

# **The Generation of the End Times**

## **Are We the Generation That Will See the End Times?**

**This Generation:** Matt. 24:33-34 “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that [my coming] is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled”.

Christ here seems to be giving criteria by which His coming could possibly be dated, at least approximately. There is a generation that will not pass away until everything He has prophesied for the last days has been fulfilled. We know that all must be fulfilled also at the end of Daniel’s 70th week, so this should help us to discover when that will occur.

Obviously what Christ has to say here is of great importance in our attempt to discern how close we are to His return. There are, as always, some problems. To whom is Christ speaking, to Israel or to the Church? Is He referring to the Rapture or to the Second Coming? Who or what does He mean by “this generation?” Furthermore, as we have noted previously, the above statement seems, at least upon its face, to contradict (verses 42 and 44): “For ye know not what hour your Lord doth come, For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

A time was coming when all the signs of which He spoke would have been fulfilled before the eyes of a particular generation. On that basis they would realize that Christ’s coming was right at the door. Yet at the same time He declares that no one will know when He will return. In fact, even those who are watching for Him are likely not to think that He is coming when He really is. Of course, we know that both of these seemingly contradictory statements from our Lord are true and that there is no contradiction.

We have already pointed out that there is only one rational and Scriptural way to reconcile these two statements. Christ can only be referring to two different events: The Rapture and the Second Coming. There are no signs for the Rapture, which will take almost everyone by surprise.

The signs are all for the Second Coming, which is why those who heed His Word would know exactly when He is right at the door about to enter the world scene once again. This time He comes not as a lamb to be led to the slaughter, but in power and glory and to take vengeance upon the enemies of God.

This is the only generation to which most of the prophecies of Revelation apply. This is the only generation in history that has witnessed the coming together of the whole predicted scenario to precede the Messiah’s Second Coming. Here is a list of some of the fulfillments of this predicted scenario:

1. The return of the Jews to the land of Israel and the formation of a state in spite of centuries of persecution wherever they fled.
2. The Israeli recapture of old Jerusalem.
3. The rise of Russia as a dangerous rogue military power with an awesome arsenal of lethal weapons inherited from the USSR.

4. The rise of Islamic nations as a major power with their relentless pursuit of Jerusalem and Israel's destruction.
5. The entrance of China as a world class power and the rise of Asia as the most populated and technically skilled area in the world.
6. The uniting of European nations into a single awesome power after centuries of fighting with each other.
7. The simultaneous increase in frequency and magnitude of war, earthquakes, plagues, famines, super storms, global warming, and global weather pattern changes.

**The Return of the Days of Noah and Lot:** Jesus prophesied that:

Luke 17:26-30 "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"

Two of the most depraved periods in history were the days of Noah just prior to the Flood, and the days of Lot. In both cases the people were so sinful that God destroyed them from the face of the earth. In Noah's day it was the whole world that sinned; in Lot's day it was the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is instructive that our Lord Jesus chose to use the moral climate in which these ancient people lived as a warning about the lifestyles of men and women just before His return. It is believed that we are already living in the moral climate of the days of Noah and of Lot.

**What Kind of Days Were They:** Even a casual reading (of Gen. 6:1-9), shows that the people of Noah's day were sexually obsessed. In this case the sons of God were cohabiting with the "daughters of men" and "producing giants, mighty men, men of renown", renowned doubtless for their wickedness. The most important lesson we can learn from this passage is that their wicked lifestyle caused God to unleash the flood. Their lifestyle included three specific sins.

1. Sexual perversion.
2. "The thoughts of their hearts were evil continually".
3. Routine living with disregard to the consequences of impending judgment.

These people were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." In other words, they ignored the preaching of Noah for 120 years and violated the known law of God as if there were no accounting to come. (Note: God himself prophesied the flood as he told Noah).

Present world conditions could very well be as bad or worse than those that existed in the days before the Flood and in the days of Lot. The most common sins of our day are sexual, from fornication to adultery to homosexuality. That is evidenced worldwide by the 50 million or more abortions perpetrated annually and the rampant sexually transmitted diseases, for STDs to AIDS, all diseases that, for the most part, do not afflict those who follow the sexual laws of God. In the past generation, due to the increase in pornography via magazines, movies, TV, and videos and

now the internet, there has been an acceleration of sexual promiscuity and an ever lowering of the age of first sexual activity.

