

An Overview of the Signs of the Times

What are the great variety of signs that point to the Lord's soon return?

By Dr. David R. Reagan, <https://christinprophecy.org/articles/an-overview-of-the-signs-of-the-times/>

Many people believe there is nothing that can be known about the timing of the Lord's return because Jesus said He would return like a thief in the night ([Matthew 24:42-44](#)). But Paul makes it clear in [1 Thessalonians 5:1-6](#) that Jesus' statement does not apply to believers: "*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief...*" He then proceeds to explain why: "*for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.*" Paul is referring, of course, to the light of the Holy Spirit who indwells all true believers and who can enlighten us through our study of Scripture to know the season of the Lord's return ([1 John 2:27](#)).

God's Attitude. As a matter of fact, God is obligated by His character to warn the world of the imminent return of His Son. The reason is that Jesus is returning in great wrath to "*judge and wage war*" ([Revelation 19:11](#)), and God never pours out His wrath without warning. God does not wish that any should perish, but that all should be brought to repentance ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). Therefore, God always warns before He executes His wrath. He warned the world through Noah for 120 years. He warned Sodom and Gomorrah through Abraham. He sent Jonah to warn the pagan city of Nineveh, and He sent Nahum to the same city 150 years later.

Likewise, God is warning the world today that His Son is about to return. He is calling the world to repentance. The message of the hour to unbelievers can be summed up in these words: "*Flee from the wrath that is to come by fleeing into the loving arms of Jesus now.*" Jesus came the first time as an expression of God's love; He came to die for the sins of Mankind. But when He returns, He will come in vengeance to pour out the wrath of God on those who have rejected God's love and grace.

The soon return of Jesus also carries with it a message for believers. Lukewarm Christians and carnal Christians are being called to commit their lives to holiness: "*The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*" ([Romans 13:12-14](#)).

God's Method of Warning. God is alerting believers of the soon return of His Son through what are called "signs of the times." These are prophecies concerning world events that we are told to watch for, prophecies that will identify the season of the Lord's return. The Bible is full of these signs. There are about 500 prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to the Second Coming of the Messiah. In the New Testament, one out of every 25 verses is concerned with the return of Jesus. In fact, there are so many signs that it is difficult to grasp all of them. The best way I have found to do this is to put them in categories:



1. **The Signs of Nature** — We are told to watch for earthquakes, famine, pestilence, and signs in the heavens (see [Matthew 24:7](#) and [Luke 21:11](#)). This is the least respected category of signs for several reasons. For one thing, many people simply shrug their shoulders and say, "There have always been natural calamities, so what else is new?" Note that Jesus says these signs will be like "*birth pangs*" ([Matthew 24:8](#)) that is, they will increase in frequency and intensity as the time draws near for His return. In other words, there will be more intense earthquakes and more frequent ones. That is exactly what is happening today.

Another reason these signs are given little respect is because most Christians are so rationalistic that they do not really believe in the supernatural, and they therefore find it difficult to believe that God speaks to the world through signs of nature. Yet, the Bible teaches this principle from start to finish. God dealt with the world's sin through a great flood in the days of Noah (Genesis 6). He called the nation of Judah to repentance through a

terrible locust invasion (Joel 1). In like manner, He called for the nation of Israel to repent by sending drought, windstorms, mildew, locusts, famine and pestilence ([Amos 4:6-10](#)). The prophet Haggai pointed to a drought as evidence that God was calling the people to get their priorities in order ([Haggai 1:10-11](#)).

The New Testament begins with a special light in the heavens marking the birth of the Messiah ([Matthew 2:2](#)). On the day that Jesus was crucified, there was three hours of darkness and an earthquake ([Matthew 27:45-51](#)). And when Jesus returns, the earth will experience the greatest earthquake in its history as every mountain is lowered, every valley is raised, and every island is moved ([Revelation 16:17-21](#)). God has always spoken through signs of nature, and He continues to do so today. We had better pay close attention to them.

2. **The Signs of Society** — Jesus said that society will become increasingly lawless and immoral as the time approaches for His return. In fact, He said it would become as evil as it was in the days of Noah ([Matthew 24:12,37-39](#)). Paul paints a chilling picture of end time society in [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#). He says it will be characterized by three loves: the love of self (humanism), the love of money (materialism), and the love of pleasure (hedonism). He then points out that the payoff of this carnal lifestyle will be what the philosophers call nihilism that is, a society wallowing in despair. Men's minds will become depraved ([Romans 1:28](#)), and people will call evil good and good evil ([Isaiah 5:20](#)). We are seeing these prophecies fulfilled before our eyes today as we watch our society reject its Christian heritage and descend into a hellish pit of lawlessness, immorality, and despair. Even worse, we are exporting our nihilism around the world through our immoral and violent movies and television programs.

3. **The Spiritual Signs** — There are both positive and negative spiritual signs that we are to watch for. The negative ones include the appearance of false christs and their cults ([Matthew 24:5,11,24](#)), the apostasy of the professing church ([2 Thessalonians 2:3](#)), an outbreak of Satanism ([1 Timothy 4:1](#)), and the persecution of faithful Christians ([Matthew 24:9](#)).

These negative spiritual signs began to appear in the mid-19th Century when Christian cults started forming. First came the Mormons, then the Jehovah's Witnesses, and then a great variety of spiritualist groups like the Church of Christ Scientists and the Unity Church.



The apostasy of the mainline Christian denominations began in the 1920's when the German school of higher criticism invaded American seminaries and undermined the authority of the Scriptures, teaching that the Bible is Man's search for God rather than God's revelation to Man.

During the 1960's Satanism exploded on the American scene and has since been exported worldwide through American movies, books, and television programs. Dabbling in the occult has become commonplace in the form of astrology, numerology, crystal gazing, transcendental meditation, and channeling. The whole trend has consummated in the appearance of the New Age Movement with its teaching that Man is God.

As society has secularized, true Christianity has come under increasing attack. Judeo-Christian values, once the foundation of Western Civilization, are now openly mocked, and those who still adhere to them are castigated as "intolerant fundamentalists" by the media.

The positive spiritual signs include the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world ([Matthew 24:14](#)), a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit ([Joel 2:28-32](#)), and spiritual illumination to understand prophecies that have been "sealed up" until the end times ([Daniel 12:4,9](#)). As with the negative signs, we are seeing these positive signs fulfilled...

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