

Signs of the Times

Signs of the Times – What Are the Signs of Christ's Imminent Return?

More signs of Christ's return exist today than at any time in history. (In Matthew 16:3), Jesus rebuked the people of His day for failing to recognize the "signs of the times" that heralded His first coming. How much more reason do we have today to recognize the signs of His second coming?

We are surrounded by so many obvious signs that one would have to be blind not to see them, yet some fail to recognize them even when they are called to their attention. Especially with all of the aids we have in this modern age such as books, Internet research, study, radio and television, study guides, tapes, VCR's, and the ability to communicate with others via phone, church, meetings, etc. Much easier than in the days of Jesus by far.

Two signs predicted by the Hebrew prophet Daniel for "the time of the end" should be obvious to all. The increase in travel and the increase in knowledge. The speed of travel is dependent on the increase in knowledge. More than in any age before this one, men are "running to and fro on the earth", just as the Bible predicted for "the time of the end."

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places". "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:7-8).

There are 2 Jewish idioms in those passages.

Nation against nation, our Lord was speaking of a war started by 2 nations, each combatant soon joined by the surrounding kingdoms until all the nations involved are included. In Tim LaHaye's book *Are we living in the end times* on page 39, he explains this as what had occurred (in 1914 – 1918). When the Archduke of Austria, prince Francis Ferdinand, was shot by a Serbian zealot in the very area of the world where in these recently passed days, UN peacekeepers must be stationed to keep the Serbs and Croats from killing each other.

One month later Austria declared war on Serbia, followed shortly by the other kingdoms of the world, until all but seven nations officially joined the conflict (those 7 countries sent mercenaries). It at first was called "the Great War" that involved a total of approx. 53 million men, 13 million of whom were killed (not including civilians), and then renamed WWI.

The 2nd part (of Matt. 24:8), talked of famines, pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places. A look at history reveals that the flu epidemic of 1918 spread throughout Europe, Canada, and the US taking more lives than were lost on the battlefields. Much of this vulnerability to disease was caused by malnutrition and famine as a result of the war. So, three parts of the first sign Jesus gave His disciples, were fulfilled. The 4th part, Earthquakes, are harder to pin down but definitely have been increasing in number.

According to Tim LaHaye everyone realizes that “the Great War” did not usher in the time of the end, for only 22 years later the world was plunged into WWII. Jesus did not say the first sign would usher in the end, but said, “all these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt 24:8). That term is used to describe a woman in labor and the pain Israel will endure at the end of the ages. Tim LaHaye gives us the analogy that those signs are the beginning of the birth pangs, and they will become more intense and regular.

The Top 7 Sins of the Tribulation: (Rev. 9:20), lists the top 7 sins of the Tribulation:

1. Rebellion against God (“They did not repent”).
2. Worship of demons.
3. Idolatry.
4. Murders.
5. Sorceries (drugs).
6. Sexual immorality.
7. Thefts.

It is interesting to compare this list with one given by the apostle Paul (in Col. 3:5-6), which mentions “sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry”. Paul then reminds his readers, “Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.” Is it ever! Even though these 7 sins of the Tribulation will become rampant after the church has been raptured, already they are among the most dominant sins of our society.

Rebellion Against God: Rebellion is a way of life today, both nationally and individually. Government, media, and education policy is relentlessly removing every vestige of our nation’s heritage that relates to God, prayer, the Bible, and Christian values. For over fifty years faith in God and obedience to Him have been treated as vices rather than virtues and as national liabilities rather than assets.

Worship of Demons: Twenty years ago, Satan worship was scarcely heard of; today it is rampant. Satan worshipers are frequently on the evening news because of some satanic ritual that killed or maimed someone. Witchcraft too, is becoming rampant, even respectable.

USA pictured 700 witches dressed in black and wielding brooms, sweeping down the Matterhorn in Switzerland. Add to that astrology, psychic readings, and other occult practices that seek information from satanic sources. Although mankind has a keen interest in the future, he refuses to go to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, but instead often resorts to necromancy, tarot card readings, voodoo, and other demonic practices. And it will only get worse during the Tribulation!

Necromancy is the act of conjuring the dead for divination. It dates back to Persia, Greece, and Rome, and in the Middle Ages was widely practiced by magicians, sorcerers, and witches. It was condemned by the Catholic Church as “the agency of evil spirits,” and in Elizabethan England was outlawed by the Witchcraft Act of 1604.

