true to Him? (I do.)

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