

Knowing the Signs of the Times (Part 2)

I. REVIEW: JESUS COMMANDS US TO KNOW THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- A. Jesus gave ***12 trends*** as signs of the generation in which He will return (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8, Lk. 21:7-18). They are false christs, war, ethnic conflict, economic warfare, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, troubles, commotions, fearful sights, great signs from heaven, and persecution.
- ⁵ Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars...for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation...and there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows (birth pangs). (Mt. 24:5-8)*
- ¹¹ There will be...famines, pestilences...fearful sights and great signs from heaven. (Lk. 21:11)*
- B. Jesus commanded us to know the generation that the Lord returns.
- ³² Learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly...this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place... (Mt. 24:32-34)*
- C. In Mt. 24:33, Jesus said that when we see **ALL** the prophetic sign events of Mt. 24 occur at the same time that we should know that summer is near (change of season in God's calendar). There is only one generation in which **all these things** happen simultaneously on a global basis.
- D. Five common lies against knowing the signs of the times and the generation that Jesus returns.
- Lie #1: we cannot understand End-Time Scriptures or the signs of the times because no one can.*
Lie #2: some think that understanding the End-Times will minimize the work of the Kingdom.
Lie #3: since we are not able to know the day or hour, we should not try to know the generation.
Lie #4: that every generation believed they were the last one.
Lie #5: it will all pan out in the end. The question is how well will it pan out for you?
- E. Four types of prophetic signs that indicate the generation in which the Lord returns.
- 1). **Sign Events** – signs predicted in Scripture will alert the Church to the timing of His return.*
*2). **Sign Trends** – in society and creation will escalate and thus signal the final generation.*
*3). **Cosmic Signs** – highly unusual phenomena in the sky, this even includes weather*
*4). **Personal Signs** – subjective prophetic experiences (are secondary because they are fallible).*
- F. Scripture describes **3 prophetic time frames** related to the last 7 years of this age (Dan. 9:27). The last 7 years is made up of 2 distinct periods each lasting 3½ years.
- First time frame: beginning of birth pangs with ***turmoil in the nations*** (Mt. 24:4-8).
Second time frame: increased labor pangs with ***counterfeit world peace*** (first 3½ year period).
Third time frame is the hard labor pangs with the ***Great Tribulation*** (final 3½ year period).

II. POSITIVE SPIRITUAL TRENDS INDICATING THE GENERATION JESUS RETURNS

- A. There are positive spiritual trends prophesied in the Scripture that will occur in the generation the Lord returns in a unique measure and intensity on a global basis. They are clearly measurable.
- B. **Gospel preached to all nations**: Jesus connected the timing of His return to the preaching of the gospel to all nations. Mission organizations project from statistical data that the gospel will be heard by every people group and language on the earth for the first time by 2025.
¹⁴ This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mt 24:14)
- C. The gospel has been preached to 4 billion people. Churches exist in all 251 nations and territories of the earth. The greatest harvest of souls in history is happening in this hour. The Bible has been translated into 2,062 languages (available to 98 percent of the world's population). Wycliffe expects to have the Bible translated in every known language of the earth by 2040.
- D. **Salvation of Israel**: Jesus connected the timing of His return to Israel turning to Him. Messianic (Jewish) congregations in Israel are seeing more Jewish people coming to Jesus than at any time in church history since the 1st century. There are now about 120 Messianic congregations in Israel totaling over 10,000 believers. This is an increase of over 500% in the last 10 years.
³⁹ You shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mt 23:39)
²⁶ All Israel will be saved, as it is written ... (Rom. 11:26)
- E. **Bridal identity**: John connected Jesus' return to the Church worldwide understanding her bridal identity. This is occurring in a global way for the first time in history (Rev 22:17; Mt. 25:1-13).
¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)
- F. **Global prayer movement**: Jesus connected the timing of His return in Lk. 17 to night and day prayer in Lk. 18. Isaiah prophesied of 24/7 prayer ministries continuing until Jesus' Coming (Isa. 62:6-7) and energized by those who have a bridal identity (Isa. 62:4-5). The recent surge of 24/7 prayer with many stadium prayer events occurring worldwide is a sign of the times.
⁷ Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith (agreement in prayer) on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8)
- G. **Global prophetic worship movement** (Isa. 42:10-13): Jesus is coming back in context to the greatest worship movement in history. The current explosion of worship and music combined with intercession is a sign of the times. [Isaiah](#) prophesied more than any other on the place of prophetic [singing in](#) the End-Times (over [100 verses](#)). See Isa. [5:1-7](#); [6:3](#); [9:3](#); [12:1-6](#); [14:3-27](#); [24:14-16](#); [25:1](#); [26:1-6](#); [27:2-5](#), [13](#); [29:19](#); [30:29-30](#); [35:1-10](#); [38:19-20](#); [42:10-17](#); [43:21](#); [44:23](#); [48:20-21](#); [49:13](#); [51:3](#), [11](#); [52:8-10](#); [54:1](#); [55:12](#); [56:7-8](#); [60:18](#); [61:3](#), [7-11](#); [62:6-7](#), [9](#); [63:7](#); [65:13-14](#); [66:10-14](#), [21](#).

