

Christ in Prophecy

Prophecy 45: 50 Reasons we are in the End Times

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Bible teaches that no one can know the date of the Lord's return. But the Bible also clearly teaches that we can know the season of the Lord's return. I am going to present you with 50 reasons why we are living in the season when Jesus is going to return. So, stay tuned!

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! As I said at the beginning of this program, the Bible says we cannot know the time of the Lord's return. But the Scriptures make it equally clear that we can know the season of the Lord's return.

Consider, for example, these words in First Thessalonians chapter 5, beginning with verse 2: "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."

Okay, folks, this passage asserts that Jesus is coming like "a thief in the night." But then it proceeds to make it clear that this will be true only for the pagan world and not for believers. His return should be no surprise to those of us who know Him and His Word, for we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of the nature of the times. That's what it means when it says "we are children of light and of the day."

Furthermore, the Scriptures give us many, many signs to watch for; signs that will signal that Jesus is ready to return. The writer of the Hebrew letter referred to these signs when he proclaimed that believers should encourage one another when they see the day of judgment drawing near. Jesus also referred to the end time signs in His Olivet Discourse, given during the last week of His life. Speaking of a whole series of signs which He had given to His disciples, He said, "When you see all these things, recognize that He, the Son of Man — that is, Jesus is near, right at the door."

You know, folks, every time I think of the signs of the times, I'm reminded of a great man of God named Elbert Peak who has gone home to the Lord. I had the privilege of participating with him in a Bible prophecy conference held in Orlando, Florida in the early 1990's. Mr. Peak was about 80 years old at the time. He had been assigned the topic, "The Signs of the Times." And he began his presentation by observing, "Sixty years ago when I first started preaching, you had to scratch around like a chicken to find one sign of the Lord's soon return." He then paused for a moment, and added, "But today there are so many signs I am no longer looking for them. Instead, I'm listening for a sound — the sound of a trumpet!"

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: One hundred years ago in 1917 there was not one single, tangible, measurable sign that indicated we were living in the season of the Lord's return. The first to appear was the Balfour Declaration which was issued by the British government later in that year, on November 2, 1917.

The declaration was prompted by the fact that during World War I the Turks sided with the Germans. And thus, when Germany lost the war, so did the Turks, and the victorious Allies decided to divide up both the German and Turkish empires. The Turkish territories, called the Ottoman Empire, contained the ancient homeland of the Jewish people, an area the Romans had named Palestine after the last Jewish revolt in 132 AD. Now, what most people do not realize is that in 1917 Palestine included all of modern day Israel and Jordan. And in the scheme the Allies concocted for dividing up the German and Turkish territories, Britain was allotted Palestine.

This decision is what prompted the Balfour Declaration. In that document, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, declared that it was the intention of the British government to establish in Palestine quote, "a national home for the Jewish people."

The leading Evangelical Christian spokesman in England at the time was a man by the name of F. B. Meyer. He immediately recognized the prophetic significance of the declaration, for he was aware that the Scriptures prophesy that the Jewish people will be regathered to their homeland in unbelief right before the return of the Messiah. Meyer sent out a letter to the Evangelical leaders of England asking them to gather in London in mid-December to discuss the prophetic implications of the Balfour Declaration. In that letter, he stated, "The signs of the times point toward the close of the time of the Gentiles and the return of Jesus can be expected any moment."

But, before Meyer's meeting could be convened, another momentous event occurred. On December 11, 1917 General Allenby, the leader of the Allied Forces in the Middle East, liberated the city of Jerusalem from 400 years of Turkish rule. Now, folks, the Bible says we have been in the end times ever since the Church was established 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. And in my opinion, I think there is no doubt that the momentous events of 1917 marked the beginning of the end of the end times because they led to the worldwide regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland and the re-establishment of their state.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Since the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, we have witnessed throughout the 20th Century the appearance of sign after sign pointing to the Lord's soon return. There are so many of these signs in fact, that one would have to be either biblically illiterate or spiritually blind not to realize that we are living on borrowed time.

I have personally been searching the Bible for years in an effort to identify all the signs, and it has not been an easy task to get a hold on them. That's because there are so many of them, both in the Old and New Testaments. I have found that the best way to deal with them is to put them into categories, and in doing that, I have come up with six categories of end time signs.

The First Category of End Time Signs is The Signs of Nature. In Luke 21:11, Jesus mentioned this category when He said: "And there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven."

