

SOME BIBLICAL SIGNS REGARDING THE 2nd COMING OF JESUS CHRIST¹

What follows is a brief summary of the signs that Jesus (e.g. **Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 17 & 21**) or other biblical writers said would take place *prior to Christ's second coming to earth*. Please keep in mind that these signs do **not** refer to the prior event called the "Rapture" when Christ will call his believers out of this world prior to the Tribulation & they will disappear "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (**I Cor. 15:51-58 cf. I Thess. 4:13-17 & Jn. 14:1-3**). The word "rapture" is from the Latin *rapio*, and means catching or snatching away. Note there is **no** sign that must occur before the "rapture" happens! It could take place at *any moment*. Instead, the signs listed here refer to Christ's second coming *to earth* at the **end** of the tribulation, when He will return to destroy the Antichrist & the Gentile nations, and set up His millennial kingdom. Some of these signs will begin before the start of the tribulation; others will take place during the tribulation period or near its end. **Signs 1-9** are **more general in nature** (e.g. *wars, earthquakes, famines, disease*, etc.) & have occurred throughout history—though not perhaps on the scale we see them happening today. Matthew 24 also seems to imply that Jesus, in describing them, was referring particularly to the seven year Tribulation period. **Signs 10-19** (a number of which have only recently begun to take place), *may be the most significant* in indicating that we may be nearing the end of the Church Age.

Let me emphasize that **NO ONE KNOWS WHEN CHRIST WILL RETURN!** (**Mt. 24:36**) **Anyone who tries to set dates is clearly and unquestionably in error!** However, Jesus and other biblical writers did enumerate signs that would enable discerning Christians to realize when Christ's return would be approaching. How close it is no one knows. But it may be closer than we think! May our anticipation of His return cause us to live pure, godly lives so that, "we will not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (**I Jn. 2:28**)

1. False Christ's, false prophets, & false miracles will abound. – **Mt. 24:5, 11, 24, 26.** It goes without saying that there are all kinds of people running around claiming to be "The Christ" today. One Bible prophecy expert mentioned that there had been more than 1000 individuals who have appeared and claimed to be Jesus Christ since 1900—and that statement was made three decades ago!

2. Wars and rumours of war around the world. – **Mt. 24:6-7.**

3. Famines. – **Mt. 24:7.** (cf. #'s 2-4 with **Rev. 6:1-8**)

4. Pestilences. – **Mt. 24:7; Lk. 21:11.** The Greek word *pestilence* has the meaning of *disease*: "Loimos, a pestilence, any deadly infectious malady, is used in the plural in Luke 21:11 (W.E. Vine, "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words", [Fleming H. Revell Co: Old Tappan, New Jersey, vol. 3, p. 180] cf. "loimos, loy-mos"; ...a plague (lit. the disease, or fig. a pest):--pestilence." (James Strong, "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible" [Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1890], Greek dictionary, p. 45)

5. Earthquakes in many places. – **Mt. 24:7.**

6. Oppression and persecution of Christians. – **Mt. 24:9.** There is a tremendous amount of worldwide persecution of Christians going on right now! Several sources claim that more Christians have been killed in the past century, than all the prior centuries combined. However that is just a prelude. This verse more likely is describing the much greater persecution of both Jews and Gentiles who become believers in Christ *during the Tribulation period*.

7. General lawlessness. – **Mt. 24:12**

8. Signs in the sun, moon, and stars -i.e. cosmic disturbances. – **Mt. 24:29; Lk. 21:11, 25; Rev. 6:12-17; 8:12.** These will most likely occur *at the end of the Tribulation period*, just prior to Christ's physical return to earth for the battle/war of Armageddon.

9. Normal ("Status quo") lifestyles going on in many respects. (e.g. marrying, eating, etc.). – **Mt. 24:38.**

10. A worldwide apostasy (i.e. falling away) from the truth. – **II Thess. 2:1-3.** This is not occurring today just within "liberal" denominations due to their rejection of the Bible & its teachings. Shockingly, many professing *evangelicals* are also—often unknowingly—assimilating "occult type" beliefs and practices via such things as: a) the "Positive Confession movement (e.g. "Name it-Claim it", "Visualize your Reality", etc) promulgated by various influential authors & Christian television personalities; b) the

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uncritical acceptance of allegedly “Christian” psychology which often contains unbiblical therapeutic philosophies; c) the “Self Esteem” movement & beliefs promoted by Robert Schuller, Joel Osteen, etc, which has inundated the Christian publishing industry.² Such individuals will also endorse almost anybody & anything from Islam to Mormonism!

