

Should We Look for Signs Luke 12:54-56

ETS: Jesus chastised the people for now knowing how to interpret the times

ESS: We need to be able to interpret the times

OSS: I want people to be alert to what is happening around them

PQ: Are you alert to what is happening in the world?

UW: Alert

ME

Have you thought about all the SIGNS we see on the road?

- Warning Signs: Stop Signs, Yield Signs, Speed Limit Signs (which some ignore)
- Information Signs: Rest Area, Hospital, Food and Gas
- Advertising: Billboards, yard signs, etc.

Some SIGNS you CAN'T IGNORE

- Ignoring STOP SIGNS will get you killed or hurt
- Ignoring SPEED LIMIT signs will get you a ticket or arrested

Some signs we IGNORE UNLESS we NEED them

- Ignore food/gas signs until your stomach is growling or you need gas
- Ignore the REST AREA SIGNS unless you can't keep your eyes open anymore

Some signs we IGNORE, but they still make a subconscious impression

- Advertising signs

Signs give us INFORMATION

WE

There are OTHER SIGNS

I know COLTS FANS are anticipating the upcoming season

- They are pouring over the stats of each player
- They are asking questions
 - Will Shane Steichen be the right coach
 - Will Antony Richardson be able to deliver as the new quarterback

Colt's fans are looking at the signs

- Signs of how these players **performed/coached** in the past

- Signs of what they are doing in **preparation** for the seasons

I wonder if **Christians** are looking with the same FEVOR that many SPORTS FANS, GAMERS, HUNTERS, NEWS JUNKIES, and others have when it comes to Jesus' Return?

- I wonder if Christians really BELIEVE Jesus is returning.
- I wonder if Christians really WANT Jesus to RETURN.

I wonder how many Christians are watching the SIGNS of the TIMES.

PROBLEM: We can SAY we are looking for Jesus to RETURN, but at the same time we are ignoring the SIGNS of Jesus' return!

GOD

Turn to **Luke 12**

Jesus is at the height of His ministry.

- **Luke 12:1** "...a crowd of many thousands came together, so that they were trampling on one another."

Jesus seems to be ignoring the gathering crowd and is speaking only to His disciples **WARNING** them against...

- **Hypocrisy (v. 1-3)**
- **Fear of persecution (v. 4-12)**
- **Greed (v. 13-21)**
- **Anxiety (v. 22-34)**
- **Unpreparedness for Jesus' return (v. 35-48)**

Then Jesus makes a shocking statement: “Do you think that I came here to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” **(Luke 12:51)**

The disciples were expecting Jesus to

- Be a UNIFIER, **NOT** a DIVIDER!
- Set up His kingdom in Jerusalem
- Conquer the Romans
- To be the Victorious Warrior that is predicted throughout the Old Testament

They were not expecting Jesus to DIVIDE people!

I can imagine

- Their **eyes widened** when they heard Jesus say this!
- Them looking at each other in **amazement** and **shock!**

- Fear really starting to grip their souls because if their Master is going to DIVIDE people then they will also DIVIDE people if they keep following Him.

Luke 12:54-56 “He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, right away you say, ‘A storm is coming,’ and so it does. 55 And when the south wind is blowing, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. 56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why don’t you know how to interpret this present time?”

- There seemed to be **confusion** when Jesus started talking about **His 2nd coming** in **vss. 35-48**, but apparently when Jesus told said He came to DIVIDE people in **vss. 49-53**, He was not only speaking to the DISCIPLES *but also to the crowd*.
- ***Jesus is clearly speaking DIRECTLY to the crowds*** in vss. 54-56

Why does this detail matter?

- It is like Jesus wanted to ANGER the crowd too!

Look at what Jesus calls them: “**Hypocrites**”!

- Jesus **angered** the **religious leaders** in **Chapter 11** by accusing them of being “**hypocrites**” and now He is calling the crowds “**Hypocrites.**”

I like technology to a degree because it is making our lives convenient.

