

Unprecedented Signs of Christ's Return

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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.

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."... But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance... Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.

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

Concerning the timing of His return, Jesus Himself makes a clear distinction between signs that are clearly meant to show believers that His return is drawing near and 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.

- **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

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. Mark 13:28-33

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.



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But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Unprecedented 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 in the past) 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 descendents 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.

"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. Joel 3:1-2

"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land. Ezekiel 37:21

And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 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 late 19th century and later by Nazi persecution the Jewish people began returning to 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.



"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. Ezekiel 37:21-22

"Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God. "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory." 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.

And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." 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 burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it... "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. Zechariah 12:1-3, 10

2) Gospel Signs



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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 has which is nearly completed had to happen first and then the end will come.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And 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. 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 and is one of the things God is raising up in the earth today and restoring to the life of the church. There is a 24/7 worship and intercessory movement that began in Kansas City in the mid-90's, the International House of Prayer, and that now has spread world wide.

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old. Amos 9:11

'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.' 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. Again, 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).

Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. Revelation 8:10-11



Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.
Revelation 16:3-4

Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. 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 world capitalism). 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.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. Revelation 18:1-4

c) Technological signs. We now have the technological ability to put a mark (a smart chip) under the skin of the hand or the forehead so that no buying or selling can be done without the mark.

He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 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 Christians will be martyrs who come through the great tribulation (the time of troubles that precedes Christ's return) by confessing their faith in Christ in the face of the world's hostility—not by being "raptured" out of harm's way.

Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. Revelation 6:11

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 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 "to and fro"—both increasingly characteristic of our own times.

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Daniel 12:4

