

Christ in Prophecy

Signs 8: Jesus is Returning Soon, Part 2

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Are you aware of the fact that we are living in the season of the Lord's return? How do I know that? Because the Bible gives us signs to watch for, and we are being bombarded by those signs today as never before. Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Last week I presented the first in a series of programs that I have titled, "Jesus is Returning Soon!" In that program I focused on proving from the Scriptures the fact that although we cannot know the date of the Lord's return, we can know the season.

Here is one of the most important Scripture passages I used to prove that point:

I want to prove to you with Scripture that we can know the season of the Lord's return. Let's begin with the letters that Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, and let's start with 1 Thessalonians 5:1, and I want to show you proof positive that we can know the season of the Lord's return. The passage reads as follows: "Now as to the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night." There's that statement I talked about at the beginning. He's coming "like a thief in the night!" Verse 3 says it will occur while people are saying, "Peace and safety!" At that time, Paul says, "Destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

Now, the fundamental point I'm leading up to is found in verse 4. Underline it in your Bible. Don't ever forget it. This is the crucial verse. The verse proves beyond a doubt that you and I can know the season of the Lord's return. The verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:4, says "But you brethren, believers, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are 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"

Now, what is that saying? Paul is saying Jesus is coming like a thief in the night. But not for the brethren, not for Christians. He's coming like a thief in the night for the world. He's coming like a thief in the night for pagans. He's coming like a thief in the night for those professing Christians who do not have any personal relationship with Him, and who have never really been born again, and who refuse to believe the Word of God and study the Word of God.

But He's saying, "Let me tell you, if you have been born again, if you're truly a child of God, if you read the Word and believe the Word, there is no reason in the world why Jesus should

come as a thief in the night.” Look again at verse 4 it says, “But you brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do.”

What do you think he means when he says, “We are sons of light and not of darkness”? I think what He’s referring to is the fact that if you are truly a born again child of God, you have the Holy Spirit residing inside of you. The Holy Spirit is the one who wrote the Bible. And if you will lean on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will illuminate your mind and illuminate your heart and open your eyes to understand the mysteries of God’s Word, including the season of the Lord’s return. And so it is that the Bible says point blank, Jesus is not coming as a “thief in the night” for those who know Him and those who love Him.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: After using several additional scriptures to prove we can know the season of the Lord’s return, I began presenting the biblical signs of the times that we are told to watch for.

I explained that there are very many of these signs, many more than the signs of the First Coming of Jesus. And I explained that’s because Jesus is returning to pour out the wrath of God on those who have rejected His love, grace and mercy. And since God does not wish that any should perish, He is providing us with an abundance of signs to indicate the season of His Son’s return.

I have divided those signs into six categories. Here is how I introduced the first category:

What are the signs of the Lord’s soon return? Let me present them to you in categories. First are the signs of nature. And let me just tell you right up front, right up front, that the signs of nature are the least respected signs in all the various categories of signs. When you mention signs of nature, people say, “What do you mean by that?” I respond by saying, “What I’m talking about is earthquakes, and volcanos, and famines, and pestilence, and mysterious things in the heavens,” and they start laughing. They start laughing! Usually for one or two reasons.

They either first of all say, “Well those things have always been with us. There have always been famines, and always earthquakes, and always tornadoes, so what else is new, Dave, come on, get serious.” Or, they just laugh. They laugh at you because they think you’re a stupid idiot to believe that God would speak through a sign of nature. They put you on the level of some ignorant and superstitious native in some primitive land who thinks that because his volcano goes off his god is mad at him.

Well, folks, I’ve got news for you. The signs of nature are for real. They are for real! The Bible teaches from beginning to end that God has always spoken through nature and that He continues to do so today. God put a special light in the heavens when Jesus was born. On the day that He was crucified, there was special three hours of darkness and an earthquake. And the Word says that when Jesus returns, there’s going to be the greatest earthquake in all of history, that every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain will be lowered, and the whole earth will be flattened like a plain, and every island will be moved, and the city of Jerusalem will be lifted up to be the highest point on the face of the earth.

The Bible clearly teaches that God speaks through signs of nature. I could give many examples of biblical prophets pointing to natural calamities and explaining that they were remedial judgments sent by God to call people to repentance.

This week, I want to continue presenting the categories of signs God has given us to watch for. I'm going to show you three more categories: the signs of society, the spiritual signs and the signs of technology.

Let's begin with the signs of society. The second category of signs pertain to the nature of society. Again, in Matthew 24, Jesus said in verse 37 that "the coming of the Son of Man will be just like it was in the days of Noah." He then begins to describe the days of Noah. What the Lord is saying here is, "I'm going to come back in a time when society is as evil as it was in the days of Noah." In other words, He's declaring that society worldwide will go full circle and return to being as deranged, and debased as it was in the days of Noah.

