
CHAPTER 10

SIGNS OF THE END TIMES

Eschatology refers to the study of the final events that will mark the end of the world and usher in God's eternal kingdom. Definite signs marking the last lap of history will surely precede such a significant event, the consummation. Christian eschatology concerns the end of all creation: an end in which the whole course of human history will reach its God-given conclusion. It also speaks of the destiny of all human persons, their bodily as well as spiritual reality.

This is a branch of theology that deals with future events, and the Bible presents them in obscure or strange symbols and figures, hence it has become easy target for much speculation and misinterpretation. People have unsuccessfully tried to predict the time of the Second Coming. Yet as human inquiry seems to suggest, every one would want to know. So when do you personally think Christ will return? The Bible gives us some signs, which are to be pointers but never tell us the span of the end times. As seen from the dispensations, the Church Age is all part of the end times; therefore, it is a long period. The crucial matter is still the quest to know the signs of His returning.

Every generation of Christians has expected the return of Christ in their lifetime. This is partly due to the fact that no absolute solution has been discovered by any generation for this human problem. As each generation is overwhelmed with poverty, ignorance, disease, political instability, natural disasters, wars and rumors of war and terrorism, the tendency is an appeal to imminent eschatology as the only source of hope.

Incidentally, founders of religious sects wrongly use the imminence of His coming to hold their followers in bondage and manipulate or control them. It must be emphasized in the light of Matt. 24:36 that any attempts to predict the exact date of the *parousia* is

unscriptural and misleading. Notwithstanding, since it biblical to know and discern the times, we need to understand conditions of the end times (2 Tim. 3:1ff). Hitherto, it is to discern the frequency and intensity as time rolls over, for these signs have been with the early church. You discern by (1) spiritual insight and (2) knowing and seeing the pointers.

May I propose for now that since the prophets did not see the Church, most of the signs here would be indicators having a bearing only on entire parousia but especially the 'Appearing'. Besides, Jesus gave us the clue that all these signs together form the pointer.

From the accounts of Luke we read, *"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."* Then He spoke to them a parable: *"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near."* (Luke 21:28-31)

A list of some of the identifiable signs is:

1. Progress in human endeavors and increase in travel
Dan. 12:4; Nah. 2:3, 4; 1Thess. 5:1-3
2. The Explosion of knowledge
Dan. 12:4
3. Increase in false prophets and deception
Matt. 24:4, 5, 11
4. Wars and rumors of wars
Dan. 11; Matt. 24:6, 7
5. Famine and mass hunger
Matt. 24:7
6. Earthquakes and nature's upheavals
Matt. 24:7
7. Diseases, Pestilence and Epidemics
Matt. 24:7
8. Breakdown of family unit
2 Tim. 3:1-4
9. High increase in crime and corruption
Matt. 24:12

10. People loving pleasure more than God
2 Tim. 3:4
11. Signs of space activities
Luke 21:25
12. Distress among the nations with no solution
Luke 21:25
13. Men's hearts failing for fear
Luke 21:26
14. Sign of Gog and Magog (Russia's) involvement in the Middle East
Ezek. 38; 39
15. The Rise of a Kind of Communist power to prepare forces for future battle
Ezek. 38; 39; Dan. 11; Rev. 16:12
16. The Restoration of the Holy Land
Ezek. 36:33-35
17. Signs of the European Common Market preparing the launching pad for the Anti-Christ
Dan. 9:26
18. Return of Jews back to their ancient homeland
Amos 9:14, 15
19. Rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948
Ezek 37
20. Rebuilding of Jerusalem
Jer. 31:38-40
21. Perilous and evil times due to self-centeredness, violence, Satanism, sexual immorality and moral degeneracy, gay, thefts, cyber crimes and rebellion
2 Tim. 3:1-7; Rev. 9:20, 21
22. Capital and labor conflict
James 5:1-4
23. False teachers
2 Pet. 2:1, 2
24. Attack on Bible prophecy
2 Pet. 3:3, 4

25. All Nations hear the gospel
Matt. 24:14; Rev. 5:9, 10
26. Great apostasy
2Thess. 2:1-3
27. Rise of cults
1 Tim. 4:1-2
28. Days of Noah, with brisk life amidst wickedness Matt.
24: 37-39; Luke 17:26, 27
29. Lawlessness among youth
2Tim. 3:2
30. Automobile sign
Nah. 2:3, 4
31. Christians know He is surely coming, but not the date
Matt. 24:36; Heb. 10:25
32. Both Revival and Lukewarmness in the Church Acts
2:17-21; Rev 3:14f

Christians will know He is coming not because He tells us the time but again like it happened in 70 A. D. the signs are true pointers especially to that generation who witness all these signs. From Matt. 24:32-33 we read again, *"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 all these things, know that it is near- at the doors!"*