The scourge of all sexual perversion is pedophilia and child molestation. Some have estimated that such sins against children have increased 300% to 500% since pornography was legalized by the Supreme Court in 1972. Pornography has caused the minds of both men and women to be obsessed with sex, or as the Bible predicted, “every imagination of the thoughts of his (man’s), heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Hollywood has polluted the most powerful communications vehicle the human mind ever invented, film, which has the ability to affect the mind, emotions, and will.

**Homosexuality, the Sin of Lot’s Day:** The sexual sins of Sodom and Gomorrah in Lot’s time were so gross that men were driven with a passion not only for their own sex but even became disrespectful to the angels who visited Lot. It is almost unbelievable in our day how those who reject the sexual laws of God have succeeded in making one of the basest of sexual sins, sodomy, respectable and even acceptable.

A few years ago, Hollywood stars kept their personal sex lives in the closet. Today homosexuals are “out” and demanding their “rights”. What rights do they demand? The right to marry, the right to cohabit with the same sex, the right to teach school, where they could influence young minds, the right to adopt children, the right to serve in the military, and the list goes on.

**It’s Later That it’s Ever Been:** No one knows for certain when Christ will return or whether we are really living in the end times. It is believed however, that Christians living today have more reason than those of any generation before us to believe that Christ could come in our lifetime. For example, all prophecy scholars agree that the generation that saw Israel restored to her land in 1948 could well be the “generation (that), will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened” (Matt. 24:32-34).

In other words, before this strategic generation passes from the scene, time, as we know it, will come to an end. When you examine the “signs of the times” that have been fulfilled in our lifetime, you have to believe the coming of Christ is very near. As Jesus said, “Near, even at the doors.” Yes, we could indeed be living in the end times!

Dr. John Walvoord, the most knowledgeable living prophecy scholar in the world today, (at the time of writing, he lived from May 1, 1910 to December 20, 2002), said the following at a prophecy conference about the times in which we live: I have been studying prophecy for many years (over 50), and while I do not believe it is possible to set dates for the Lord’s return, I do sense in the world today an unprecedented time of world crises that can be interpreted as being preparatory for the coming of the Lord. If there ever was a time when Christians should live every day as though Christ could come at any time, it is today.

Tim LaHaye couldn’t agree more. He hopes that everyone who reads his book, “Are we living in the end times”, will be prepared for His coming at any moment. Don’t be like the majority, “ashamed before Him at His coming.” We pray that you will “be ready” when He comes, he says.

When Jesus was asked “When shall these things be?” He told them: “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near” (Matt. 24:32).

What does this mean? Many argue the “fig tree” refers to the restoration of Israel to her ancestral homeland. The fig tree is indeed a symbol for Israel today in much the same way the eagle symbolizes America, or the bear is a symbol for Russia.

But, if that were the entire story, identification of the fig tree as Israel would be very subjective. The Bible does refer to a fig tree some 33 times, 18 times in the Old Testament alone. In context, the fig tree is always a symbol for Israel, such as Hosea’s statement, “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season” (Hosea 9:10).

It is in that context that the symbolism of a blossoming fig tree in early spring is used. Just as that is a sure sign the general time of summer has arrived, so, the argument goes, is the restoration of Israel to her land a sure sign the general time of Christ’s return has arrived. With that in mind, the verse following is stunning.

Matt. 24:34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”

**This Generation Will Not Pass:** One could expect something as important as “the end of the age” to be more clearly defined than a parable about a fig tree. After all, it was Jesus Christ who promised, “this generation will not pass.” Why didn’t He just say, “the generation that sees the restoration of Israel to the land will not pass till all these things be fulfilled”?

Why would He deliberately obscure an issue this important with vague references to trees, leaves, and summertime? But it’s important to recognize that the parable isn’t just about Israel as the fig tree. Jesus said the leaves would symbolize:

1. Religious deception and occult practices.
2. Hot wars and Cold wars (wars and rumors of wars).
3. International revolution among nations.
4. Ethnic conflicts.
5. Famines.
6. Earthquakes.
7. Plagues.
8. Global weather pattern changes.
9. Record killer storms.

Like the first leaves on the fig tree, they would all come at the same time. Like birth pangs, they would all increase in frequency and intensity. And the generation that saw all these things would not pass from the world stage until all of the prophecies of the last days (including His return), had come to pass.