11. A false, “One World” religious system. – Mt. 24:24-25; II Tim. 3:1-5, esp. v. 5; Rev. 17. This goal is gaining impetus through such things as the *World Council of Churches* [W.C.C.], the “*New Age Movement*,” the “*Parliament of the World’s Religions*” and the general syncretism [i.e. joining together] of Far Eastern religions and religious beliefs with Western Christianity.³

12. A worldwide emphasis and preoccupation with “peace.” – I Thess. 5:3. Everyone from the United Nations to the Bahai’s, constantly talk about the need for peace-especially worldwide peace. Ironically, at the same time there is less peace on this earth than there has ever been. The reason: You cannot have peace without the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ!

13. Drug use & drug addiction on a worldwide scale. – Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21; 18:23; 21:8 & 22:15. The Greek words for “sorcerer”, “sorcery,” etc., [*pharmakeia, pharmakon, pharmakeus*] mean drugs, drug use & drug seller. Our English word *pharmacist* comes from one of them. Scripture is not referring to chemists (pharmacists) and doctors, but to *illicit* drug use. It is not necessary to document the huge and increasing use of everything from marijuana (“weed”, “ganja”) and “crack” cocaine, to heroin, and a host of “party” drugs (e.g. “ecstasy” etc). More significant is the increasing acceptance, justification, & push for the legalization of drugs such as marijuana. **Revelation 18:23** attributes the future fall of the entire world economic system to the abuse of drugs! And of course *alcohol* is the most widely abused drug of all, and it’s perfectly legal! Most troubling of all is that its use is now being widely accepted and justified among professing “evangelicals” and permitted on Christian college campuses!

14. The development of a worldwide (one world) government, and a unified worldwide economic system. – Rev. 13:15-18; 18:1-24. The “*United Nations*” is probably a preliminary step towards this goal. The push for a common currency and economic system is also gaining momentum (e.g. note EU initiatives such as the “*Euro*”). The development of a universal currency was predicted & recommended as far back as 1988 in an editorial that appeared in the respected British magazine “*The Economist*” That secular author’s guess at the time was to expect a one world currency to become a reality around 2018!

15. The regathering of Israel to the Promised Land. – Ezek. 37:1-14. In the light of various prophetic Bible passages one realizes that no Tribulation events could have occurred until Israel was back in their land. That event—against all odds—came to pass in 1948 when Israel became a nation again for the first time in almost two thousand years! That they retained their ethnic identity intact for nearly two millennia is itself nearly miraculous.

16. A revived “Roman Empire” (i.e. a European/Mediterranean confederacy). – Dan. 7:20-27. The current European Union may be a prelude to this. Previously unthinkable developments (e.g. the crumbling of the former Soviet Union & the “*Iron Curtain*” in 1989), has smoothed the way for the possibility of a revived Roman Empire on the lands it previously occupied so many centuries ago.

17. The technology for the fulfillment of certain tribulation events only now exists! – Rev. 11:7-12; 13:3, 14, 18. For example: the capability of *the whole world* to instantly view the death and resurrection of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (**Rev. 11**) as well as the “resurrection” of the Antichrist (**Rev. 13**) via worldwide satellite communications. Also, the ability to buy and sell via an identification “mark” such as invisible inks, the imbedding of computer microchips (already occurring in Puerto Rico, the United States, Mexico, etc.-see below), computer scanning, etc., is only now emerging. The imbedding of microchips the size of a grain of rice under the skin of dogs and cats has been going on for several years. Recently (July, 2006) the implanting of such identification chips began on humans! A public media announcement from Puerto Rico on July 2, 2006 stated that **four hospitals** “*will begin implanting a Florida made microchip the size of a rice grain in patients who suffer from illnesses that cause memory loss, like Alzheimer’s disease...It is inserted in the forearm, costs \$200 and is voluntary...’It is a way to offer an additional service...on a population that has memory*

² Note: For a very helpful & eye-opening expose of the source of the “Positive Confession Movement”, see “*The Seduction of Christianity*” by Dave Hunt (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1985). A few other books explaining and documenting the current departure from biblical truth and towards man-centered ministry philosophies & methodologies include: “*No Place for Truth-Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology*”, David Wells (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993); “*Dining With the Devil*”, Os Guinness (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993); “*The Bleeding of the Evangelical Church*” by David Wells (Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, Scotland, 1995); “*Prophets of PsychoHeresy I & II*”, Dr.’s Martin & Deidre Bobgan (Eastgate Publishers: Santa Barbara, California, 1989 & 1990); etc.