Zeroing on the Key Pointers

When we scale the above down we sum up with some key pointers:

1. Knowledge intensification and human progress
Dan. 12:4; 1Thess. 5:1-3
2. Deception, rise of cults and Great apostasy
Matt. 24:5; 1Tim. 4:1-4; 2Thess. 2:1-3
3. Perilous and evil times due to self-centeredness, violence, Satanism, sexual immorality and moral degeneracy, gay, thefts, cyber crimes and rebellion
2 Tim. 3:1-7; Rev. 9:20, 21
4. Capital and labor conflict
James 5:1-4
5. False prophets and teachers
Matt. 24:11; 2 Pet. 2:1, 2

6. Attack on Bible prophecy
2 Pet. 3:3, 4
7. All Nations hear the gospel
Matt. 24:14; Rev. 5:9, 10
8. As in the Days of Noah, brisk normal life in evil days
Matt. 24: 37-39; Luke 17:26, 27
9. Unprecedented quakes, (tsunamis), pestilence, wars, famine, and upheavals in nature (Global warming, etc) leading to distress Matt. 24: 6-13; Luke 21:25-27; Acts 2:19, 20
10. Both Revival and Lukewarmness in the Church
Acts 2:17-21; Rev. 3:14f
11. The nation of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple sign as times of Gentiles run out
Jer. 31:38-40; Dan. 9:24-27; 11:1ff; Luke 21:24

THE FUTILITY OF HUMAN REASONING

It is sometimes interesting to observe how humans reason. Before the close of year 2000, speculations were all over the places that a misguided rock was going to fall on planet earth to destroy one-third of the human populace by 31 December. So people ran to churches to hide away saying they would be spared in Church houses.

But I remember similar news in 1966 when I was in secondary school. The news was that a defected huge meteor was going to hit the earth and possibly change its axis of rotation. This was only a few weeks after a total eclipse of the moon had occurred. We left the classrooms with our teachers to observe what the outcome would bring. Anyway, nothing happened and the world continued.

Again nothing happened in 2000, and people consciously or unconsciously are thinking if Jesus did not come in 2000, then at least His coming is very far. They say it is only every 2000 years that something happens on planet earth. Well I do not know how they figure dates and monitor all events; but they say from Adam to the flood was 2000 years and from there to Jesus' birth was 2000 years so 2000 A.D. must be His Coming. Then 1000 years for the millennium to make a perfect 7000 years of mother earth before it is destroyed with fire.

The question is has God said this in Scripture? No, sir/madam! Unfortunately, this is the mindset of even some good meaning Christians, thinking that the Rapture then is now a distant event, at least a 1000 years from 2000 A. D. I would rather counsel a steadfast clinging to the biblical teaching of the imminence of His Coming that promotes sober living, watchful praying, and love towards diligent Christian duty (1Pet. 4:7-19).

Present-day Visible Pointers to discern the Imminence of His Coming

We live in exciting times in which the following are key pointers to buttress the imminence of His Coming in our time:

1. Increase in knowledge giving rise to a global village system of the world with all the inventions and the high information technology of the computer age (Dan. 12:3, 4). Many end time prophecies began at the turn of the 20th century. Now, traveling is easy and fast and weapons of mass destruction are in man's hands. With information intensification; knowledge is power!
2. Jewish resettlement in the Promised Land in the 1900s long after their dispersion in 70 A. D. and all other related issues as a result (Ezek. 36 - 39). Many prophets had predicted the discipline of the Lord on rebellious Israel. They also indicated their return to the Promised Land (Is. 11:11, 12; 39:6; 43:5, 6; 44:28; 45:4; Jer. 23:3; 25:11; Ezek. 36:8, 24). We must notice that Moses additionally had predicted only two great dispersions for the Jewish nation (Deut. 28:46-58; 64-68). It is generally believed that the first was to Babylon, while the latter was the dispersion in 70 A. D. to all parts of the world. Therefore, having now resettled in Jerusalem and regaining step by step all the Promised Land, there would possibly not be any more dispersion. Presently, the only unfulfilled Jewish prophecy could be the rebuilding and restoration of the Temple worship.
3. The anticipated Revival of Ancient Roman Empire even as the European community coming together would set the stage for the Anti-Christ to be revealed in his time. The Euro currency, the

new immigration laws in Europe and other allied global socio-economic and political developments are positive indicators. We should also not forget that, the Catholic Church and her sister ecumenical groups for centuries have been the state Churches in most of these nations. These Churches control most of tourist sites in Palestine. Somehow then, presently, it would not be difficult to produce the Anti-Christ, a religious-political leader from within Europe and the false prophet from amongst the Jews in their homeland, who will be revealed to work together after the Rapture.