Necromancy is not to be confused with conjuring devils or demons for help. Necromancy is the seeking of the spirits of the dead. The spirits are sought because they, being without physical bodies, are no longer limited by the earthly plane. Therefore, it is thought these spirits have access to information of the past and future which is not available to the living.

It has been used to help find sunken or buried treasure, and whether or not a person was murdered or died from other causes. The practice of necromancy has been compared by some to modern mediumistic or practiced spiritualism. Many consider it a dangerous and repugnant practice. Dangerous because it is alleged that when some spirits take control of the medium, they are reluctant to release their control for some time.

Necromancy is not practiced in Neo-pagan Witchcraft, but it is practiced in Voodoo. There are two noted kinds of necromancy: the raising of the corpse itself, and the most common kind, the conjuring or summoning of the spirit of the corpse.

Idolatry: Unredeemed man always resists worshiping God by faith but demands “aid to worship”, things made with human hands, from pictures to images to relics and icons. These days paganism is widespread not only in backward countries but also in America. Have you noticed the increased worship of the mother goddess Gaia? Pronounced Guy-Ya).

A replica of the Parthenon located in a park in Nashville, TN features a huge statue to Gaia. To the Christ rejecting mind, the worship of any female goddess is attractive, for she is nonjudgmental, gentle, and ever merciful. She would never banish people to hell for their sins, nor in most cases even punish them. She only blesses them, ever a preference for the God rejecting sinner.

It is quite possible that we are on the verge of seeing a merging of the feminist movement, liberal Christianity (with its penchant for feminizing the Scriptures), and mother goddess worship. At the same time, many in the Catholic church are trying to persuade the Pope to establish Mary worship as official church doctrine by naming Mary “Co-Redemptrix with Jesus” and the fourth member of the godhead.

In all likelihood, as soon as all born again Christians are Raptured, there will be no restraining influence to keep such perverse doctrine from being made official. Perhaps that is why Babylon, the religious beast is seen with a woman on its back, controls the Antichrist’s kingdom during the first half of the tribulation. **Woman Sitting on a Scarlet Colored Beast** (see Rev. 17:3).

Murders: One of the major social problems of our day is the rise in the murder rate. Already it has reached frightening proportions. The younger generation committing murders whose ages are 10-11 years old, is increasing each year. The current violent crime rate, almost 25,000 murders each year is making this once Christian nation the murder capital of the world.

The rise in drive-by shootings, rapes, muggings, and murders are horrible enough. But the greatest evidence that Tribulation like living has already gripped our society is the government’s attitude toward murdering the most innocent and weakest among us, the unborn. More than 57

million murders of unborn babies have taken place since Roe vs. Wade in 1973 according to the ADF.

Drugs: From the Greek word translated “sorceries” in the KJV, we get the word pharmacy. Unfettered drug use will be common during the Tribulation. Drugs and alcohol are a way of life for many non-believers.

Sexual Immorality: From the white house (this was written when Clinton held office), to the movie theater, it is accepted policy today to disregard sexual purity before marriage and sexual fidelity afterward. Many educators have all but abandoned teaching virtue; instead, they have made a virtue out of homosexuality and lesbianism, which for centuries were called perversions and in the Bible, are called “an abomination” and “unnatural”.

The sexual revolution of the 60’s, based on the perverted sex studies of Alfred Kinsey in the 50’s, followed by the explicit sex education of the 70’s and 80’s, and strengthened by the Supreme Court’s 1972 decision that transformed pornography from an illegal business into legally acceptable. Ten billion dollar a year trade in the 90’s, has turned the Western world into a sex obsessed cesspool of immorality, just like that of the Tribulation. It is hard to believe that sexual immorality can get any worse than it already is. But it will!

In 2007, It’s hard not to pick up a paper, watch a newscast or read the news on the internet where a teacher is not accused of having sex with a minor student. Recently a 40-year-old teacher gave up his teaching practice to marry his 16 year old student.

Thefts: Gated communities and security systems are becoming a way of life today. Why? Because of the rise in theft. Theft is with us today and will continue right into the Tribulation, although it will probably become much worse under Antichrist, who is opposed to everything Jesus Christ stands for. Many of the terrorists of today are using Credit card theft as a way to raise money for their causes.