Go back to Genesis chapter 6 and read what it says about the days of Noah. You will be surprised to learn it doesn't give much detail about those days. But what it says is very bad. It says first of all that "men's minds were focused upon evil," and because of that, there were two major manifestations: immorality and violence.

If you want to know what Noah's society was like in detail you have to turn to the New Testament. You turn to Romans chapter 1, and start reading there with verse 18. And the rest of the chapter tells in detail how horrible Noah's society really was. What Paul does here, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is describe what kind of society God pours out His wrath against; and when he describes it, he has to be describing Noah's society because Noah's society is the classic example in all of history of the pouring out of God's wrath.

It was a society in which it says in verse 18, "men suppressed the truth in unrighteousness," even as we are doing so here in the United States by refusing to allow our children in the public schools to be taught the true origin of the universe, and the true origin of the human species. It goes on to talk about how it was a society in which they worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. They were Humanists. They worshiped Man rather than God.

We're the same, in the same way this country is today, we're a Humanist society. We are worshiping Man rather than God. We believe that Man can accomplish anything he pleases, and we therefore do not believe we need God.

The passage in Romans chapter 1 goes on to talk about how the people were futile in their speculations and imaginations, how they professed to be wise but were, in reality, fools. My friends, we are a nation just like that. We're a nation that worships at the altar of education, for example whatever the problem is, we think it can be solved by education. If it's AIDS, just teach the kids how to have safe sex, when what they need to learn is to learn the definition of moral sex.

In verse 24 it says that the society disintegrated to the point that God just stepped back and let evil multiply. The first evidence of that in America was the sexual revolution, which occurred in this country in the 1960's. And when we did not repent, God stepped back further, and lowered the hedge around the nation a second time, allowing sin to multiply, and the second manifestation mentioned in verse 26 was a plague of homosexuality. It was at that point that our society began to fall apart at the seams.

My friends, if you will turn over to 2 Timothy chapter 3, you will find a parallel passage to Romans chapter 1. In Romans 1 Paul speaks as a historian. In 2 Timothy chapter 3 he speaks as a prophet, and he uses almost exactly the same language to confirm what Jesus has already told us, namely, that the society of the end times is going to be like it was in the days of Noah. Look at what it says there in 2 Timothy 3, he writes, "Realize this that in the last days difficult, or perilous times will come." Paul continues and prophesies that people will love three things: self, money and pleasure. Those three go hand in hand. If belief in Man is the religion, money will always be your god, and your life style will always be the pursuit of pleasure. When you have Humanism, you will have Materialism, and that will produce Hedonism.

But, there is a fourth element in this equation, and that is the payoff, because God cannot be mocked. The payoff is what philosophers called Nihilism which is just a sixty-four dollar fancy philosophical word for despair. Accordingly, look at the despair that is mentioned in this passage in 2 Timothy 3, where he writes, "Men will be 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." Do I need to say anything to convince you that we have arrived? Not only has our society reached this despicable condition, but the whole world has, and one of the reasons is because of the impact that we, the United States of America, have upon the whole world.

Have you ever stopped to think about that? Have you ever stopped to think about the fact that we have been the moral polluter of planet earth? The whole earth has been impacted by our movies and our television programs. Anywhere you go in the world, if you turn on the TV the first thing you're going to see are the most immoral and the most violent American television programs and movies.

And so it is that society is back to the way it was in Noah's time. The signs of society point to the soon return of Jesus. We live in an age where people have forgotten how to blush. We live in an age where people call evil good and good evil.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: The third category of end time signs is what I call spiritual signs. Regarding these spiritual signs, let me begin by emphasizing that there are a great variety of them. There are negative ones and positive ones, and let me warn you, the negative ones are extremely negative.

For example, in Matthew 24 Jesus three times, three times emphasizes that one of the signs of the end times will be false Christs, false prophets and their cultic groups. It's the first sign He mentions in verse 5. He says, "Many will come in my name and they will say, 'I am the Christ' and will mislead many." In verse 11 He mentions it again when He cautions that "many false prophets will arise and will mislead many."

And then again in verse 24 He warns about "false Christs and false prophets" who will show "great signs and wonders." Three times He warns us about cults. That's the reason that all prophetic ministries are also cult watching ministries. And so it is that we are living in the age of the epidemic of the cults. It began in the mid-19th century, with the formation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormon Church, which today is the largest cult in the world. It is a church that teaches a false Jesus.