- I watched a video about **Google Duplex**. This service uses an **AI-driven voice** to make phone appointments *without any interaction from the user*.
 - Not only was the AI able to understand someone on the other end of the line, but it was also able to respond with correct answers to questions, and insert “ums” and pause breaks to make itself sound more like a real human.

A downside to technology is we are seldom aware of the environment around us.

- If we want to know the weather, we pull up the Weather App

They did not have technology like this in Jesus (or until the last couple of decades), so people had to become **experts** at **reading** the **signs** in the **sky**. Here are a few examples:

- **Rising smoke** from a fire indicates a **high-pressure** area in the vicinity. High pressure is associated with **fair weather and clear skies**.

- When the **smoke from a fire collapses and curls**, it's indicative of a **low-pressure** system in the area. Low pressure is associated with stormy weather.
- A **ring** around the **sun or moon** is referred to as a "Sun or Moon Halo."
 - Haloes are caused by high altitude ice-crystals in **Cirrus clouds**. Because Cirrus clouds are a **signal for impending rain**,
 - A **ring around the moon or sun** usually means a **warm front** is coming, bringing rain with it.
- A **rainbow** in the **western sky** in the **morning** indicates rain.
- The **rotation** of the Earth causes **prevailing winds** to come from the **West**.
 - *If no clouds are present*, a **westerly wind** often indicates **good weather**.
 - If clouds *are present*, a westerly wind indicates **incoming storms**.
- A **clear moon** in a **clear sky** indicates **no imminent moisture** but could be a **harbinger** of **cooler temperatures** overnight and into the morning.
 - **Scattered clouds across the Moon** are a sign of **moisture-laden clouds** and often are a **portent of rain**.

We could go on and on about signs in the sky that predict incoming weather.

Remember, they didn't have **Google** or **books**.

- The **scrolls** were in the local synagogue
 - *You couldn't go to the bookstore or search your smartphone for information.*

Over the centuries, people have developed SAYINGS to help them remember things—including weather conditions.

- Red sky at night, sailor's delight; Red sky at morning, sailors take warning.
- When ditch and pond offend the nose, look for rain and stormy blows.
- Chimney smoke descends, our nice weather ends.
- A ring around the sun or moon, means rain or snow coming soon.
- When clouds appear like rocks and towers, the Earth's refreshed by frequent showers.
- Rainbows in the morning give you fair warning.

They knew how to read the **signs of the sky**: **Luke 12:54-55** "He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, right away you say, 'A storm is coming,'

and so it does. 55 And when the south wind is blowing, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is."

Then Jesus accuses them with a shocking statement:

Luke 12:56 "**Hypocrites!** You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why don't you know how to interpret this present time?"

Jesus is asking, "Why can't you tell what is going on?"

What were the signs that God was doing something in their midst?

- Jesus' **healing** of people was clearly a sign!
 - No one had seen healing in Israel since the time of **Elisha!**
 - (John the Baptist didn't heal people!)
 - The **healings** Jesus was doing EXCEEDED those of **Elisha**
 - Jesus healed the **lame, blind, mute,** and **demon-possessed** and He was raising dead people
 - Jesus was doing "long-distant" healings
 - Jesus was healing "**Every kind of disease**"
 - The **miracles** Jesus was doing EXCEEDED those of Elisha

- Jesus was feeding **4,000** then **5,000** (just men)
- Jesus was calming **massive storms**
- Jesus was **walking** on water
- Jesus was **turning water** into **wine**

No prophet in the history of the Jews had the **extent** of **healing** and **miracles** that Jesus was performing.

Jesus was **teaching** “with authority”

- He was a **master** of the Scriptures
- He **dumbfounded** the **religious leaders** and **lawyers** when they tried to trap Him.

Surely, these were *SURFACE LEVEL SIGNS* that God was doing something!

All those who **knew the Scriptures** had to do was a little research!

- Remember when the wise men arrived in Jerusalem and they asked Herod, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews”? and Herod called in the “**chief priests and scribes of the people**” and they quoted from **Micah 5:2** and said the Messiah would be born “**In Bethlehem of Judea,**” they told him, “**because this is what was written by the prophet.**”

- Yet, none of the Gospels record the religious leaders accompanying the wise men to Bethlehem, which was only 5 miles to the south of Jerusalem!

