

# When Is Christ Coming?; The Twenty Signs Of the Bible Give Us a Clue

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Millions of Americans are caught up in a desperate attempt to know the future. The phenomenal rise in the sale of crystal balls, Ouija boards and fortune-telling tarot cards is only a part of the new “groping” into the future.

A couple of years ago I was having breakfast with Walter Reuther. Reuther said, “Science could bring para dise to earth by the year 2000.” I replied, “There is one flaw. No one has fed into the computers the facts about man's moral weakness, his tendency toward hate, lust, greed that produce racism, crime, war and a thousand other evils.”

The predictions of future events occupy approximately one quarter of all the Bible: The teaching of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is dealt with in some 1,800 passages in the Bible—over 318 of these being in the New Testament.

The prophecies of the Bible do not predict a world of gradual progress toward a materialistic paradise. They see a world torn by lawlessness, war, famines and pestilences on a scale that only God himself can terminate if the human race is to survive.

Constantly throughout the Bible the phrase “the last days” or “that day” or “the day” or “the day of the Lord” is used, indicating in most places an “X” period in history when dramatic events will take place. These events will culminate in God's intervention and the literal return of Jesus Christ to this planet.

The Bible does not teach that the earth or the human race will come to an end. The Bible teaches that the world will be renovated by fire. This fire will destroy all that is evil and prepare the earth for the Kingdom of God.

It will be a Kingdom that will bring about the “new social order.” There will be the abolition of social injustice, war, poverty, disease and racism.

The inevitable question comes, “When is Christ coming? Do you think His coming is near?”

In 1860 the French chemist, Marcellin Berthelot, said, “Within a hundred years of physical and chemical science man will know what the atom is. It is my belief when science reaches this stage, God will come down to earth with His big ring of keys and will say to humanity, ‘Gentlemen, it is closing time.’ ”

One morning on the Mount of Olives when the disciples were alone with Jesus they asked him the same ques tion, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Jesus warned them on at least two occasions to beware of setting dates.

The Bible teaches that there will be a future generation with certain characteristics to indicate that the end of the age is near.

There are well over twenty distinct signs that were left by the prophets, Jesus and the apostles that we are to look for. Every one of them is in a state of fulfillment at this moment.

For example, Jesus characterized the mental state of the world just before His return. He said there would be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity” (Luke 21:25). To be distressed is to be under pressure; perplexity means bewilderment. In other words, He said the generation before His return would be under such severe pressure from every point of view that there would be no apparent way out.

Another example has to do with the moral state of the world. Jesus said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage” (Luke 17:26-27). This indicates a breakdown of the home and extremely loose morals.

His prediction concerning war would be another example. He said, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars . . . for nation shall rise against nation” (Matthew 24:67). The Bible indicates that towards the end of the age wars will become more widespread, more devastating and more frequent. These wars will all culminate in what is called “the battle of Armageddon.”

And then there is the great emphasis on the word “peace.” The Apostle Paul said, “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (I Thessalonians 5:3). Never has there been so much talk of peace.

Another example is when Jesus said, “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). Today by radio, television and the printed page the Gospel is being proclaimed around the world for the first time in history.

However, the greatest sign of all are the signs transpiring in the Middle East. For over three thousand years the Bible has said that the final events of history and the Second Coming of Christ would center around the nation of Israel. Until May 14, 1948, there was no nation of Israel. Jesus predicted, in Luke 21:24, that “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” There are hundreds of passages in the Bible that indicate that Israel will once again occupy center stage in world affairs.

I do not know the hour, the day, the month of the year. It is wrong and un-Biblical to try to set the date of Christ's return. God alone knows when He will come. Yet the Bible says that He will come back to this earth. What we see happening today may well be a preparation for God's intervention in human affairs, with the coming of Jesus Christ and the setting up of a new social order. Thus the future does not belong to Communism! The future does not belong to capitalism! The future belongs to God!

# Sequence of Events of the Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

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1. Rapture! (I Thessalonians 4:13-18)
2. War breaks out in Middle East. (Ezekiel 38)
3. United States is devastated by the Rapture. (I Thessalonians 4)
4. Israel is left to go it alone. (Ezekiel 38,39)
5. This war is at the beginning of the Tribulation. (Ezekiel 38:11,12)
6. The Antichrist confirms the peace treaty. (Daniel 9:26,27)
7. Israel rebuilds the Temple. (Daniel 9:27)
8. The treaty is broken at the dedication of the Temple by the demand for idolatry. (Revelation 13:14-18) (II Thessalonians 2:4)
9. The wrath of the Antichrist is pointed at Israel. (Revelation 13)
10. Armageddon and the Second Coming. (Revelation 16 and 19)