This category of signs has always been the least respected, even among believers. The mere mention of it usually evokes a sneer accompanied by the words, "Come on, what else is new? There have always been earthquakes and tornadoes and hurricanes." But those who have this attitude forget that Jesus said the signs would be like "birth pangs," that means they will increase in frequency and intensity the closer we get to the Lord's return. In other words, there will be more frequent natural disasters and more intense ones.

And folks that is exactly what has been happening. For example, between October of 1991 and November of 2004, a period of 13 years the United States experienced; 9 of the 10 largest insurance natural disasters in history, 5 of its costliest hurricanes in history, 3 of its 4 largest tornado swarms in history. And keep in mind, that these statistics were compiled before the Hurricane Katrina disaster in August of 2005.

The Second Category of End Time Signs is The Signs of Society. Paul mentioned this category of signs in 2 Timothy 3 when he wrote these words: "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

This passage sounds like a typical evening newscast today! Notice the three things it says people will love in the end times: self, money, and pleasure. The love of self is Humanism; the belief that Man can accomplish anything on his own. It is the religion of the end times. The love of money is Materialism. When Humanism is your religion, your god will always be money. The love of pleasure is the third love that is mentioned. This is Hedonism. It is the lifestyle that is always produced by Humanism and Materialism. But God cannot be mocked. He therefore sees to it that when people chose Humanism, Materialism, and Hedonism, the payoff is always Nihilism; which is a fancy philosophical word for despair.

Need I emphasize that our world is wallowing in despair today? We live in a society that's plagued by abortion, sexual perversion, domestic violence, child molestation, blasphemy, pornography, alcoholism, drug abuse, and gambling. Like the days of the Judges in the Old Testament, people are doing what is right in their own eyes, and the result is that people are calling evil good and good evil.

The Third Category of End Time Signs is The Spiritual Signs. There are more signs in this category than any other. Many are evil in nature, but there are also some very positive ones. Concerning the negative signs, a typical passage is the following one found in 2 Timothy 4 where it says: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside into myths. Some of the negative spiritual signs that are specifically prophesied include the following: false christs, cultic groups, heresies, apostasy, skepticism, deception, occultism, and persecution. The one that Jesus mentioned most frequently was false christs and their cultic groups. And in fulfillment of that prophecy, we have experienced a literal explosion of cults since 1850, groups like the

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons. But, praise God, we are told that there will be some very positive spiritual signs in the end times.

And the most important one that is prophesied in many places is a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This outpouring began at the dawn of the 20th Century, and proved to be one of the greatest spiritual surprises, and blessings, of the century. You see, when the 20th Century began, the prevailing viewpoint among both Catholics and Protestants regarding the Holy Spirit was what was called Cessationism. This view held that the gifts of the Spirit ceased when the last Apostle died. In effect, it was a belief that the Holy Spirit had retired in the First Century.

But, the 20th Century had hardly gotten started when a Holy Spirit revival broke out at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas in 1901. Three years later, a similar Holy Spirit revival swept Wales and began to spread worldwide. Then, in 1906, the Spirit fell with great power on a humble black preacher in Los Angeles named William J. Seymour. And the Azusa Street Revival, as it came to be called, continued for four years and gave birth to the Pentecostal Movement.

The Bible prophesies two great outpourings of the Spirit and symbolically pictures them as the "early and latter rains," based on the two rainy seasons of Israel. The early rain occurred at Pentecost in the First Century when the Church was established. The latter rain was prophesied to occur after the Jewish people had been re-established in their homeland. And, accordingly, the latter rain began with the Pentecostal Movement, just as God began to regather the Jews to their homeland under the visionary leadership of Theodore Herzl.

But the rain did not become a downpour until after the re-establishment of the state of Israel in May of 1948, just as prophesied by Joel. First came the anointing of Billy Graham's ministry in 1949, followed by the Charismatic Movement of the 1960's. Today, most of Christianity, whether Pentecostal, or Charismatic, or Traditional, fully recognizes that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is alive and well in Spirit-led worship, the continuing validity of spiritual gifts, the reality of spiritual warfare, and the importance of a Spirit-filled life in winning that warfare. In addition to the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit, there are other positive spiritual prophecies being fulfilled today like the preaching of the Gospel worldwide, the revival of Davidic praise worship, and the development of Messianic Judaism. Another remarkable positive sign is the understanding of Bible prophecy. You see folks, the Hebrew prophets often did not understand the end time prophecies that the Lord gave to them. A good example can be found in Daniel 12 where the prophet complains to the Lord that he does not understand the prophecies that have been entrusted to him. The Lord's response was, "Don't worry about it. Just write the prophecies. They have been sealed up until the end times." In other words, the Bible teaches that many of the end time prophecies will not be understood until the time comes for them to be fulfilled. And that is exactly what has been happening in the past 100 years. Historical developments and scientific inventions are now making it possible for us to understand end time prophecies that have never been understood before.