Why didn't the religious leaders go?

- *Because they could not be **bothered** to take the **time to investigate**?*
 - You'd think if men from the **far east**, probably **Babylon**, showed up and asked where the "**King of the Jews**" was to be born, SOMEONE would have gone with them to investigate!

All the religious leaders and anyone had to do was to RESEARCH Jesus' **lineage**

- Jesus was a **Jew**
- Jesus was of the **Tribe of Judah**
- Jesus was of the **Line of David**

All the religious leaders and anyone had to do was to RESEARCH Jesus' **PAST**

- Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**
- A **massacre** of children would happen in Bethlehem, which was right after Jesus' birth!
- Jesus was born to a woman who claimed she was a **virgin** when He was born

- Jesus' family **fled to Egypt** and returned

All these things were connected to the Messiah in the Old Testament prophecies

All the religious leaders and anyone had to do was to
NOTE Jesus' ministry to this point

- **Isaiah 9:1-2** stated that the Messiah would ministry in Galilee
- **Psalm 78:2-4** **Isaiah 6:9-10** stated that the Messiah would teach using parables
- **Isaiah 61:1-2** stated that the Messiah would minister to the brokenhearted

Jesus would **fulfill many more OT prophecies** when He entered Jerusalem for the final time.

All the religious leaders and anyone had to do was open their eyes to the present

- **Psalm 22, Zechariah 14, and Isaiah 53** refer to the Messiah as being "**pierced**"
 - In fact, **Psalm 22:16** states the Messiah would have His "**hands and feet** pierced."
 - These prophetic passages were written before crucifixion was practiced
 - **Crucifixion** was now practiced, which set the stage for the Messiah

All the **religious leaders** and anyone had to do was to open their eyes to the fact that **CRUCIFIXION** was **now the primary** means of Roman execution, which meant that the Messiah could be killed this way.

Why didn't the religious see that possibility?

- Because they could not **conceive** that the **Messiah** could be killed
- Because they **reinterpreted** those passages **metaphorically** or **symbolically** *to avoid the plain interpretation* that the coming Messiah would be killed.

*Circumstances such as his **birthplace, lineage, and method of execution** were beyond Christ's control and could not have been accidentally or deliberately fulfilled.*

Those who wanted to **"Go Deep,"** could have looked at the **timeline** in **Daniel 9** and noticed that they were living at the **exact time** the angel **Gabriel** said the **Messiah** would be **"cut off."**

Anyone can say anything, but Jesus' **miracles, teachings, lineage, and ministry practices** were giving evidence **He** was the **long-awaited Messiah.**

- All people had to do was to accept the PROPHECY was being FULFILLED in THEIR LIFETIME!
 - And this wasn't "I hope it's happening" they had PROOF that Old Testament prophecies were LITERALLY being Fulfilled in front of them!

Do you think Jesus is **angry** that people didn't recognize the signs? Yes!

Sermon Title: Should We Look for Signs? Yes!

Look for Signs of Jesus' Return

Why does Jesus call them "hypocrites"?

- *Because they SAID they were looking for the coming Messiah, but they were NOT really looking for the coming Messiah!*

Let's update Jesus' condemnation to us today: "He also said to the PEOPLE WHO ATTEND CHURCH, "You know the top Indy 500 car drives, the lineup for the Colts, the latest fads, the status of Hollywood stars and music celebrities, and you stay glued to the TV all day. "Hypocrites! You know all about trivial things, but why don't you know how to interpret this present time?"

What are the Signs of Jesus' Second Coming?

Return of the Nation of Israel

The **Book of Revelation** and the **Book of Daniel** require Israel to be in their land!

- Why?
 - Rebuilding of the temple (ch. 11)
 - The sealing of 144,000 Jews
 - The listing of the 12,000 from each Tribe
 - The returning of the Jews to their land
 - Jerusalem as the Jewish capital

Last week, on May 14th, Israel celebrated 75 years as a nation

What are the Signs of Jesus' Second Coming?