4. Unprecedented upheavals in nature and intensity in earthquakes, tsunamis, bush fires, tornados, climate change, diseases, political power shifts and the like since the 21st Century are visible signs of the end of the age.

THE DAYS JUST BEFORE HIS COMING

Certain clues are given in Scripture to help our understanding on how to redeem the times, in these end times.

As in the Days of Noah and Lot (Matt. 24:37-42; Luke 17:26 – 36)

What is the predominant nature of today's activities? The answer is given in comparison to the days of Noah and Lot. From Luke 17:26-30 we read, *"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."*

Why talk about those days? They were days preceding the wrath and judgment of God of that time. They were days of godlessness and wickedness. People were going about normal daily life activities on mass scale, just as we live in today's global village of commerce but without standards of moral conduct. Those days of population explosion but full of immorality, drinking, inordinate marriages, violence, corruption, evil, wickedness, sodomy and all kinds of

grievous sins (Gen. 6:1-13; 18:20; 19:1-14) compare with ours, the days just preceding the Rapture and the coming wrath of God.

Tribulation resemblance as pointer to the days just before the Rapture

Besides these, the characteristics of people in the end-time generation just before the Rapture would bear resemblance to lifestyle in the period of the Tribulation. “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not *worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts*” (Rev 9: 20, 21).

According to scripture, this will be the general lifestyle of the unregenerate people in the last days. Paul says, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: *For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” 2 Tim 3:1-7 (NKJ).

The world is currently living in perilous times and facing an insurgence in these five sinful habits listed in Rev. 9:20, 21 above:

1. **Idol Worship** – Marked by false-christs, Satanism, sorceries, cults, idolatry and what have you.
2. **Murders** – Violence, Terrorism, suicide attacks, serial killings, cold blood murders, wickedness, cyber crime, and so on.
3. **Sorceries** – Witchcraft, hard drugs, mediums, occultism, etc.
4. **Sexual immorality** – Rape, incest, homosexuality (lesbianism), fornication, open sex, pseudo marriages (including defiling of marriage beds), hard pornography and the like.
5. **Thefts** – Highway robbers, fraud, high level thievery, armed burglary, stealing, cyber crime, etc.

THE RIGHT BIBLICAL MINDSET TOWARDS SIGNS

The simplest way is to avoid looking for signs [whether miraculous signs or signs of His Coming] but to keep faith in Jesus being continually filled and led by His unerring Spirit to do God's Will.

The parable of the Ten Virgins (See Matthew 25:1-13).

The parable has to do with two groups of people concerning the eschatological Kingdom of God - Christians and non-Christians or Christians and those who used to profess the Christian faith but have fallen into apostasy. We note here that the true Christians, the wise, are the ones who after having believed in the Lord Jesus, continued in the principles of the faith and thus having enough oil all the time. The foolish if at all they professed Christianity became apostate or only paid some lip service. Just like the sons of Sceva in Acts 19, they were not inwardly believers in Christ and not known to be saints.

This parable may be applicable to any time of the eschatological kingdom. It could be applied to any phase of the parousia, the rapture or any other phase of the first resurrection mentioned in Rev. 20:1-7. In the parable the foolish virgins did not have a second chance as some seem to infer, for the door was closed.

So, I personally believe that even though people will be converted after the rapture, such converts will not be left-over believers and hence not a part of the Church. Believe it or not, the rapture will seal off the Church, those who merit being part of the Bride of Christ.

Being worthy of His calling

A clear teaching of Scripture on the indicatives for ascertaining whether the Rapture has occurred and that some have been either raptured or left out are just two observations; 1) a falling away from the faith and 2) the revelation of the Anti-Christ.

Paul reminds us in 2Thess. 2:1-3, *"Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter,*

as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition," (NKJ). In this case then, the pre-occupation should not be on being left behind but actual making sure that you merit the rapture (2Thess. 1:5, 11).

Finding your needed ground as a Spirit-filled believer

Incidentally, no clue is given in Scripture concerning the timing for the Rapture of the saints in Christ. This is the more reason for maintaining the position of holding on to an imminent return and for being ready at all times and at any time. Remember, to keep in mind, that any day and hour following that day - the day of Pentecost is ideal for the rapture! The apostles taught it (Rom. 13:11-13; 1Cor. 1:7; 16:22; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 10:24, 25; James 5:8; 1Jn. 2:18; Rev. 22:17, 20).

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (1John 2:18).

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1Cor. 1:2-9).

"If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha." (1Cor. 16:22 NAS).

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:20-21).

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the amour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14).

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." (James 5:7-12KJV).

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb.10: 24, 25).

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book..... And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.... And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.... He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:7, 12, 17, 20).

Means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition," (NKJ). In this case then, the pre-occupation should not be on being left behind but actual making sure that you merit the rapture (2Thess. 1:5, 11).