Take Israel for example. All of the end time prophecy revolves around the nation of Israel. But how could those prophecies be understood as long as Israel did not exist and there was no prospect that the nation would ever exist again? This is the reason that Hal Lindsey's book, "The Late Great Planet Earth" became such a phenomenal bestseller in the 1970's. For the first time it explained the events prophesied in the book of Revelation in natural terms that people could easily understand.

The Fourth Category of End Time Signs is The Signs of World Politics. Jesus mentioned that category in Matthew 24 when He said: "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. For nations will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." I taught international politics for 20 years before I entered the ministry full time, so this is an area that is particularly fascinating to me. The Bible prophesies a very specific end time configuration of world politics. The nation of Israel is pictured as being re-established in its homeland, surrounded by hostile Arab neighbors intent on its destruction. And this, of course has been the situation in the Middle East since the Israeli Declaration of Independence in May of 1948. Daniel prophesied that the Roman Empire would be revived, something many men like Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Hitler tried to do through force. But the prophecy had to await God's timing for its fulfillment, and that came after World War II, with the formation of the European Common Market that has since morphed into the superpower called the European Union. The Bible pictures a great power located in the land of Magog in the "remote parts of the north." This nation will menace Israel in the end times and will ultimately lead an invasion of Israel together with specified allies, all of which are modern day Muslim states. Russia with all its Muslim republics and its Muslim allies fits this description precisely. All the nations of the world are prophesied to come together against Israel in the end times over the issue of the control of Jerusalem, a prophecy being fulfilled today.

The magnitude of warfare in the 20th Century is another fulfillment of end time prophecy related to world politics. The 20th Century was one of unparalleled war. Like birth pangs, the frequency and intensity of war increased exponentially. It is now estimated that more people died in wars during the 20th Century than in all the previous wars throughout all of recorded human history.

The Fifth Category of Signs is The Signs of Technology. Jesus mentioned this sign in Luke 21 when He said: "Men will faint from fear over the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." The development of nuclear weapons seems to be foreshadowed by this prophecy in Luke 21 that speaks of people "fainting from fear" due to the "powers of the heavens being shaken." The incredible carnage of the Seal and Trumpet Judgments portrayed in chapters 6 and 8 in the book of Revelation indicates that the Antichrist will conquer the world through the use of nuclear weapons. We are told that one-third of the earth will be burned, and that one-half of humanity will be killed.

Further evidence that this is a nuclear holocaust is found in Revelation 16 where we are told that at the end of the Tribulation the survivors will be covered with sores that will not heal, indicating exposure to radiation. As I pointed out earlier, there are many end time prophecies that simply cannot be understood apart from modern technological developments.

Consider the prophecy in Revelation 11 about the two witnesses who will call the world to repentance during the first half of the Tribulation. When they are killed by the Antichrist, we are told that their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days, and the whole world will look upon them. How could anyone understand such a prophecy before the development of satellite television in the 1960's? Likewise, how could the Antichrist control all buying and selling worldwide without the aid of computer technology? Or how could the False Prophet create the illusion of giving life to a statue without the technology of holograms, virtual reality, and robotics? And how could an army of 200 million come out of the Far East before the population explosion that was produced by modern medical technology? How could the Gospel be proclaimed to all the world before the invention of motion pictures, radio, television, and the Internet? The list goes on and on.

The Sixth Category of Signs is The Signs of Israel. An example of such signs can be found in Zechariah 12:3 where it says: "And it shall come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; and all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it."

The signs that relate to Israel are the most important of all because the Jews are God's prophetic time clock. What I mean by this is that the Scriptures will often tie a prophesied future event with something that will happen to the Jews. We are told to watch the Jews, and when the prophesied event concerning them occurs, we can be sure that the other prophesied event will also occur.

An example can be found in Luke 21:24 where Jesus prophesied that the Jews would be dispersed from Jerusalem and be led captive among all the nations. But, then He added that one day they would return to re-occupy Jerusalem, and when that happens, the end time events will occur that will lead to His return. There are many, many prophecies concerning the Jews in the end times, many of which began to be fulfilled in the 20th Century, but there are four key ones. The first is their worldwide regathering in unbelief which you can read about in Isaiah 11.

