

Unprecedented Signs of Christ's Return

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The "end of the age," also known as "the last days," is not the end of the world. The truth is that this end is essentially a new beginning. That should not surprise us. We have already experienced a precursor of this. In order for God to make us "new creations," He had to bring to death the "old man." Through spiritual rebirth The Father made us new in Christ, but the day of our conversion was hardly our "last day" or the "end of our life" on earth. God amazingly restored us to whom He had originally created us to be and then united us to His Spirit, giving us new birth, new life and freedom from captivity to the fallen nature and the enemy's dominion over us. Old things "passed away" and "all things" were made new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Something similar is coming to the earth as a whole!

Signs and Times

Concerning the return of the Lord two things are beyond dispute in the text of scripture: 1) the day is surely coming when the Lord will return to bring an end to the present age and 2) it is very important that believers stay watchful for His return. It is anticipated in scripture that in the last days (before His coming) many will cease believing and expecting this promise of God to be fulfilled—they will be caught unprepared. Hence, the repeated warnings to stay alert and prepared.

2 Peter 3:2-4, 8-9, 14-15

Concerning the timing of His return, Jesus Himself makes a clear distinction between reading the "signs" that are meant to show believers that His return is drawing near and knowing "the day and hour" which will remain a hidden thing. He fully expects that we will know that it is near— "at the doors"—but we are not to press Him for the exact moment. **Mark 13:28-33**

Dates and hours—the exact moment of His Coming is withheld from all.

Times and seasons—the near approach of His Coming will be known by many.

The teaching of St. Paul is in accord with the teaching of Jesus. For people of the world there will be a complacent attitude that life is going on as usual. Unaware of the times and the seasons, they will not be watching and preparing for the return of Christ. Instead, they will be surprised and overwhelmed like people suddenly awakened (too late!) by a thief in the night. But it is quite different for people of faith who have no need of further instruction concerning the return of the Lord. They will be awake and alert to the times and seasons and will not be surprised when the Day finally arrives.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Unprecedented and Incontrovertible Signs of Christ's Return

None of the following signs were in place prior to the middle of the past century. Up until very recently no one looking for Biblical signs of the Lord's return would have been in a position to say His return was drawing near. Conversely, the convergence of these signs (many of which had been unthinkable possibilities even a hundred years ago) point inexorably to the knowledge that Jesus said His church would have about the season of His return.

1) Jewish Signs

a) **The re-gathering of the Jews at the end of the age of the Gentiles.** The return of Jews to the land promised by God to Abraham and his descendants forever is the ultimate fulfillment of the Hebrew scripture prophecies of national restoration. The restoration of Jerusalem to Jewish control is a sign that the end of the age of the Gentiles is drawing near its appointed fulfillment. This includes the miraculous restoration of Hebrew as a spoken language.

Joel 3:1-2, Ezekiel 37:21, Luke 21:24

b) **Restoration of national Israel in 1948.** The nation of Israel was twice ruthlessly destroyed by the Romans—partially in 70-72 AD and completely in 130 AD. For almost two thousand years, the forlorn dream of Jews in exile from the land was to return to the land as sojourners. But few would have believed national restoration was possible. Then, first by the Zionist movement beginning in the



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late 19th century and later by Nazi persecution, the Jewish people began returning to settle the land. The lineage of the priesthood is available to be restored and the rebuilding of the temple is a practical (though not political) possibility. **Ezekiel 37:21-22, Isaiah 66:7-11**

c) The conversion of the Jews at the end of the age of the Gentiles. Previous centuries have seen forced Jewish converts to Christianity (who practiced their Jewish faith secretly) and willing, believing converts who were then assimilated into Gentile Christianity. The rise of Messianic Jews (Jews who retain their Jewish heritage and identity when coming to faith in Christ) in the past few decades marks a shift towards the end of the age of the Gentiles. **Romans 11:23-27**

d) Jerusalem and Israel become a central stumbling block in world politics. This is prophesied as being just prior to the ultimate realization by Jews of Jesus as their Messiah. The restored nation of Israel in the midst of Arab oil and terrorist violence has completely changed the balances of world power. The Israel-Islamic conflict truly makes the nations reel. **Zechariah 12:1-3, 10**

2) Gospel Signs

a) The gospel is being preached in all the world. For the first time in world history, the Bible is being targeted for translation into every known language and the gospel is being carried by missionaries into every known people group as a witness to all the nations. This is nearly completed. According to Jesus it has to happen first and “then the end will come.” **Matthew 24:3-14**

b) The restoration of the tabernacle of David. Intercession and praise that is offered before the Lord as continuous worship around the clock is prophesied of the end of the age. Amazingly, God is raising this up in the earth today and restoring it to the life of the church. There is a 24/7 worship and intercessory movement that began in Kansas City in 1999—the International House of Prayer—and it has spread worldwide to over 100 locations. **Amos 9:11, Acts 15:16-17**

3) Global Signs

The Book of Revelation gives us a picture of the whole world organized against God along with signs of global deterioration and corruption. As with the other events, these are Biblical signs that simply were not happening until the middle of the 20th century.

a) Environmental signs. We now have the capacity to destroy the environment: to kill life in the rivers and aquifers (springs of water); to kill one third of the life in the ocean; to cause people to be scorched by the sun (with the loss of the ozone layer?); to spread disease (plagues) world-wide in a matter of hours (jet travel). **Revelation 8:10-11, Revelation 16:3-4, Revelation 16:8-9**

b) Political/economic signs. We now have a one world financial system. Babylon as it is pictured in the Book of Revelation looks like a world economic system organized for greed and power. We now have a one world *de facto* (though not yet *de jure*) government. Efforts continue to be made to develop a one world religious system. **Revelation 18:1-4**

c) Technological signs. We now have the technological ability to put a smart chip under the skin of the hand or the forehead so that no buying or selling can be done without the “mark.” Will this become the infamous “mark of the beast”? **Revelation 13:14-17**

d) Persecution of Christians. The number of Christians that have been killed in the last 100 years exceeds the total from the previous 1900 years. According to the book of Revelation, many believers will put to death during the “Great Tribulation” (the “time of troubles” that precedes Christ’s return). They will exit the earth as martyrs as the world’s hostility against Christianity increases—not by being “raptured” out of harm’s way. **Revelation 6:11, Revelation 7:13-15**

e) The information age. One predicted sign of the end of the age would be an increase of knowledge, combined with great movements of individuals going “to and fro” upon the earth—both stunningly characteristic of our own times (internet; jet travel). **Daniel 12:4**