Rise of False Religions

Since the 1960s America has seen an **explosion of Cults**

- **Cults** are religious groups whose teachings differ from what the Scriptures teach

Explosion of Islam

- Islam is currently the 2nd largest religion in the world
 - According to the **Pew Research group**: “Muslims will grow more than twice as fast as the overall world population between 2015 and 2060 and,

in the second half of this century, will likely surpass Christians as the world's largest religious group.”

What are the Signs of Jesus' Second Coming?

Lawlessness with Increase

The [Meeting minutes](#) from the United Nations from January 26, 2023: “Against a backdrop of the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War and a consequent, pervasive sense of insecurity around the world, the United Nations must rethink its efforts to achieve sustainable peace....”

Let's talk about what will happen in the **Christian community**

Paul wrote in **1 Tim. 4:1-2** “Now the Spirit explicitly says that *in later times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared.*”

What are the Signs of Jesus' Second Coming?

People will Depart Leave the Faith

Christianity is on the DECLINE in the Western world

- Several “high profile” Christians have “left the faith”
- Young people are not attending church or identifying as Christians

Global Affairs Sept/Oct 2020 “[Giving up on God: The Decline of Global Religion](#)”

- There are pockets of Christian growth, but overall we are seeing a decline

Demons are spiritual entities that are opposed to God

Do I believe they exist? Yes!

- According to the Apostle Paul in **Eph. 6:12** “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.”
- Demons OPPOSED Jesus throughout His ministry

Luke 17:26 & 28 “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man...It will be the same as it was in the days of Lot: People went on eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building.”

- We will **unpack** this in greater detail when we get to **Luke 17**

Right now, I want to note that Jesus said that before He returns it will be “Like the Days of Lot.”

- Since **June** is upon us, let’s just look at the **Days of Lot**

What are the Signs of Jesus’ Second Coming?

Rise of Homosexuality

Do you know what the month of June is in the West?

Pride month

What we will start seeing in the next few days?

- **Pride flags, Pride parades, corporations changing their logos to Pride colors**
 - **Pride symbols** will also be showing up in many **church buildings** throughout the country
 - **Clergy** will proudly display Pride colored stoles on their flowing robes
 - **Pulpits** will have Pride banners hanging

What was the characteristic of the Days of Lot?

Homosexuality was the **accepted norm**.

Gen 19:4-5 “Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, the whole population, surrounded the house. 5 They called out to Lot and said,

“Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have sex with them!”

- According to [Axios](#), 1 in 5 young people in America now identify as LGTQ
- [US News and World Report](#), June 2020

I believe Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, in his book, *“The Return of the Gods”* is correct that in the 1960s, America and the **West** began kicking out God and we opened the door for the demons to return.

- Starting in the 300’s A.D. the **Gospel overtook the Roman Empire** and the West and kicked out the controlling demonic forces
 - But as Jesus said in **Luke 11**, when a **demon leaves** and comes back, if one greater than Him (i.e., Jesus) is not there, the demon will bring **“seven other spirits, more evil than itself”** and take up residence.
 - That is what began to happen in the 1960s and we opened the door for the demonic gods to return.

The Old Testament says a lot about the **demonic “gods”** and how they deceived people.

- One of those was a **goddess called Ishtar**
 - Ishtar is often called **Ashtoreth** in the Bible

- The **Greeks**, called her *Aphrodite*
- The **Romans** called her *Venus*

Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Aphrodite, or Venus was the god of **unbridled sexuality**.

This “**goddess**” returned to the West in the 1960s and launched what we call “**The Sexual Revolution.**”

- Do you think the “**Sexual Revolution**” just happened? NO!
 - There is a **demonic force**, known as Ashtoreth/Ishtar in the Bible, behind it.

Since PRIDE month is upon us and Jesus said it would be “**as it was in the Days of Lot**” before His return you might find this interesting:

The Western World is preparing to celebrate **PRIDE MONTH**

- Do you know WHERE PRIDE month came from?
- Do you know what happened on June 28, 1969?