A Second Opinion: In the world of medicine, it is a wise and prudent practice to seek a second opinion when a physician’s original diagnosis is both grave and troubling. That’s not a bad thing to do here either. We recommend consulting with the apostle Paul, who had something to say about how society and culture would deteriorate in “the last days”:

“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).

Note the eighteen characteristics of a society in free fall as outlined by Paul. What is often lost on students of history is that such declining values have been a consistent part of Western culture since the First World War.

Selfish: Lovers of themselves. The massive breakdown of marriage today has no greater single cause than selfishness. This is the natural result of two generations of teaching children and youth to “do your own thing” and get all the “gusto” out of life you can. Thanks to selfishness, the divorce rate in our country is above 51%.

Covetousness: Lovers of Money. We have a population that is never satisfied but is on a continual quest for more. More money, more things, and more gratification.

Boasters – Proud: These are two traits God hates (Proverbs 16:18), yet they are both on prominent display today.

Blasphemers: The use of the Lord’s name in vain is commonplace today. Thanks to Hollywood and others in the entertainment industry, it has become universal in movies and even on TV. The fact that God not only disapproves of this kind of speech but also warns He “will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7), does not seem to deter millions from the sin of blasphemy. Imagine what will happen when the one group almost never uses the name of God and His Son in vain is suddenly snatched out of this world, leaving all the blasphemers behind!

Disobedient to Parents: Parents who are disobedient to God will raise children disobedient to their mothers and fathers. The rise in Juvenile crime has reached epidemic proportions, worrying law enforcement officials as they contemplate the next generation. One police officer told Tim LaHaye that child and youth murder crime (ages 8-15), is escalating faster than any other crime category.

Rebellion: The spirit of rebellion is invading many Christian homes. A national youth speaker prior to 2002 said, “70% of today’s youth raised in Christian homes do not follow their parent’s faith when they leave home.” If he is right, that is up 25% in just 20 years. Now in 2007 that number is around 80%. The music and lyrics popular with today’s youth are built on rebellion to parents, police, and all authority figures.

Today’s social workers and sociologists are trying to keep parents from disciplining their children! As a pastor states, Tim LaHaye, I found there is a direct correlation between children who were not allowed to sass and disobey their parents in their very young years and those who followed their parents’ faith in adulthood.

Unthankful: Rebellious people are unthankful people; that is why they are so miserable. The Bible teaches us to “be thankful,” which produces a thankful attitude and thus a happy life, regardless of circumstance. That is not the mental attitude encouraged today. Instead, the disadvantaged are urged to complain about their terrible lot in life, even though it is measurably better than where they or their ancestors came from.

Have you ever noticed that there are no lines to get out of America, Canada, and other Western countries? There are, however, long lines to get in. Regardless of their circumstances, people should be encouraged to thank God for their blessings rather than continually curse the darkness.

Unholy: Everywhere you turn today you see the hand of satanically inspired disrespect for God, and a worship of other gods. The worship of nature is an unholy form of pantheism famous for its intolerance of other religions. The worship of the occult does not foster holy living as taught in Scripture, but just the opposite. This may be one cause of its modern appeal: It panders to the immorality that has always been a part of pagan religions, many of which are invading the West.

Without Natural Affection: One of the most basic Judeo-Christian principles has been the natural and beautiful attraction between the sexes. The love of a mother and father for their children, the love of the extended family for each other, and the love of one's country were similarly considered "natural." Today we are living in a depraved Romans chapter one world that many who fear God has given or will give up to "vile passions" that reverse the normal order of things (Roman 1:26-27).

Today homosexuality and lesbianism are accepted by many in officialdom as "normal". Promiscuity before and after marriages and divorces are said to be unrelated to integrity. Mothers are known to abandon or drown their own children. Children have been known to kill their parents and then demand leniency from society because they are orphans. One unwed mother killed her own infant after giving birth in the bathroom. She stuffed the child in the trash can, then returned to the dance floor at her senior prom to dance the night away. We could call this decade the death of natural affection.

Truce Breakers and False Accusers: Whether it is Israel and the Oslo accords with the PLO, or Russia, China, or North Vietnam breaking treaties with America and the West, most people have lost confidence in nations and their leaders. A majority of citizens don't expect leaders to keep their officially written word, much less their spoken word.