And folks, that's the fundamental, bottom line, characteristic of all cults, they preach a false Jesus. The Mormons teach that Jesus is the brother of Lucifer, one of 2,000 gods created by the super god, whom they identify as the exalted man Adam. Talk about something straight from the pit of Hell! The Jehovah Witnesses then came along later in the 19th century teaching that Jesus was the archangel Michael.

Since the 20th Century we have had an explosion of cults. Consider all the spiritist cults that teach things like Jesus is a medium of the sixth sphere of the astral projection, whatever that gobbledygook means.

On and on it goes, with some cult leaders, like Reverend Moon, claiming to be the Messiah. The cults are all around us, and they're a sign that Jesus is coming soon.

The second negative spiritual sign is Satanism. The Bible tells us that in the end times there is going to be a tremendous outbreak of Satanism. In 1 Timothy chapter 4 in verse 1 Paul writes these words, he says, "The Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

Folks, Satan has gone public. He wants to take as many people to Hell with him as he possibly can. I first became aware of this trend back in the Sixties when the movie, "Rosemary's Baby," was released. It was about a woman abducted by a witch coven and impregnated by Satan. It was a horrible movie. But that was just the beginning. Its success fueled copycats like "Exorcist I and II" and "Omen I and II". The trend has intensified in recent years to the point that our movies and television programs today are obsessed with satanic themes like vampires. The success of these films simply reflects the fact that the American people have become obsessed with the occult. Americans are caught up in astrology and numerology. Just look at the checkout stands at your major super markets and you will see the horoscope books and the tabloids that traffic in the occult.

The number one best-selling publications in America today are the filthy tabloids, like "The Star" and "The National Enquirer" which are saturated from beginning to end with ESP, numerology, astrology, and other forms of New Age mumbo-jumbo, all of which is Satanism.

The third negative spiritual sign is apostasy. This is a sign that is mentioned repeatedly in the Scriptures. Paul refers to it in 2 Thessalonians 2 where he says, "That the Antichrist will not be revealed until the great apostasy takes place." Jesus refers to it in Matthew 24 where He says that "men's love will grow cold." Paul refers to it again in 2 Timothy 3 where he says that, "In the end times the reason society is going to be so terrible is because men will hold to the form of religion but they will deny its power."

Paul refers to the apostasy of the professing church again in 2 Timothy chapter 4. He says that we need to stress the Word of God in the end times because he says, "The time will come when people 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." All kinds of myths. All kinds of heresies. All kinds of gross apostasy.

In the Church at large today, you can find Christian spokesmen denying all the fundamental truths of the Bible, denying the words of Jesus, denying the virgin birth, denying the Resurrection, denying the Second Coming. Even arguing that there are many roads to God.

Most of our seminaries spend their time disparaging the Bible, arguing that it is Man's search for God rather than God's revelation to Man. And our mainline Protestant denominations seem intent on spiritualizing everything in the Bible.

You can even find heresies at the conservative end of the spectrum among fundamentalist groups that argue the Holy Spirit retired in the First Century. At the opposite extreme are those who emphasize the Holy Spirit to the point of overshadowing the Savior, Jesus Christ. And then there are the fads, the winds of doctrine things like the Discipling Movement, the prosperity doctrine, and the power of positive thinking. There is no area of Christianity that is immune to the heresy, and apostasy that is sweeping through the Church today and it's all a sign of the soon return of Jesus.

I told you the negative signs are very negative, but oh, thank God for the positive ones! The positive spiritual signs are absolutely magnificent. One of them is found in Matthew 24 where Jesus says, "The Gospel will be preached to the whole world and then the end will come."

Folks, that began in the 20th Century. In the past 100 years, through the use of modern technology, we have preached the Gospel to the whole world. Through the use of satellite television; through the use of computers translating the Bible into many, many different languages; through the use of radio and short wave radio; through the use of motion pictures and television and on and on it goes.

Another positive spiritual sign is the understanding of Bible prophecy. I don't know if you've ever noticed this, but a lot of times when God would give prophecies to Old Testament prophets, particularly prophecies about the end times, they would react by saying, "Lord, I don't understand this prophecy." The Lord would usually respond by saying, "Cool it, it's not for you to understand. It will be understood when the time comes for it to be fulfilled."

Take, for example, Daniel 12. In this chapter you'll find Daniel complaining twice to the Lord that he does not understand the end time prophecies given to him. The Lord tells him to forget about it because, as the Lord puts it, "These words are concealed and sealed up until the end time." So, the fresh understanding of end time prophecy which has come in the last 50 years through books like "The Late Great Planet Earth" is a sign of the times.

