

10 Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ



What on earth is going on?

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Things are not going well for the human race. The philosopher, Noam Chomsky, wrote: "We're approaching the most dangerous point in human history... We are now facing the prospect of destruction of organised human life on Earth." (Spectator Magazine April 2022).

He is not the only one fearing for the future of the human race. Multiple crises are hitting the earth, with the potential to bring the end of life as we know it. Here are some things happening now.

- Extreme heat, droughts, forest fires, floods, and even very cold weather in various places.
- Global food production and distribution in decline, with the UN warning of a coming famine which could affect up to a billion people.
- War, bad government, poverty and violence have brought some nations to the brink of collapse, sending refugees in search of a safer home.
- Family life and moral values under attack. Many people find it hard to cope with the stress of modern life.
- Covid has not gone away with warnings of coming variants and future pandemics threatening another round of health crisis. Side effects of vaccination programme causing health concerns also.
- A growing financial crisis in the world as prices rise and there is a shortage of supplies. In many countries millions are crushed by poverty. The economies of many nations are massively in debt, as economists warn of impending economic crisis worldwide.

You can read about all this every day in your newspaper, but there is one piece of information you will not find in the news. All these things line up with the prophecies of the Bible for the last days of this age. Here are some examples:

- An increase in wars, famines, plagues and earthquakes. Luke 21.10-11
- The earth full of violence and immorality and many people afraid of what is going to happen. Luke 17.26-27, Luke 21.25-6, Genesis 6.11. Lawlessness will abound. Matthew 24.12, 2 Thessalonians 2.1-12
- Widespread pollution of the earth and a crisis in the environment. Isaiah 24, Revelation 8.6-11
- A situation in the Middle East, concerning Israel and the surrounding nations, which will bring about the last war in history before Jesus returns. Ezekiel 36-9, Zechariah 12-14, Luke 21
- A globalisation process backed by hi tech developments which will bring the world together in a dictatorial system controlling the world. Revelation 13, Daniel 12.4
- An attack on the Bible from all sides, but the message of the Gospel reaching all nations despite opposition and persecution. Matthew 24.9-14, Matthew 28.18-20

Not long before He left this world, Jesus' disciples asked Him about His Second Coming:

'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the

age?" And Jesus answered and said to them: "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 rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.'

Matthew 24.3-8

He gave more details of this in what is known as the Olivet Discourse in the Gospels of Matthew, chapter 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament also spoke of these things and the last book of the Bible, Revelation, tells us what will happen in the final seven years before Jesus returns.

When you study all these prophecies and then compare them with all that is happening in the world today you see that it is all coming together according to Bible prophecy. The Bible compares these signs to the pains of a woman in labour. In childbirth the woman experiences labour pains (contractions) which become more intense the nearer she gets to the birth of the child. Once this process starts it cannot be reversed until the child is born. So once the last days' labour pains begin, there will be a series of painful events, which will not be reversed until the final event, which is the physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

When Jesus comes again to the earth, He will come differently from the way He came in the first time, when He came in humility, to suffer and die for the sins of the world. This time He will come as the King of kings with all the power of God to judge the world and save it from destruction. He will bring an end to sin and wickedness and establish the age of righteousness and peace, that the Hebrew prophets foretold (Isaiah 2.1-4, Daniel 7.13-14, Zechariah 14, Revelation 11.15 and 20).

At some time in this process God will supernaturally take those who believe in Jesus as Saviour and Lord out of the world into His presence in an event called the rapture of the church. We don't know the day or the hour when this will happen so Jesus tells us to be ready all the time (Matthew 24.36-44). This is what will happen:

'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.'

1 Thessalonians 4.16-18

You will find more about this in the final section of this booklet from page 30-34. Before that we will look at 10 signs of the Second Coming of Jesus. Read this through and consider whether these things are happening now and if they really do point to the Second Coming of Jesus. Then consider whether you are ready for this coming event. This is the most important issue facing every person alive today on this planet. How we respond will determine our destiny for ever. So please read this through and judge for yourself whether we really are living in the last days before Jesus returns. Then make your decision as to how you will respond.

Ten Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Sign 1: Increase in wars and violence

Jesus said: *'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.'*

Luke 21.10

In the book of Revelation, we read of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: *'Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.'* Revelation 6.4

These verses tell us that in the last days before Jesus' return, there will be an increase in conflicts within nations and between nations. Over the last hundred years we have seen this happening. The First World War from 1914-18 resulted in around 20 million deaths, civilians and soldiers. Out of World War 1 came the conditions which brought Hitler to power in Germany in 1933 and so led to the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. This caused the greatest slaughter in war known to humanity, around 70-80 million deaths, soldiers and civilians and the atrocity of the Holocaust with the murder of 6 million Jews.

Out of the Second World War came the Cold War in which the NATO countries of western Europe and America were against the Soviet Union and Communism. There were revolutions and conflicts around the world, for example Korea and Vietnam, bringing many more deaths. The Cold War nearly became hot at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, when for a few days the world stood on the brink of a nuclear exchange between the USA and the Soviet Union, which could have destroyed civilisation.