G.H. End Times outpouring of the Spirit: all believers will receive prophetic dreams and visions (Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:17-21). The number of Pentecostal/Charismatic believers has exploded from approximately 1 million in 1900 to over 600 million today. (Acts 2:17; Jer. 31:9; 23:20; Dan. 11:33-35; Isa. 26:9; Rev. 11:3-6; 18:20; Mt. 17:11; Mal. 4:6).

¹⁷ I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy... (Acts 2:17)

H.I. Unparalleled understanding of End-Time prophecy (Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Dan. 11:33; 12:10): an angel told Daniel that information about the end-of-the-age was “shut up and sealed” in his day and that it would be unveiled at “the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4, 9, 12). This speaks of an unsealing of revelation regarding the “time of the end”.

²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 23:20)

H.J. Global youth focus in the Kingdom of God: Malachi predicted a unique time in which a generation of youth would turn their hearts to the fathers of the faith at the same time that the fathers turn to love and serve them (Mal 4:5-6). This includes a massive turning of the heart of the Church to the fatherless (orphans, human trafficking victims). This prophesied time frame was knit to the release of the “spirit and power of Elijah” just before Jesus’ coming.

III. NEGATIVE SPIRITUAL TRENDS INDICATING THE GENERATION JESUS RETURNS

A. **The Harlot Babylon worldwide religion** (Rev. 17:2-6): the Harlot Babylon will be a counterfeit “justice” movement and religion that will masquerade as an answer to injustice as it deceives the earth by feeding the poor, meeting humanitarian needs, loving peace, and championing the dignity of humanity with no moral absolutes. The Harlot religion serves as a “forerunner” to prepare the nations to worship the Antichrist.

B. **Persecution against believers:** will be unique in the generation in which the Lord returns (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9, 14; 9:21; 11:7; 13:7, 15; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; Mt. 10:21-22, 28; 24:9; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4). According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001) the number of martyrs over 1900 years equaled nearly 25 million believers. In the 20th century, there have been almost 50 million martyrs worldwide.

C. **Falling away from the faith:** is a sign of the times (Mt. 24:9-13; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Many churches today deny Scripture as infallible and therefore, as the moral plumb line. They deny Jesus’ deity and reject Him as the only way of salvation.

D. **The increase of lawlessness** (Rev. 9:21; 14:18; 17:5; 18:5; Dan. 8:23): fullness of sin on earth

²¹ They did not repent of their murders...sorceries...sexual immorality or thefts. (Rev. 9:21)

1. **Murder:** as the primary sin on earth (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-14; 9:21; 13:7, 10; 16:6; 17:6)

2. **Sorceries:** occult and demon worship will fill the earth (Rev. 13:3-4, 8, 12-15; 14:11)

3. **Immorality:** demon energized perversion (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:3; 19:2)

4. **Theft:** legislation and persecution motivated by theft (i.e., the Nazi’s anti-Semitism)

IV. GLOBALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRENDS INDICATING THE END-TIMES

- A. **Globalization**: an alarming and observable trend is globalization and the manner in which finances, commerce, communication, religion, and geopolitics will converge from a nation-based context to a more globally unified expression (Rev 17-18). There will be one-world technology, economics, political cooperation, travel and info. Nations and religions will pool resources.
- B. **Knowledge and travel** (Dan. 12:4): Daniel prophesied of a remarkable increase of knowledge (communication) and travel (transportation) as many “run to and fro” to obtain it.
⁴ Seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro (unprecedented travel), and knowledge shall increase (information age). (Dan. 12:4)
- C. **Internet**: has allowed knowledge to increase in the earth in an unprecedented way. Science and scientific advancements are currently fueling immorality (gender change, abortion) and murder (stem cell research, cloning) as clarity decreases in the ethical debate (Rev. 9:21).
- D. **Instant communication**: satellite transmission with robotics, laser technology, instant global communication with microchip technology to facilitate a cashless society, etc. (Rev. 13:13-18).
¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast (Antichrist), that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship...to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast... (Rev. 13:15-17)
⁹ Those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see (through media) their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. (Rev. 11:9)

V. POLITICAL SIGN EVENTS PERTAINING TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL

- A. In Scripture, Israel is the reference point in discerning God’s prophetic timetable for the End-Time drama. Israel has always been the primary timing indicator for God’s prophetic calendar. The entire End-Time drama in Scripture is given in context to events related to Israel. Dan. 9:24-27 is the most significant prophecy about nations in the End-Times. It speaks of Israel being **in the land**, with an **army** and a **rebuilt Temple** with sacrifices according to the law of Moses.
- B. The re-establishing of the **state of Israel** and capturing of the **city of Jerusalem** fulfills numerous prophecies. Israel began as a nation on May 15, 1948. Scripture describes Jerusalem inhabited by citizens of the state of Israel as the **center of world controversy** in the End-Times (Zech. 12:1-3; 14:1-3; Luke 21:20-24). The Abomination of desolation requires Israel to be in the Land with a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 25:15; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:5, 15-18).