A lot of the understanding has come through the development of world events. For example, end time prophecy focuses on the nation of Israel. Well, before 1948 it was difficult to understand those prophecies since Israel did not exist and had little prospect of ever existing again. Or consider the prophecy in Revelation 9 that an army of 200 million will march across Asia to Israel in the end times. When that prophecy was written, there were not even 200 million people on planet earth. Today, one nation, China, can send such an army.

Developments in modern technology have also helped us to better understand Bible prophecy. You see, the Bible has many prophecies that depend for their fulfillment upon modern inventions such as computers, lasers, robotics, nuclear power. For example, the Bible says that in the end times during the first 3½ years of the Tribulation, there will be two great witnesses of God in Jerusalem who will preach the Gospel and perform mighty miracles.

In Revelation 11 it says the Antichrist will kill both of these men, and their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days. It further states that the whole world will look upon those bodies and will witness their sudden resurrection and rapture to Heaven.

Now, how can the whole world look upon two bodies lying in the streets of Jerusalem? Before the 1960's nobody could figure that out. Now, it's very simple. We don't even have to stop and think about it. All you have to do is just point a television camera at them, zap the signal up to a satellite, and the whole world is able to watch. It's amazing how so much of end time prophecy is being understood for the very first time.

In 1970 Hal Lindsey's book, "The Late Great Planet Earth" became the number one best-selling book in the world and remained the best seller for ten consecutive years, as certified by "The New York Times." Was that because he was given some sort of special illumination? Well, yes, I'm sure the Holy Spirit illuminated his heart, his mind, and his eyes and helped him to understand. But a lot of his insights were just based upon the development of technology and the development of world events. These enabled him to explain things that were never explainable before.

So, the positive spiritual signs are the preaching of the Gospel all over the world and the understanding of Bible prophecy. And there's a third one, and oh, what a glorious one it is! I wish I could spend the rest of our time just talking about this third wonderful spiritual sign. It is the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit. You see, the Bible prophesies that in the end times there is going to be a second pouring out of God's Holy Spirit. Read Joel chapter 2. It talks about the "early rain" and the "latter rain." The early rain was at Pentecost. That's why Peter quoted Joel 2 in his Pentecost sermon.

But folks, if you go back to Joel chapter 2 and read the passage carefully, you will see that Pentecost was a partial fulfillment of the prophecy because it talks about a second rain, a second pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The passage says that this second outpouring of the Spirit will occur after the reestablishment of the nation of Israel in the end times. We have been witnessing and experiencing that end time pouring out of the Spirit ever since 1948 when the Jews were re-established in the land of Israel.

The Holy Spirit is being poured out today in an unprecedented way since the First Century. Because Satan is attacking individual Christians and churches as never before, we need a special anointing of the power of the Holy Spirit to stand against Satan. So, God's Holy Spirit is being poured out. And that is a sign of the soon return of Jesus.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so we have the signs of nature, the signs of society, and the spiritual signs. There's also the signs of technology. Now I've already covered these or mentioned them to some extent, so I won't spend a lot of time on them.

Regarding technology, I want to remind you that Jesus said all the end time signs would be like birth pains, meaning they would increase in frequency and intensity the closer we get to the time of His return.

In the field of technology, this is reflected in what is called the Exponential Curve. All of life, and especially technology, began to experience an exponential growth curve in the 20th Century. Now an exponential curve occurs when the growth of something becomes so rapid that a graph of its growth shows a line going straight up, as in this graph of our nation's national debt.

A biblical example of what I'm talking about is to be found in Daniel chapter 12 where it says there's going to be an explosion of knowledge and an increase in the rapidity of transportation in the end times. These two things began to happen in the 20th Century. Both knowledge and transportation have increased exponentially over the past 100 years.

Today, the exponential curve is everywhere around us. Encyclopedias are no longer published because they are out of date the moment they come off the press. Three-fourths of all the scientists who have ever lived are alive right now. Two-thirds of all the medicines that have ever been developed have been developed since the end of World War II. We entered the 20th Century still relying on horse as our basic mode of transportation. Today, we have autos, and bullet trains, and planes, and rocket ships.

The Bible says that in the end times when the Antichrist sets up the world kingdom, he is going to keep tabs on everybody. Everyone will have the mark of the beast in order to buy and sell. How can that be? How can it be accomplished apart from lasers and computers? The Bible says that the false prophet will make an image of the Antichrist, and people will worship the image because it will appear to be alive. How can that be apart from robotics or holograms? Modern technology and the inventions it has produced are a sign of the soon return of Jesus.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Next week, the Lord willing, we will take a look at what most Bible prophecy experts call the cornerstone end time prophecies namely, those regarding the nation of Israel.

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