One June 28, 1969 a **gay bar**, known as **Stonewall** in Greenwich Village in New York City was **raided** by the police.

- When the **crossdressers and employees** were being arrested, onlookers report that a **feeling of agitation** came over the crowd of a few hundred and they began **throwing objects** at the police, which caused the police to **retreat** inside the bar.
 - This became known as **“The Stonewall Riots”** and these laid the groundwork for the LGBTQ movement.

Do you think what happened in **June 1969** was by accident? NO

- According to the Apostle Paul in **Eph. 6:12** **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.”**

There is more going on than most people realize

- Why? **Luke 12:56** **“Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why don’t you know how to interpret this present time?”**
 - They **“don’t know how to interpret this present hour.”**

There had been other raids **on other gay bars** in New York and across the country so WHY Stonewall?

- WHY did this happen at Stonewall?
- WHY was **Stonewall** the **Catalyst** for the LGBTQ movement?

Jonathan Cahn lays out all the **amazing connections** to the **Stonewall Riots and Ishtar** in his book *“The Return of the gods”* but I will share a few here.

According to ancient tradition, ISHTAR DWELLED IN a place called the **eshdam**.

- Eshdam was the ancient Mesopotamian word for a **tavern, pub, or inn**.
 - What was Stonewall? It was a **gay bar**.

The **goddess Ishtar** is presented as being drawn to **Gates**

- The **Ishtar Gate** was originally built by **Nebuchadnezzar** in Babylon in 575 B.C.
- What is New York city known as? The **Gateway to the United States**

So we have a **Bar** at the **“Gateway”**

In one of the descriptions of Ishtar we read: **“In the evening, she came forth with authority and stood in the**

street before a wondrous gate. She made an offering of firstfruits.”

- So, she is said to come to the gate at night and to “stand in the street”

The Stonewall raid began in the **night** of June 28th at a **Bar** in the **Gate** of the United States

Ishtar was the “goddess of both male and female prostitutes”

- Interestingly, **male prostitutes** led the **uprising** that night at the Stonewall bar.
 - The uprising began in the **street outside the bar**

The **Stonewall Raid** began

- In the **night**
- In the **street**
- At a **Bar**
- In the city known as the **Gateway** to America

Interestingly, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* contains a vivid description of the goddess’s rage.

- In this account, **Ishtar** tries to **seduce** Gilgamesh but he **refuses** her **advances**

- In her anger, she calls down the “**bull of Heaven**” but Gilgamesh and his associate kill the bull
 - Ishtar gets angry and stands on a wall, known as the **Wall of Uruk**
 - Guess what this wall is made of? **Bricks!**
 - According to reports, the Stonewall riots began with people throwing bricks at the police

In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Ishtar is said to be a stone that *“...that buckles out the stone wall.*

- Is it a **coincidence** that the riots that were the foundation of the LGBT movement were started at “**Stonewall**”?

Ishtar is often called a “**Lioness**”

- She is described as riding a chariot driven by **seven lions**.
- In carved reliefs, she stands on the **back of a lion** or **lions** as she rides into war.

In particular, the Lion’s head

- The goddess is depicted in carved reliefs as **holding reins**, by which she **turns the lion’s head** and directs the course of her entrance.

- In other reliefs she places her foot on top of the **lion's head**.
 - *It was a sign of total dominance and uncontested power.*

A few years **before** the **riot**, in **1966**, just two doors down from Stonewall, the **Lion's Head tavern** was established.

- Later that **same year (1966)** three members of the **Mafia** purchased the property that would become **Stonewall**.
 - In **1967**, **Stonewall opened its door**.
- Years after the **Stonewall** riots a **gay advocacy group** set up its **headquarters** right about the Lion's Head tavern

The **warrant to raid Stonewall** was issued on June 26, 1969.