It isn't just nations that break treaties and agreements at will; it is also private citizens. For example, our courts are filled with challenges to prenuptial agreements after the marriages blow up. We are a litigious society that boasts one lawyer for every 300 people. Lawyers are getting rich on the backs of broken agreements and false accusations.

Incontinent: The Greek word means "without self-control". Although our country was built on self-discipline, industry, and personal integrity, today we are a nation of overweight, alcoholic drug abusers and sexual perverts who cannot control our desires and passions, and who don't even try.

Fierce: Society has turned hostile, so much so you are not sure you can avoid being insulted, berated, or assaulted by strangers who feel insulted by something you have done or said. "Road rage" is one of today's worst problems on the nation's highways, and women are as bad as men. In marriage, anger and hostility often result in spousal or child abuse. Police say that domestic conflicts are among their most dangerous calls. We are rapidly becoming a nation of "fierce" people.

Despisers: Esau is infamous for despising his birthright and selling it to his brother, Jacob, for a mess of porridge. Today we have a whole subculture of intellectual elitists who have rejected God and His wisdom. They not only embrace the "wisdom of this age" or the "wisdom of man,"

but they also demand that the rest of the nation do the same, and thereby despise their spiritual heritage.

Traitors: Who can deny that treachery is increasing in the Western world? People in lofty and influential positions have sold their country's secrets for money, influence, and more recently, ideology. When anyone in a position of influence puts his own ideology above loyalty to his country and betrays the nation's defense secrets, he or she is a traitor, another sign the end is quickly approaching.

In addition, I personally would like to point out the oil embargo of 1973 when the Saudi's thought they could get us to stop helping Israel by stopping the oil shipments. I distinctly remember our president and many of those in congress swear to the public that we would start immediately by developing alternate methods of fuel to end our dependence on foreign oil.

I consider those involved to be traitors to our country. They soon sold us out because of money, power, and greed. To date, we are more dependent than ever. The lobbyists continue to do their thing, the elected still accept their bribes, and oil continues to flow into this country. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Russia, and others. These people are not our friends they want to see both the US and Israel eliminated! Fast forward to 2016 as things began to change somewhat due to a process called fracking. Whereby the US is now somewhat energy sufficient and supplying others with this new technology. This though, is being hard fought against by other factions within our own government.

Not to mention those in high places including the FBI that has sold secrets to our enemies for at least 15 years. Those in our government who sold or gave nuclear technology to China & India. China in turn gives Pakistan nuclear capabilities. Clinton involved in giving our technology to China and in turn gets campaign contributions. Why isn't he in jail! And in 2017, even his wife.

What about those presidents who appoint Supreme Court Judges who has an agenda such as Roe verses Wade, the removing prayer from schools, the removal of the 10 commandments from all Federal buildings. How do you think these things happen? Whose agenda is being done here besides Satan's, who is running our country, who cares ... we should.

Heady and Reckless: We have become a nation of reckless individuals who give little thought to making the decisions that will mold the rest of our lives. Besides the huge national debt which In 2017 is above 20.4 trillion dollars. Additional borrowing has exceeded that amount, including \$784 billion of dollars of credit card charges alone, all at exorbitant interest rates.

Most economists believe there will be a day of reckoning and that a crash leading to a depression is inevitable. The same reckless condition is seen in the sexually permissive attitudes of both the heterosexual and homosexual communities. With sexually transmitted diseases, including the awful plague of AIDS, resulting in incredibly high death rates and painful illnesses, one can only marvel at the many reckless individuals who think, it won't happen to me. Unfortunately, for millions it does.

High Minded: The Greek word translated “high minded” may also be rendered “haughty”, “puffed up” or “arrogant.” It is amazing that the purveyors of secular humanism, with their disgraceful track record of societal failure, can still be so autocratic as to assume the right to make decisions for others.

We make no apology that we who hold to biblical doctrine and values are dogmatic but not in our own wisdom or authority. We are convinced that obeying the principles of God is good for individuals, society, and the nations of the world. Wherever God’s principals have been followed, they have elevated individuals and society. Wherever they are ignored, they have created cultural and moral depravity.