- C. Several prophecies related to Israel are closely linked to each other. They include the return to the land, gaining control of Jerusalem, rebuilding the Temple, **re-establishing the Hebrew language** and the **Sabbath** (in their civil law; Mt. 24:15-20), becoming the center of world politics and controversy (Zech. 12:1-3; 14:1-3; Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Lk. 21:20-24).
- D. The re-establishment of the **Hebrew language** was prophesied by Zephaniah. For Israel to speak Hebrew after being out of their homeland for 2,000 years is unprecedented in history.
⁹ Then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord. (Zeph. 3:9)
- E. Over 2,500 years ago, Daniel and Zechariah prophesied what seemed impossible; that a weak and broken Israel would be the primary focus of the whole earth (Zech. 12:3; 14:2). Jerusalem is quickly becoming the center focus of world attention. The **stage will be set** that leads to the Armageddon Campaign in which all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem for 3½ years. Anti-Semitism will increase worldwide. Jesus requires that the Church stand with Israel.
¹ Behold, the day of the LORD is coming...² For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken...half of the city shall go into captivity... (Zech. 14:1-2)
- F. Significant activities related to the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple signal the coming of the End-Times. The Abomination of Desolation cannot occur unless Israel rebuilds the Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This Temple does not currently exist, but it must be rebuilt (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; 13:12-18; Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11). Even now plans to rebuild the Temple are being pursued aggressively in Israel.

VI. POLITICAL SIGNS OF THE TIMES FOCUSED ON OTHER NATIONS

- A. **World peace and safety**: the Antichrist will offer his solutions to the turmoil in the nations that is seen in the beginning of birth-pangs (Mt. 24:4-8). The last 7 years begins when the Antichrist confirms a covenant with many nations bringing world peace that lasts 3½ years (1 Thes. 5:3; Dan. 9:27). The Antichrist is first revealed as a ***man of peace*** who brings **world peace**.
³ When they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains (Great Tribulation) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thes. 5:3)
- B. **Global government**: emergence of a global coalition based in a Middle East-European superstate (revived Roman Empire) with a 10-nation confederation under the Antichrist's authority (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; 9:26-27; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16). This one-world governmental coalition will lead the world into the Armageddon Campaign. This will be the largest political, military, economic, religious power in history (Dan. 2; 7; Ezek. 38; Rev. 13; 17). There is a growing globalization quickly moving towards a one-world governmental cooperation.
- C. A worldwide cooperation in policies and economics will be necessary for the legislation seen in Rev. 13:14-17. These systems must be refined before the Antichrist unveils his true evil self. A one-world coalition of nations, with the majority of the nations operating with deep cooperation with the Antichrist in their policies, concerns economics, technology, security and military.

VII. SUMMARY: THESE TRENDS MUST ALL HAPPEN IN THE SAME GENERATION

- A. **Watch for:** the stage to be set that leads up to the Armageddon Campaign. All the nations of the earth will be gathered in Israel to war against God.
- B. **Watch for:** emergence of a European Superstate (Europe/Middle East) in the area of the ancient Roman Empire that leads to a worldwide governmental authority with a 10-nation confederation.
- C. **Watch for:** for one man to rise up from obscurity (as a regional political leader) with unusual diplomacy who initially works with a 3-nation coalition then will lead a ten-nation confederation (Superstate) and will confirm a peace treaty with Israel and the Middle East bringing peace.
- D. **Watch for:** growing globalization or a deliberate movement towards a one-world governmental cooperation. The United Nations calling for the political identity of a new World Order will push to minimize national boundaries and establish one currency, military, political process, etc.
- E. **Watch for:** a counterfeit peace and safety that will be easily noticed as the world wrongly assumes that their problems are being solved by unusual, skillful leadership.
- F. **Watch for:** anti-Semitism to grow rapidly on a worldwide scale.
- G. **Watch for:** trends that will lead to an international siege against Jerusalem.
- H. **Watch for:** significant increased Arab hostility towards Israel (Ezek. 35:1-15).
- I. **Watch for:** the emergence of oil rich Islamic nations in alliance with a global leader (Antichrist).
- J. **Watch for:** the emergence of worldwide religious network with great economic power that legalizes killing Christians who resist it.
- K. **Watch for:** the emergence of a worldwide economic system.
- L. **Watch for:** the rebuilding of the city of Babylon located on the Euphrates River in Iraq.
- M. **Watch for:** the rise of the kings of the East (Asian confederacy) that will initially resist the Antichrist, but then will eventually join him in attacking Israel.
- N. **Watch for:** a series of battles around the world after the worldwide peace and safety.