³ For further help see “*Evangelicalism Divided*” & “*The Unresolved Controversy: Unity with Non-Evangelicals*” both by Iain Murray (The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, Scotland, 2000 & 2001 respectively); “*The Tragedy of Compromise*” by Ernest Pickering (BJU Press: Greenville, SC, 1994); “*The Great Evangelical Disaster*” by Francis Schaeffer (Crossway Books: Westchester, Illinois, 1984), etc.

problems...or great health problems,' said Nelson Martinez, coordinator of operation for Hostos Medical Services... (and) In February, A Cincinnati surveillance equipment company became the first U.S. business to allow employees who voluntarily got chip implants to use them to enter secure rooms. Some employees in the Mexico attorney general's office have also been implanted with chips for this use." (www.theledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?Date=20060702...).

A Fox News report July 15, 2006 stated: "***New Jersey Hospital to Implant Microchips in Patients' Arms.*** In a new test program, Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey plans to implant patients suffering from chronic diseases with a microchip that will give emergency room staff access to their medical information and help avoid costly or serious medical errors, the insurer said on Friday. Horizon plans to announce on Monday that it is teaming up with Hackensack University Medical Center in a pilot program where 280 patients regularly treated at the hospital will be implanted with a chip containing a code...The rice-sized microchip is implanted in a patient's arm above the elbow and can be detected using equipment at the hospital...The program is voluntary and won't cost the patient any money to participate. Patients with chronic conditions are the program's target because they are more likely to have serious medical problems that could leave them unable to communicate when they are in the emergency room, said Dr. Richard Popiel, vice president and chief medical officer at Horizon. For example, diabetics with low blood sugar may become confused or unconscious. He said Horizon will test the program for two years to see if it warrants expansion. VeriChip Corp. makes the chips and detection equipment. Hackensack already had the equipment because it was part of VeriChip's development program." (www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0.3566.203730.00.html)

18. Israel's preparations to rebuild the Temple! – Isa. 60:22; Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15-16; II Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 11:1-2; Ezek. 40-48; etc. Preparations are already well under way to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and reinstate temple worship. There are a number of Jewish groups (e.g. *The Temple Institute*), who have already fabricated most of the vessels and implements needed for use in a new (*third*) temple! Men in Jerusalem are training right now for the priesthood and priestly garments have been made! Harps for use in the anticipated upcoming temple worship continue to be handcrafted. Biblical passages describing the *Great Tribulation* and the *Millennium* refer to a future temple (above), so it will be rebuilt. A group of Jews have already cut the cornerstone! The fact that so much preparatory work has already been completed, lends further support to the belief that Christ's second coming may be near.⁴

19. Israel dwelling in their land in peace and safety. – Ezek. 38:11. This has definitely not happened yet—*not by a long shot!* But it will come eventually. There is a never-ending strong worldwide pressure to produce peace in the Middle East. Among the reasons are to ensure a constant supply of oil for world demands, stabilize the region and thus world currencies, etc. This future "peace" will be short-lived and will probably dissolve around the mid-point of the Tribulation, when the Antichrist desecrates the newly rebuilt temple (cf. **Dan. 9:27** & #18 above). The culmination will apparently occur when Russia, China, Egypt and several other countries from the north, east & south eventually attack Israel and battle the Antichrist and his forces, in what is called the war of Armageddon. (cf. **Ezek. 38-39; Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 9:16; 16:12; II Thess. 2).**

Listed below are a few good books on the subject of Bible prophecy:

- Anderson, Sir Robert, "*The Coming Prince*" (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984 reprint)
- Hunt, Dave, "*Countdown to the Second Coming*" (The Berean Call: Bend, Oregon, 2005)
- Hunt, Dave, "*Global Peace & the Rise of Antichrist*" (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1990)
- MacArthur, John, "*The Second Coming*" (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 1999)
- Pentecost, J. Dwight, "*Things to Come*" (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1973)
- Ryrie, Charles, "*Come Quickly Lord Jesus-What You Need to Know About the Rapture*" (Harvest House: Eugene, Oregon, 1996)
- Shelton, Bob, "*God's Prophetic Blueprint*" (BJU Press: Greenville, South Carolina, 1985)
- Shelton, Bob "*Prophecy in Context – A Look at the Olivet Discourse*"(JourneyForth: Greenville, South Carolina, 2008)
- Showers, Renald, "*Maranatha-Our Lord Come*"(The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry: Bellmawr, New Jersey, 1995)
- Walvoord, John F., "*Armageddon, Oil & the Middle East Crisis*" (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids Michigan, 1974)

⁴ For further documentation of these things see for instance, Thomas Ice & Randall Price, "*Ready to Rebuild*" (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1992); Randall Price, "*In Search of Temple Treasures*" (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1994) & John Schmitt & J. Carl Laney, "*Messiah's Coming Temple*" (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997).