

Time Audit Chronicles: Signs of the End of the Age and Christ's Return

(Matthew 24:4-35)

Prologue: The Mystery of the Future

It was a chilly evening, and the Presswood family sat around the fireplace, their faces glowing in the warm light. Ariel was drawing a futuristic city in her sketchbook, imagining what the world might look like in 100 years. Alice, with Mr. Fluffernutter nestled in her lap, was pretending to be a time traveler who had just witnessed the end of the world.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, looking up from her drawing, "do you think we'll know when the end of the world is coming? What will it look like?"

Ryan smiled, his thoughts drifting. "That's a good question. Jesus spoke a lot about the end of the age and what we should expect when He returns. But He didn't give us a specific date—He gave us signs to watch for and a call to be prepared."

Alice's eyes grew wide. "Like when you're waiting for a big surprise party?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Jesus didn't want us to be caught off guard, but He wanted us to live in anticipation, being ready at all times."

Ariel's curiosity piqued. "Let's use the Time Audit Machine to hear what Jesus said about the end of the age and His return. I want to know what signs we should look for."

The Journey Begins: The Temple's Destruction

The Time Audit Machine hummed softly as Ariel set the coordinates.

"Destination: Jerusalem, 30-33 CE. Objective: understand Jesus' teachings on the signs of the end of the age and His return."

With a flash of light, the family found themselves standing in front of the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. The disciples were admiring its grandeur, and the city bustled with people. Jesus walked alongside them, His face calm, but His words filled with warning.

"There they are," Ryan said, pointing to Jesus and His disciples. "This is where Jesus speaks about what's to come—about the signs of the end and how we should live in light of them."

The Disciples' Question (Matthew 24:3)

As Jesus and the disciples sat on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Temple, the disciples asked Him privately:

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3)

Ryan looked at Ariel and Alice. “The disciples wanted to know when the end of the age would come and what signs they should watch for. Jesus began to answer them with a warning to be cautious of deception.”

The Signs of Deception and False Christs (*Matthew 24:4-5*)

Jesus replied, His voice solemn:

“Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” (Matthew 24:4-5)

Ariel wrote this down quickly. “False messiahs?”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus warned that in the last days, there would be many claiming to be the Christ, deceiving people with false promises. We must be discerning and stay close to the truth.”

Wars, Famine, and Natural Disasters (*Matthew 24:6-8*)

Jesus continued, listing other signs:

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” (Matthew 24:6-7)

Ariel frowned. “That sounds like everything happening in the world today.”

“It’s true,” Ryan said. “Wars, famines, and natural disasters have been happening for centuries, and Jesus said these are signs of the birth pains of the end times.”

Jesus then added:

“All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:8)

“This means we haven’t reached the worst of it yet,” Ryan explained. “But these events should remind us to be alert and prepared.”

Persecution of Believers (*Matthew 24:9-14*)

Jesus spoke more directly to His followers, warning them of the challenges they would face:

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake.” (Matthew 24:9)

Ariel looked concerned. “Is this going to happen to Christians everywhere?”

“Jesus warned His followers that persecution would come,” Ryan said gently. “But He also promised that those who endure to the end will be saved.”

Jesus continued:

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13)

Ariel’s pen hovered over her notebook. “Endurance is key.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Endurance in faith, even when things are hard, is essential. But there’s hope—Jesus promises that those who remain faithful will be saved.”

Jesus also mentioned that the gospel would be preached to all nations before the end came:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14)

Ariel smiled. “So, the gospel has to reach everyone first.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “The gospel is God’s invitation to everyone, and before the end, it will be preached everywhere.”

The Abomination of Desolation (*Matthew 24:15-22*)

Jesus then warned about a specific event—the abomination of desolation:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)” (Matthew 24:15)

Ariel looked up. “What is the abomination of desolation?”

“Historically, it referred to the desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem,” Ryan explained. “But it’s also a future event that signifies the ultimate rebellion against God. Jesus warns His followers to flee when they see these signs.”

He continued, explaining the severity of this time:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:21)

Ariel’s eyes grew wide. “That sounds terrible.”

“It will be,” Ryan said. “Jesus was warning that the end times would bring intense suffering. But He also promised that those who are faithful to Him will be protected in the midst of it.”

The Coming of the Son of Man *(Matthew 24:29-31)*

Then Jesus spoke of His glorious return:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.”
(Matthew 24:29)

Ariel gasped. “The sun and moon will stop shining?”

“It’s a cosmic sign,” Ryan explained. “Jesus is describing a supernatural event that will happen when He returns in glory.”

He continued:

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”
(Matthew 24:30)

Alice’s eyes lit up. “He’s coming in the clouds?”

“Yes,” Ryan said, smiling. “When Jesus returns, it will be visible to everyone. His power and glory will be so immense that every eye will see Him.”

The Fig Tree Parable: Recognizing the Signs *(Matthew 24:32-35)*

Jesus told the parable of the fig tree to explain how to recognize the signs of His coming:

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.” (Matthew 24:32)

Ariel nodded. “So, when we see certain signs, we know that the end is near.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Just like farmers can tell the seasons by the fig tree, we’ll be able to recognize the signs of Jesus’ return. But no one knows the exact time.”

Jesus concluded:

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” (Matthew 24:34)

Returning Home: Be Ready and Watchful

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, leaving the family deep in thought. Ariel flipped through her notes, while Alice began to set up a pretend “end times” scene with her toys.

“Jesus gave us some clear signs to look for,” Ariel said. “But we don’t know the exact time of His return.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus called us to live wisely and be prepared, always watching and staying faithful.”

Alice looked up. “So, we should always be ready, like a surprise party?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said with a smile. “We live in anticipation of His return, and we make sure we’re living for Him every day.”

Reflection: Living with Hope and Watchfulness

That evening, Ariel read aloud from Matthew 24:

“‘But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.’”

The family sat quietly, reflecting on the mystery of the future.

“We don’t know when Jesus will return,” Ryan said, “but we know we’re called to live in hope, stay faithful, and be ready at all times.”

Ariel nodded. “And when He does return, we’ll be with Him forever.”

Alice hugged Mr. Fluffernutter tightly. “I think we’re ready for His return!”

Takeaway: Be Ready for His Coming

In Matthew 24:4-35, Jesus teaches us about the signs of the end of the age and the importance of being ready for His return. While we don’t know the exact time, we are called to live with anticipation, watching for the signs and remaining faithful. The cosmic signs, the persecution, the spreading of the gospel—these are all part of God’s plan to prepare us for His glorious return. Living in hope, endurance, and watchfulness will ensure we are ready when He comes.