Luke 21:28 “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Keep in mind the audience to whom Jesus was speaking. The redemption He promised “would draw near” was the national redemption of Israel. He redeemed the Church (both Jew and Gentile who trusted in Him), at the Cross. That is an accomplished fact. Israel’s national redemption in accordance with the Abrahamic covenant takes place at the Second Advent.

**Could it be any Other Generation:** Jesus’ message was carefully addressed to one specific generation, somewhere in time, a generation to which His fig tree reference would make sense. That generation had to be able to identify the time in which it lived to the exclusion of all others. And Jesus defines a generation in a manner unique to Scripture. He says that the generation alive at the time of the rebirth of Israel will still be around at the Second Advent (the return of Christ).

Not 40 years, or three score and ten years, or even 120 years. He put it simply. If you were around in 1948, then, barring being hit by a bus, or run down by a runaway shopping cart, you can expect to be around to see all these things. All of them.

Understanding the times in which we live is not the exclusive domain of the theologian. Peter reminds us, “but know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter on one’s own interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). The fact is, evidence pointing to this generation as the Generation is all around us, interconnected with such precision that no thinking person could honestly cry “Coincidence.” A plan for human history, laid out in advance, with each detail recorded thousands of years in advance, can only come from God. Those details of Bible prophecy must be fulfilled within one generation, and no other, or it is nothing more than “coincidence.”

The signs given by Jesus for the last days have not been completely fulfilled. What we see happening all around us are the birth pang signs all increasing in frequency and intensity, in concert with each other. This demonstrates to some degree how close the ultimate fulfillment these birth pangs are in relation to our present age. The fact is the next firm event on the prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the Church. All the other signs will not be completely fulfilled until after that takes place.

The unveiling of the Antichrist, the false prophet, the mark of the Beast, the signing of the 7-year covenant between Israel and her enemies, these cannot occur until after God removes His Church. However, we are seeing the increasingly heavy shadows of what is to come. Zola Levitt put it beautifully in a TV broadcast. He said, “We are pushing at the membrane of time that separates the Church Age from the beginning of Tribulation.”

**Unusual Signs Unknown to Previous Generations:** Wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, etc. These are some of the signs which yearly are increasing at a rate unlike anything known to previous generations. Ours is the first generation for which these prophecies, seemingly impossible before, even make sense. Does that mean then, that we have lost eminence after all?

No, let us look at some of these peculiar signs. Christ declared that the Great Tribulation would involve dangers to life unlike anything ever known. So horrendous, in fact, would the weapons

be, that “except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” That statement seemed outrageous for more than 1900 years.

There were no weapons capable of wiping out all life on this planet. None, that is until our generation came along. Not only the nuclear arsenals which are now common knowledge fall into that category, but other secret weapons equally deadly have been developed. A major deterrent to the use of these Star Wars weapons has been the fear that a disaster of cosmic proportions could be unleashed which would make any kind of life on this planet possible.

**Don't be Shocked, Flee to the Only Hope:** Something that should surprise no one, especially those familiar with bible prophecy, which explains just how badly conditions on earth will deteriorate in the days just before Jesus' return.

“But realize this,” Paul wrote (in 2 Tim. 3:1-5), “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; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.”

Maybe now Revelation is beginning to sound a little less allegorical and a little more real?

Hal Lindsey in his book *Apocalypse Code* tells us as he watches the evening news and reads the daily newspapers, it breaks his heart to see how rapidly the world as we know it is moving toward catastrophe. The kind of bone chilling economic, political, environmental, and spiritual disasters that he has written in his book. Think about the world around us:

1. Russia, a declining superpower with one of the world's largest nuclear stockpiles and teaming up with others.
2. China with the largest army in the world with nearly 3 million in active service with another 200 million plus militiamen.
3. Christians are already the most persecuted religious group in the world today. At the time of writing this website (2001), there were at least 11 countries that practice systematic persecution of Christians. They are China, Pakistan, Laos, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan. Currently there are others that practice a more random brand of persecution and are dominated by one of two belief systems. Communism or militant Islam.
4. Infectious diseases have increased in the US by 58% from 1980 to 1997. Growing resistance to antibiotics is a serious threat.
5. Unpredictable and often deadly weather has the most serious climate researchers in the world wondering what's going on. Is it global warming? Is it ozone depletion? Is it something we don't understand?
6. Earthquakes continue to increase in frequency and intensity, just as the Bible predicts for the last days before the return of Christ.
7. The United Nations Environment Program reports that plants, animals, and entire ecosystems are threatened at much higher rates than ever before in recorded history. At