In 1900 there were only 40,000 Jews in Palestine. By the end of World War II their number had risen to 600,000. Today, there are more than six and a half million who have come from all over the world. Folks, that means there are now more Jews in Israel than were killed in the Holocaust. The prophet Jeremiah says twice that when history is completed, the Jewish people will look back and conclude that their worldwide regathering was a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian captivity! And, my friends, that means we are truly living in momentous times!

The second key prophecy concerning the Jews is a natural consequence of their regathering. It is the re-establishment of their state which occurred on May 14, 1948. The third key prophecy is the re-occupation of Jerusalem which occurred on June 7, 1967 during the miraculous Six Day War. The fourth key prophecy is the one whose fulfillment we are witnessing today, the re-focusing of world politics upon the nation of Israel. All the nations of the world, including the United States, are coming against Israel over the issue of the control of the nation's capital, the City of Jerusalem. The Vatican wants the city put under its control. The United Nations wants it to be internationalized. The European Union is determined to divide it between the Arabs and the Jews. And the Arabs want all of it. Israel says they will never surrender any of it.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Okay, I have summarized for you six different categories of signs, each category containing many prophecies concerning the end times, all of which are being fulfilled before our very eyes. Let me conclude now by specifically listing 50 of those prophecies:

- 1) Increasing instability of nature.
- 2) Increasing lawlessness and violence.
- 3) Increasing immorality.
- 4) Increasing materialism.
- 5) Increasing Hedonism.
- 6) Increasing influence of Humanism.
- 7) Depraved entertainment.
- 8) Calling evil good and good evil.
- 9) Increasing use of drugs.

- 10) Increasing blasphemy.
 - 11) Increasing paganism.
 - 12) Increasing despair.
 - 13) Signs in the heavens.
 - 14) Increasing knowledge.
 - 15) Increasing travel.
 - 16) The explosion of cults.
 - 17) The proliferation of false christs.
 - 18) Increasing apostasy in the Church.
 - 19) Increasing attacks on Jesus.
 - 20) Increasing attacks on the Bible.
 - 21) Increasing persecution of Christians.
 - 22) Increasing occultism.
 - 23) Wars and rumors of wars.
 - 24) Weapons of mass destruction.
 - 25) Increasing famine.
 - 26) Increasing pestilence.
 - 27) Computer technology.
 - 28) Television.
 - 29) Satellite technology.
 - 30) Virtual reality.
 - 31) Unification of Europe.
 - 32) Far Eastern military powers.
 - 33) Movement toward world government.
 - 34) Regathering of the Jews.
 - 35) Re-establishment of Israel.
 - 36) Reclamation of the land of Israel from desolation to abundance.
 - 37) Revival of Biblical Hebrew.
 - 38) Re-occupation of Jerusalem.
 - 39) Resurgence of the Israeli military.
 - 40) Re-focusing of world politics on Israel.
 - 41) Russian threat to Israel.
 - 42) Arab threat to Israel.
 - 43) Denial of the Second Coming.
 - 44) Denial of creation by God.
 - 45) Outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - 46) Translation of the Bible into many languages.
 - 47) Preaching of the Gospel worldwide.
 - 48) The revival of Messianic Judaism.
 - 49) The revival of Davidic praise worship.
- And number 50) The understanding of Bible prophecy.

Folks, this list could be greatly expanded, but the 50 examples I've just given you should be sufficient to show that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. The Bible clearly teaches that God never pours out His wrath without warning for He is a just and loving God who does not wish that any should perish. That's why He has provided so many signs to alert us to the fact that we are living on the threshold of the Tribulation.

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: Believe it or not, after listing all those signs of the times, I still have not mentioned the most important sign of all. Collectively, the Signs of Israel are the most important category. But there is one sign that does not fit into any category because it overreaches all the categories, and it is the most important sign of all. What I have in mind is the Sign of Convergence; the fact that all the signs are converging for the first time ever.

Folks, the bottom line message of all these signs is that we are living on borrowed time. And the crucial question for every human being is Are you ready? Are you ready for the return of Jesus? Will He come as your Blessed Hope or your Holy Terror? It will be one or the other, for God is determined to deal with sin, and He does so with either grace or wrath. And if you have put your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you are under God's grace. Your sins have been forgiven and forgotten, and you can look forward with confidence to that glorious day when Jesus will appear in the heavens. But if you have never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are under the wrath of God, and you have nothing to look forward to except the terror of His wrath.

The choice is yours. I personally cannot understand why anyone would turn their back on God's free gift of grace through faith in His Son. I have placed my faith in Jesus, and I therefore am able to look forward to His soon return with great anticipation and expectation. Accordingly, all that is within me cries out, "Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly Lord Jesus!"

Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope you will be back with us next week, the Lord willing. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program