

# Are We To Discern the Seasons?

*Promise: we are in the season for ongoing repentance onto life everlasting*

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7; 1Cor 1:3-9; [Mark 13:24-37](#)

(First Sunday In Advent, 11/29/20)

*So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. — v. 29*

**Lead In** – Jesus' clear words concerning His coming at the end of history is that no man knows the day or the hour. In fact before His ascension Jesus also told his followers it was not for them to know the time or the seasons. And yet, there is this business from Jesus' lips of learning from the fig tree how to determine the seasons, and to know when summer is drawing near. What's up with that?

## I. Apparent Contradictions Invite More Reflection

- Whoever said Scripture is simple to read?...
- An important principle for interpretation...
- The significance of a fig tree being employed...

## II. Apparent Conflation of Things Prophesied

- The Olivet discourse of Mt 24, Mk 13, & Lk 21...
- We assume it is all about Christ's end time return...
- Destruction of the Temple & conflated prophecy...

## III. Signs Of The Current Season

- Many springs/autumns, and then final one...
- How President Lincoln understood his time...
- Breakdown of family, of role of faith, mob rule...

**Parting Shot** – It may be good to end with some kind of consideration how the start of the Advent Season is any different than the last several weeks of the Church Year leading up to Christ the King Sunday. The return of Christ the King seems to loom large in each. But in the case of the Season of Advent it is with particular focus on the preparations for the first Advent, the Holy Nativity. And so, John the Baptist, Mary, and Joseph will play prominent roles; especially John the Baptist with his message of ongoing repentant faith, now in this Season needed more than ever...

**Ac 1:7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

**1 Th 5:1-2** Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

**Principle for Interpretation:** Let the clear, direct passages, shed light on the more ambiguous or mysterious ones.

**Mk 13:1-2** And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

**Jn 2:19-21** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-

## Mark 13:24-37 ESV

*The Coming of the Son of Man*

<sup>24</sup>But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup>Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— <sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

**Mt 27:40** "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

**Lk 21:20** "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near."

**Destruction of the Temple:** The Roman army under Titus responding to the latest rebellion by the zealots of Israel to overthrow empire leveled Jerusalem, including the temple, in AD 70.

**Mt 26:52** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

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