Yet high minded people, usually those with advanced degrees, dogmatically oppose moral teaching and prefer the immoral practices of humanism. Witness the pronouncements of Jane Fonda. She has announced a bold campaign to promote condom use while ridiculing abstinence programs in public education. Asserting that 80% of our youth are promiscuous,” she is on a crusade to see that all young people have access to condoms, even though condoms have not proven to be safe either to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

Lovers of Pleasure: Who can deny that this world has gone crazy over pleasure? From topless dancers to Hollywood entertainment to sporting events, millions spend money they cannot afford on events that consume hours of their time and energy. The whole world is becoming addicted to entertainment. Witness the crowds that attend rock and music concerts or major sporting events. Some fans go straight from one sport to another.

No Power with God: The Bible instructs leaders that “righteousness exalts a nation,” yet all the nations of the world officially condone immoral practices suicidal to their country’s best interest. Our own nation has murdered so many unborn children that we have not only incurred the wrath of God but also destroyed our nation’s social security system.

Baby boomers are concerned there will not be enough taxpayers and wage earners in the nation when they start filing for social security benefits. It is time in these evil days for Christian leaders to head their members into the voting booth and work to put a halt to the killing of innocent blood!

Paul’s Warning to the Last Days Church: It would be wrong to not highlight Paul’s great warning to the church. Millions of our neighbors, friends, and relatives are committed to the immoral lifestyles just outlined. While we should witness to them and share the gospel with them, Paul says on a personal level, “from such turn away”.

Christians should be careful not to be drawn into the last days’ lifestyles. You don’t have to participate in such lifestyles to win those who are open to the gospel. Eventually, when their world begins to collapse around them, you will be available to offer hope and help through Christ. Like the people of Noah’s day, most will not heed the warning of imminent judgment. But some who recognize the “perilous times” as a sign of the end will take advantage of the “ark of safety” and call on the name of the Lord!

It is now considered a “hate crime” to warn or speak out against homosexuality. And discrimination against a homosexual in job selection or dismissal is a violation of the law. If you refuse to rent your home to a homosexual couple, you are a lawbreaker. The secular world has turned the sexual laws of God upside down. A few years ago, the American Psychological Association considered homosexuality a mental deficiency; now the APA has endorsed it and proposed that their members no longer urge homosexuals to change their sexual lifestyle.

We have come to the place where officialdom demands that any sexual urge be permitted, regardless of its effects on marriage, the home, children, the human body, and the increased misery and suicide rate it causes. To them, anything that contributes to reducing the population is good. The moral conditions spoken of in the book of Revelation are already here. We are already living in days like those of Noah and Lot, days our Lord predicted would return just before His return to this earth.

Morally speaking, nothing needs to happen before the Rapture, and any objective person assessing the rapidly declining moral standards of our day must admit that officialdom and millions of people worldwide are already living in Sodom and Gomorrah like conditions.

The Signs of the Scoffers: One final trait typical of the moral climate during the end times ought to be considered: the emergence of scoffers. Modern skepticism has its roots in the empiricism of Descartes and has taken over the graduate schools of the world, especially through the uniformitarian theory that undergirds all of education today. Don’t let the word uniformitarian throw you. It simply describes the theory that current processes of life are sufficient to account for the origin and development of all the earth’s physical and biological phenomena.

This, of course, eliminates divine revelation of catastrophic events designed by God to judge His creatures. The theory of uniformitarianism, popularized in the mid 1800’s by the English geologist Sir Charles Lyell, became a prominent foundation for Darwinism and evolution, Marxism and socialism, Freudianism and Liberalism. It fostered many of the evils that beset our society today and is propagated by the most intellectually trained members of our society.

It is fascinating to note that almost 2000 years ago the apostle Peter, an untrained Galilean fisherman, predicted the exact thinking patterns that would characterize these scoffers. He prophesied that ... “Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts”, “and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” “For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water”, “by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:3-7).

Peter said these scoffers would deny the coming of the Lord because “since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation”. The questions Peter said these scoffers would ask are based on their uniformitarian ideas. If you eliminate the biblical

worldwide flood, as uniformitarians do, you remove a vital proof for the second coming of Christ.

