

“The Nearness of the End”

Matthew 24:32–36

Big Idea: Jesus clarifies what we *can* and *cannot* know concerning the nearness of the end.

- I. Certain events signal the imminent arrival of Christ and his kingdom. (verses 32–33)
 - A. Fig leaves signal the approach of summer.
 - B. Likewise, certain events show disciples that their Lord approaches.
 1. These events do not include the climactic end of the age itself.
 2. These events involve calamity, persecution, apostasy, and the destruction of the Old Covenant temple.
 3. Though the timing of Christ’s return is unpredictable, these events set the stage for it.
- II. These events were fundamentally fulfilled within a generation of Christ’s words. (verse 34)
 - A. This does *not* mean that Christ promised to return during the first century.
 - B. This *does* mean that Christ’s more immediate prophecies have been fulfilled.
- III. Christ’s words will outlast the present cosmos, for they are eternally firm. (verse 35)
 - A. The present heavens and earth will come to an end.
 - B. Christ’s words are God’s words, and therefore are eternal.
 - C. Christ’s words are forever true.
 - D. Christ’s words are the very foundation of reality.
 - E. Christ’s words are the only firm foundation for your soul.
- IV. The time of Christ’s arrival cannot be predicted, for only God knows it. (verse 36)
 - A. The exact date of his coming is unpredictable.
 - B. The general length of time before his coming is unpredictable.
 - C. The timing is known to no human or angel.
 - D. The timing was not known to Jesus in his unglorified humanity.
 - E. The timing is a secret exclusive to the triune God, hidden to all creation.

Points of Further Application

- 1) The events of the first century confirm Jesus' person and promises. Trust him.
- 2) The events of world history continue to warn of a coming climax. Take notice.
- 3) The events at the end of the age could arrive at any moment. Be ready.