In the 1980s Communism in Europe began to crumble, leading to the overthrow of Communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe. In 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved. Former countries under Soviet control from the Baltic states to Bulgaria, joined NATO and the EU. This signalled the end of the Cold War, but was a humiliation to Russia, as it saw countries which were once under its influence go over to the other side. Now we see war in Ukraine as Russia tries to bring this country back to its sphere of influence, while Ukraine wants to join NATO and the EU. This has sparked the biggest war in Europe since World War 2, with talk of nuclear weapons being used.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Middle East has seen a series of conflicts over the land of Israel. In 2023 Hamas terrorists attacked Israel and Israel responded with its invasion of Gaza. At the time of writing there are fears of this conflict engulfing the whole region. Over the past 40

years the whole area of the Middle East has become extremely unstable with conflicts between Iran and Iraq, and the 9/11 attack on the USA leading to the 'War on Terror' bringing a US led coalition to fight wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2011 the Arab Spring brought a series of uprisings in Arab countries against their rulers. The most serious in Syria led to the Syrian civil war which has resulted in hundreds of thousands losing their lives, and millions of refugees. It has also led to forces from Russia, Iran and Turkey coming into this strategic country to the north of Israel. Behind all this we see a potential line up of powers involved in the Gog and Magog war prophesied in Ezekiel 38-39.

There are also conflicts within nations and an increase in violence. In Matthew 24.7 Jesus spoke of 'nation against nation' as a sign of the last days. The word for nation used here is 'ethnos' from which we have the word ethnic. This means conflicts within nations between different groups of people, as we have seen in racial and religious conflicts around the world. Africa has seen a number of conflicts of this nature in countries like Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Ruanda, Nigeria, Somalia. Terrorism has affected many areas of the world as people use force to impose their ideas or religion on others. The drug trade has been another source of violence, with gangs fighting over profits from selling drugs, even involving children. Central and South American countries have seen conflict caused by the drug trade. There are an estimated 40 million people in some form of slavery today, cruelly exploited by forms of slave labour and violent gangs.

Jesus also said: *'As it was in the days of Noah so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.'* Luke 17.26-27. The Bible says that in the days of Noah *'the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence.'* Genesis 6.11. In the time of Noah, the Bible says that there was something happening in the thought life of human beings causing them to act in wicked ways: *'Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'* Genesis 6.5. Wherever you look in the world today this is happening. TV and films show images of violence and cruelty. There are computer games, which glorify aggression and killing. Add to this the influence of drink, drugs and the occult and you have a potent cocktail leading to violence and uncleanness in human behaviour. Western nations are seeing a rise in violent crime and random attacks as a result of this.

The way of violence is literally a dead end for those who follow it. By contrast, Jesus taught us to seek love, forgiveness and reconciliation. He said:

'This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.'

John 15.12

Sign 2. Earthquakes, Famines and pestilence

'And there will be great earthquakes in various places and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.'

Luke 21.10-11

Earthquakes. Statistics show a steady increase in earthquakes and volcanoes over the past 50 years. Since 2020 there have been significant earthquakes Iran, China, Afghanistan, Indonesia, New Zealand, Japan, Myanmar, Honduras, Iceland, USA, the Philippines, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. There have been volcanic eruptions at Mt Etna, Krakatoa in Indonesia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Hawaii, Mexico, Kamchatka peninsula, and Iceland. There have also been minor earthquakes in Israel, where the great earthquake of the last days will take place (Ezekiel 38.19, Revelation 11.13).

In Revelation 16.18 we read of *'a great earthquake such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since there were men on the earth.'*

Famines. David Beasley, director of the UN World Food Programme, said that the planet is facing the "worst humanitarian crisis since World War Two". This could cause one-fifth of the entire population of the globe to descend into absolute poverty and hunger. He cited wars in Ukraine, Syria, elsewhere, frequent natural disasters and economic crises in countries like Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Ethiopia. A significant amount of grain has been removed from the world market due to the war in Ukraine, while droughts, floods, heatwaves, and unusually cold weather in some places have affected food production around the world. Shortages of fertiliser and rising costs of fuel are causing farmers to cut back on production of food, while animal diseases are causing millions of pigs, chickens and fish to be slaughtered and removed from the food chain. The Green Agenda is bringing in regulations to cut carbon emissions, which are making it unprofitable for some farmers to continue to operate.

Revelation 6.5-6, the third seal speaks of famine, the third horseman of the apocalypse: *'So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine"'*. A denarius is a day's wages, so about £50 - £70 in our money, which will just buy you a very small amount of food, not enough to live on.

Pestilences. In recent years we have seen the spread of new diseases and viruses like AIDS, Sars and Ebola. Unhealthy life styles, the ease of world

travel, biological labs and human interference with nature are threatening the world with new and deadly viruses which can spread rapidly around the world.