least 4,000 plants and 5,400 animals are threatened with extinction. In addition, species are becoming extinct at a rate 50 to 100 times higher than normal. For years Hal Lindsey has been telling people to keep their eyes on Turkey, a strategically important nation and one whose prophetic significance is sometimes underrated. Recently Ankara has been cozying up to Iran and Iraq, including the striking of a multibillion-dollar natural gas deal with Iran, defying a threat of US anti-terrorist sanctions. Immediately after signing the deal, Turkish officials visited Baghdad seeking to improve relations with Iraq. The Armageddon coalition (described in Ezekiel 38) is well into formation.

8. IBM and a group of 15 U.S. and Canadian banking giants including Bank of America, Banc One and Mellon Bank have entered a joint venture that will greatly expand the world of electronic financial services with a short-term goal of replacing all cash and check transactions with electronic transfers in the near future. Citibank has developed an Electronic Money System that will permit consumers to make payments electronically anywhere in the world. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Jan. 21, 1996: "Thirty years from now, chips will be implanted in our bodies encoded with credit card, passport, driver's license and other personal information." Other experts say it won't take that long.
9. The United Religions Summit is reconvening to write a charter intended to unify the world's faiths. "We are on the threshold of a new global civilization," explained William Swing, a California Episcopal bishop who has spearheaded the movement. "When people look around, religion has just not been at the table." Working hand in hand with Swing is the UN Assistant Secretary General Robert Muller, who once wrote: "If Christ came back to earth, his first visit would be to the UN to see if his dream of human oneness and brotherhood had come true." Muller, by the way, is associated with the Lucis Trust, a New Age organization that evolved from the Lucis Publishing Company, previously known as the Lucifer Publishing Co. Draw your own conclusions about which master such men serve.
10. Every year since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, Europe has become more powerful on the world stage. Beginning with only six member nations, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, it has grown into an economic and political behemoth of 15 nations populated by 360 million with the addition of member states Britain, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland and Austria.

**What a Coincidence:** The model for the modern state of Europe was born in 1948, the same year as the rebirth of Israel. It was codified nine years later by what is known as the Treaty of Rome. It came into being simultaneously with the emergence of the Cold War, "the ultimate rumor of war".

Europe's own choice for a national symbol is a **Woman Riding a Beast**. (see Rev. 17:7-8). If this were the only event predicted by the Bible to take place at the same time as the rebirth of a nation whose history was frozen in time for 2500 years, it would be astonishing. But the Bible makes many other precise predictions. Each connects with the other, like building blocks. If this is the generation that Jesus spoke of, all of these predictions must happen in a single generation and all must be identifiable.

To make them unique, they must appear on the scene at the same time. They would have to develop at roughly the same speed. As we will see, the revival of the old Roman Empire is just one development that fits the Bible's timetable. There are hundreds more. We face an "if, then" equation.

If all these prophecies can be identified and documented as being fulfilled in one generation, then this generation must be the last before the Lord returns. If not, then the evidence documented here represent the most colossal coincidence in history. That conclusion would require a greater leap of faith than any necessary to accept the plain truth of Bible prophecy.

Many prophecy students interpret this passage to mean that when we see the rise of Israel as a nation (as we did in 1948), we will know that the time of the end is "near", at the doors. They reason that when a fig tree is used symbolically in Scripture, it usually refers to the nation Israel. So, when Israel became a nation in 1948, they and Tim LaHaye believe that was the "sign" of (Matt. 24:1-8), the beginning of "birth pangs".

It was as if the tree was planted in 1914 -1918 when the first "birth pain" was felt, but did not grow into a full-blown tree capable of budding until 1948 when Israel was granted statehood, thus fulfilling (Ezek. 37:1-8). Combine this with "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). In other words, when all the signs mentioned appear such as war, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, and Israel becoming a nation, you know that the return of Jesus is close at hand.

How long is a generation? Psalm 90:10 tells us: "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years yet is their strength labor and sorrow". Moses here suggests that a generation is seventy to eighty years. This doesn't mean that a generation is limited to seventy or eighty years, he is simply telling us what the general length is of a generation.