- On the ancient Mesopotamian and biblical calendar, it took place on the 10th day of the **month of Tammuz**.
- According to Vladamir Emeliav in "Cultic Calendar and Pyschology of Time," The tenth of Tammuz is the day given to perform the spell "to cause a man to love a man."

One final note, *In the ancient Middle East Ishtar was especially known as the goddess of **parades** and **processions**.*

- Parades honoring Ishtar in the ancient world consisted of the **cross-gendered**, the **androgynous**, the **homosexual**, and the transsexual, of men dressing as women, and women dressing as men.
 - Does that sound familiar?
- **Five months** after **Stonewall**, gay activists met in Philadelphia and planned a **march** to commemorate the Stonewall uprising to take place the **following summer** in New York City.
 - The **parade** was to be repeated every year on the **last Sunday of June**.
 - Three other marches were planned for that same weekend, one in **San Francisco**, one in **Chicago**, and one in **Los Angeles** on Hollywood Boulevard.
 - They were to be protest marches and parades at the same time.

Do you think it was a **coincidence** that the **Stonewall riots**, which became the foundation for the modern-LGBT movement, began in **June**?

- Guess which month is connected to Ishtar? **June**!

- Do you think it is a coincidence that we devote an entire month to LGBTQ called Pride Month?

NO

- In the ancient world, the month of **June (Junium)** was devoted to the worship of Ishtar.

What about the rainbow flag?

- The rainbow flag was designed by **Gilbert Baker**, an openly gay man and drag queen, and was first flown on **June 25, 1978**.
- In **1994** the sign of the rainbow was adopted as the **official symbol** of gay pride.
- The original rainbow flag had eight colors, each representing one of eight elements of the movement.
- An ancient **Sumerian inscription** says this of the participants in the Ishtar's processions:
 - "The male prostitutes comb their hair before you. They decorate the napes of their necks with **colored scarfs.**"

We don't have time to walk through all the colors, but they are all linked to the goddess Ishtar

- *In one story, she is said to "stretch herself like a rainbow across the sky and reached thereby as far as the earth."*

Should We Look for Signs? Yes!

Look for Signs of Jesus' Return

Luke 12:56 “**Hypocrites!** You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why don't you know how to interpret this present time?”

What is a “hypocrite”?

- A “Hypocrite” says one thing but does the opposite
- We are **ALL GUILTY** of being “Hypocrites,” BUT that doesn't mean we should LIVE as “hypocrites.”
- When we are **HYPOCRITICAL**, we must **REPENT!**

HOW were they guilty of being “Hypocrites”?

- They **SAID** they were longing for the coming Messiah, but they were **not actually EXPECTING HIM** to arrive—*at least not in their day!*
- They **SAID** they were longing for the coming Messiah, but they were **NOT LOOKING at the SIGNS** that were right in front of their faces!
 - They (Particularly the religious leaders) were making excuses as to WHY JESUS could not be the Messiah, but they were flimsy like
 - His father was a carpenter...
 - He grew up in Nazareth ...

- He had not been trained in Rabbinical schools...

How can WE be “Hypocrites” regarding the return of Jesus?

- We can say “Jesus is coming back” but we don’t live like He is returning soon
- We can say “Jesus is coming back” but ignore the signs preceding His coming that are around us.
 - We can say “Jesus is coming back” but we REINTERPRET Scriptural passages as allegories or metaphors rather than take them at face value
 -

I wonder if Jesus would ask that same question of us.

- “You know how to interpret the signs of a **successful sports team**, but you don’t know how to interpret the signs of my return.”
- “You spend your time focusing on the latest **Facebook and Instagram posts**, but you don’t watch what is happening in the world that points to my return.”

YOU

PQ: Do You Live in Expectation of the Messiah’s Return?

- Are you **ignoring** the signs that we are near the beginning of the Tribulation?
- Are you **prepared** for the Return of Christ?
- Are you **determined** to HOLD FAST to your faith?

The Signs are cropping up around us!

- Don't be a "hypocrite" who says "I believe Jesus is coming back" but who IGNORES the signs that He is coming soon—maybe within our lifetimes.

Wednesday night!

WE