But if in fact there was a flood, then God really does judge sinful men, and there is good reason to believe He will come again to judge the world. If man accepts the reality of the Flood, he is pressed to accept the likelihood of Christ's second coming. To demonstrate this point, Peter reached back into history and with superb logic developed a line of reasoning too deep for some of the best educated minds of our day. He highlighted five major historical events:

1. Creation: God was the originator of all things, including man.
2. The Fall of Man: Sometime shortly after creation man chose to disobey God and fell from innocence into sin. Death, disease, and human misery resulted.
3. The Flood: Man's iniquity reached such depths that God destroyed all but eight people in the world's greatest cataclysm, the Flood.
4. The Life of Christ: Jesus Christ came to die as a divine sacrifice for man's sin, to lift the curse on man and to prepare man for a future state of bliss where he could enjoy the unlimited blessings originally intended for him by his Creator.
5. The Second Coming of Christ; The next major event in God's plan for man.

According to Peter's argument, the scoffers are thoroughly mistaken that things have continued in a state of uniformity. To the contrary, man has seen two major divisions of time, with a third to come. The first, terminated by the Flood, Peter calls "the world that then existed." The present world he calls "the heavens and the earth which are now preserved." The third, after the second coming of Christ, will provide a new heaven and earth, which are kept in place by the word (or power), of God.

Why Are They So Blind: Peter provides us with 2 reasons why scoffers are so blind. The first is found (in 2 Peter 3:5), "For this they willfully forget." The unregenerate minds of unbelievers resist the idea of the intervention of God in human affairs. Their problem is spiritual, a matter of the will, and the unbeliever remains deliberately ignorant of the truth. Peter mentions a second reason for the scoffer's intellectual blindness (in verse 3): They walk "according to their own lusts."

The lovers of pleasure who fostered the "free love" movement, continue to advocate the use of marijuana, and lead rebellions against society, are bosom friends of uniformitarian philosophy! If we learn from history instead of ignoring it, we would remember that the early humanists lived in exactly that way.

There can be little doubt that this is a day of scoffers. Never have they grown so bold and blatant. They are not content to live after their own lusts, willfully ignorant of the claims of God in His Word; they also work tirelessly to pull the next generation into their Sodom and Gomorrah lifestyle. They are guilty of what Jesus predicted: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites (scoffers)! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matt. 23:15).

Our Moral Holocaust: It was Professor Alan Bloom who pointed out in his 1990 best seller “The Closing of the American Mind” that the relativistic attitude of our best educated youth today is: “Morals are no big deal!” Such popular but erroneous thinking has resulted in the near death of virtue, in millions of fatherless children, and in millions of disease plagued youth, much like the moral conditions described by the New Testament for the coming Tribulation. In fact, the present moral holocaust, based as it is on an evolutionary philosophy that rejects God, creation, and moral absolutes, exactly fulfills this sign of end time moral conditions.

While every part of the Olivet discourse provides a remarkable preview of the future, the first few verses of Jesus’ sermon give us a unique historical context that enables us to sense when the great events it describes are about to unfold: Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple. Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down”.

They asked Him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ” and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Daniel and the Time of the End: We are indebted to Daniel, the great Hebrew prophet, who asked the same questions we would ask about spiritual conditions during the end times. In his very important 12th chapter he asked, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” and “What shall be the end of these things?” He was told that “the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (Dan. 12:9). Then he was told something often overlooked by prophecy students about end time events; “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly.”

Euthanasia, partial birth abortions, cloning, cult suicides, UFO sightings, Satanic ritual murders, famines, volcanoes, I could go on and on. To most people, all of this may just sound like a collection of unrelated news. But to the student of prophecy, it all ties together. It’s all part of a pattern. It’s exactly the kind of developments we would expect to see in the generation that witnessed the rebirth of the nation of Israel and the recapturing of Jerusalem by the Jewish people. They are the signs of the times.

Jesus himself when asked for signs of His second coming predicted there would be global catastrophes like birth pains in a woman about to give birth shortly before the time for His return. In other words, all the predicted signs would increase in frequency and intensity within the same time frame, shortly before His coming. He concluded His prophecy by applying it with this parable.

This is a summary of it: Just as we can tell that the general time of summer is near when we see the first leaves on the fig tree, so we will be able to tell the general time of His return when we see all the prophecies of His return coming together and increasing in frequency and intensity.

He said that the general time would be this: the generation that sees the prophecies come together in concert will live to see their final fulfillment (Matt. 24:32-34).

Here is a description of those birth pangs Jesus predicted would occur shortly before his return: “Then He continued by saying, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:10-11, 25-26).