

## *As in the Days of Noah*

*(Living Faithfully While Awaiting the King's Return)*

“Birth Pains”

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### **Big Idea:**

The increasing turmoil of the world reminds believers that history is moving toward Christ’s return.

### **Kingdom Response:**

Persevere with hope and help others find hope in Jesus.

### **Series Heartbeat:**

The return of Christ is not an escape from the mission—it is the motivation for the mission.

### **I. Faithful Disciple-Makers**

(Matthew 24:4-8)

*“You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet.”*

*(Matthew 24:4–6, CSB)*

*“Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”* *(Matthew 24:7, CSB)*

*“All these events are the beginning of labor pains.”* *(Matthew 24:8, CSB)*

### **Key Truth:**

The turmoil around us should awaken our hope—not control us with fear.

### **II. Faithful Disciple-Makers**

(Matthew 24:9-13)

*“Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name.”* *(Matthew 24:9, CSB)*

*“Then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another.”* *(Matthew 24:10, CSB)*

*“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”* *(Matthew 24:13, CSB)*

### **Key Truth:**

Hope is not confidence that circumstances will get easier—it is confidence that Jesus will remain faithful to the end.

### **III. Faithful Disciple-Makers**

(Matthew 24:14)

*“This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* *(Matthew 24:14, CSB)*

### **Key Truth:**

Birth pains are not a signal for the Church to retreat—they are a reminder that our time to make disciples is limited.

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## Small Group Questions — Week 6

### Birth Pains

Text: Matthew 24:4–14

#### Start Here — Reflective Question

When you hear about wars, natural disasters, political instability, or other troubling events in the world, what is your first reaction? How do these events affect your sense of peace or security?

#### Discussion Questions

##### 1. REFUSE TO LIVE IN FEAR — Matthew 24:4–8

Jesus warned His disciples about deception, wars, famines, and earthquakes. He described these events as “the beginning of labor pains.”

But He also told them, “See that you are not alarmed.”

- Why do you think Jesus warned His disciples about these events while also telling them not to be afraid?
- What does the expression “birth pains” teach us about where history is heading?
- How can we stay informed about world events without becoming consumed by fear or speculation?
- What is the difference between watching for signs of Christ's return and living in expectation of His return?

##### 2. ENDURE WHEN FOLLOWING JESUS BECOMES COSTLY — Matthew 24:9–13

Jesus warned that His followers would experience persecution, betrayal, and hatred. Yet He also said:

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13, CSB)

- Why do you think difficult circumstances sometimes strengthen people's faith while causing others to fall away?
- In what ways is following Jesus becoming more challenging in our culture?
- How does knowing that Jesus is ultimately victorious help us endure difficult circumstances?
- What practical habits or relationships help you remain faithful when following Jesus becomes difficult?

##### 3. KEEP MAKING DISCIPLES WHILE THE WORLD SHAKES — Matthew 24:14

After describing the turmoil that would characterize the end of the age, Jesus declared that the good news of the Kingdom would be proclaimed throughout the world.

The mission continues even while the world is shaking.

- Why do you think Jesus included the proclamation of the gospel in His description of the end times?
- How might uncertainty or fear about world events make someone more open to spiritual conversations?
- What is the difference between trying to convince someone about end-times prophecy and helping them discover Jesus?
- How can we remain focused on making disciples rather than becoming distracted by everything happening in the world?

#### Disciple-Making Connection

The Kingdom Response this week is:

**Persevere with hope and help others find hope in Jesus.**

- How can listening to the Holy Spirit help us recognize opportunities for spiritual conversations when people express fear or uncertainty?
- What questions could you ask someone who is worried about what is happening in the world to help move the conversation toward Jesus?
- Is there someone in your life who seems anxious or uncertain about the future? How might you initiate a spiritual conversation with that person this week?