



The Life of Jesus (83)

The Characteristics of
The Last Day

Matthew 24:9-14

#1 The Characteristics of the Last Day

1. Persecution

The end of the age will be days of persecution.

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and **you will be hated by all nations because of me**”
(Mt 24:9)

Christianity and persecution can't be separated. Jesus Himself suffered and was greatly insulted and persecuted while living in the world. And He said,

If the world hates you, keep in mind that **it hated me first**. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” (Jn 15:18-19)

If we really decide to follow Jesus' way, not the ways of the world, we must be ready to be hated by those around us. But we shouldn't be surprised by that. Rather, we should consider it as proof that we have true faith in Jesus.

#2 The Characteristics of the Last Day

1. Persecution

Another reason for Christians' persecution is closely related to God's plan of spreading the gospel around the world.

There are some signs of the end of the age Jesus taught, but nothing is clearer than this sign.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Mt 24:14)

This verse explains why it has taken so long for Jesus to return. The end will come after the gospel has been preached in the whole world.

Jesus hasn't come back not because He was slow in keeping promises but because He's been waiting for the gospel to be preached to every corner of the world.

#3 The Characteristics of the Last Day

1. Persecution

For the gospel of the kingdom to be preached in the whole world means that all those who want to listen to the gospel are able to hear it as a result of churches being built in major regions around the world and the Scriptures being translated into their languages.

In this sense, we know how close we are to the end of the age.

Now, research says that there are around 2.2 billion Christians around the world which represents around 31% of the world's population. The Bible has been translated into hundreds of different languages. **The gospel of Jesus Christ has reached every country.**

Therefore, we see all the signs Jesus mentioned in Matthew 24 are happening right now, which means that **the time for Jesus to return to the world has really come near.**

#4 The Characteristics of the Last Day

2. Turning away from Faith

The second characteristic of the end of the age is that many will turn away from their faith.

“At that time **many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other” (Mt 24:10)

In the last days, many people will abandon their faith and turn away from Jesus because of the persecution and suffering

Those who have shallow faith in Jesus, those whose lives are not firmly grounded in God’s word of truth will lose their faith when they face persecution.

That’s what happened in early Christianity. Even though a lot of Christians kept their faith in the face of severe persecution and even death, there were still other Christians who betrayed Jesus. **Their faith wasn’t strong enough to endure suffering and persecution.** And what Jesus warns us here is that that same thing can happen in the last days.

#5 The Characteristics of the Last Day

2. Turning away from Faith

We should make an effort not to lose our faith starting now when it's relatively easier to believe in Jesus.

"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then **how can you contend with horses?** And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then **how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?**" (Jr 12:5, NKJV)

This is what God told Jeremiah. Jeremiah had proclaimed the message of destruction to the southern kingdom of Judah. None of the people liked his message. They persecuted Jeremiah and even tried to kill him.

So Jeremiah complained to God about his circumstances. But, God didn't console him. Rather, He challenged him. **What God reminded Jeremiah was that more severe persecutions and pains were coming.** God wanted Jeremiah to overcome his situation now so that he could also stand firm on the day of destruction.

#6 The Characteristics of the Last Day

2. Turning away from Faith

What Jeremiah was going through then was hard but it was still like running with men and living in the land of peace compared to the hardships that he would soon face, which would be like running with horses and going through rough waters in the Jordan River.

The last days will be days of severe persecution and suffering for Christians. **It will be a lot harder to keep our faith in those days.** Then, how can we expect not to lose our faith in the last days if we fail to keep our faith here and now when it's a lot easier to do so?

While we have the chance to prepare, while there are fewer obstacles that hinder us from believing in Jesus, we should make every effort to build up our faith on the firm foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's word now. That's how we prepare for the last days.

Memory Verses

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me” (Mt 24:9) (1)

“At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other” (Mt 24:10) (1)

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Mt 24:14) (1)

“If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?” (Jr 12:5, NKJV) (2)