Massive disruption was caused by the Covid 19 pandemic which spread from Wuhan in China right round the world in a few months during 2020. Governments imposed lockdowns in their countries, confining people to their homes and shutting down businesses, schools, places of worship and entertainment. Nothing like this has ever been tried in human history, with enormous disruption to society. A mass vaccination programme has been in force with nearly 5 billion people having received up to two doses of the vaccine. This is credited with slowing the spread of the virus, but some medics have raised concerns about the safety and effectiveness of the newly created mRNA vaccines. Fully vaccinated people still catch and pass on the disease and end up in hospital as a result. Repeated doses are said to cause unwanted side effects including immune deficiency, an increase in blood clots and fertility problems.

At the time of writing the World Health Organisation is warning of coming pandemics and the need for further lockdowns and repeat vaccinations. They have warned of a coming pandemic with something they call 'Disease X', which they say may cause 20 times the number of deaths than Covid. There are biological laboratories working on creating a vaccine for this as yet unknown disease. The WHO is also calling for a pandemic treaty which would give it the ability to dictate to governments what they should do in the event of another pandemic. Critics of this process warn that it can lead to control of people's behaviour and movements by an unaccountable globalist organisation.

Jesus spoke of pestilence / plagues as a sign of the last days and 'the pale horse' of Revelation 6 has been associated with pestilence causing mass death.

Sign 3: Natural disasters and the environment

More than four times the number of natural disasters are occurring now than did two decades ago, according to a report by Oxfam. The report speaks of more frequent, more unpredictable and extreme weather events that are affecting more people. A report by the international network Future Earth, based on the work of 222 leading scientists from 52 countries, says 'Humanity is under threat from perfect storm of crises. Climate, extreme weather, biodiversity, food and water crises could lead to 'systemic collapse'. The world is facing a series of interlinked emergencies that are threatening the existence of humans.' Many of these extreme weather events

are happening in places where food is grown adding to the problems of food production and famine in many parts of the world.

There are a number of environmental emergencies around the world, with increase of the frequency of floods, droughts, heat waves, extreme heat and cold in different places, hurricanes and tornados.

Generally all this is blamed on 'Anthropomorphic (man made) climate change', but there are also those who say it is due to changes in the sun, ocean currents and wind, and weakening of the earth's magnetic fields. Whatever the reason for this unusual weather it is clear that the earth is under great stress at the present time, with drought, storms, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions taking place in different places. The prophecies of the Bible indicate that disasters affecting the earth are going to increase in the last days of this age. In Isaiah 24 we read:

'The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate.' Isaiah 24.4-6

Jesus said concerning the days before His second coming:

'There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ... And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'
Luke 21.11, 25-6

Revelation 8 describes catastrophes hitting the earth in the great tribulation. There will be great heat, trees being burned up and waters undrinkable, as well as violent storms and natural disasters bringing famine, disease and death. Revelation 8.7-11 describes this:

'And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. ... Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven like a torch and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.' Revelation 8.7-11.

Revelation 16 speaks of a time when *'men are scorched with great heat'*. It speaks of both the River Euphrates (Revelation 16.12) and the River Nile (Isaiah 19.5-8) drying up in the last days of this age. These were the two great rivers of the ancient world, known to the prophets.

In Luke 21.25-28 Jesus said people will be afraid of what is coming on the earth because of the *'distress of nations, with perplexity'*. The Greek word used here is 'aporia' which means a crisis with no way out is going to hit the earth. He went on to say: *'Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'* Luke 21.25-28. When you see these things beginning to happen you should look to Jesus and His return for your redemption / salvation.

Sign 4: Immorality and lawless behaviour

Along with great violence in the last days, the Bible also teaches that there will be lawless behaviour (rejection of the 10 commandments), and sexual immorality. Jesus said, *'And because lawlessness (wickedness) will abound, the love of many will grow cold.'* Matthew 24.12. In Psalm 2, which is a prophecy of the last days, it says *'The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed'* (Hebrew means His Messiah or Christ), *saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us."* This means people will want to reject God's commandments which are seen as a restricting influence and to make up their own rules on how to behave.

Jesus said it would be like the days of Lot (Luke 17.28-9). We read about Lot in Genesis 19, where we find him *'sitting in the gate of Sodom'*. Sodom was a wicked city full of sexual immorality imposing itself on the rest of society. As a result: *Lot was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked.* 2 Peter 2.7.

Today we see a worldwide rejection of the Bible's teaching that one man married to one woman is God's will for sexuality, family life and caring for children. All the evidence shows that children brought up in a stable family by their own father and mother have a much better chance in life than those brought up in alternative arrangements. Despite this, governments, the education system and the entertainment industry, especially in western nations, are constantly attacking the Bible's teaching on family values and sex and sexuality.

As a result, we have a rise in divorce, multiple sex partners and abortion. Child abuse and prostitution are on the increase and much of our popular entertainment is low-level pornography, with hard-core porn easily

available on the Internet and on cable TV. We now have homosexual marriage being accepted in law and LGBT ideology being imposed on society so that to speak out against it can cost you your job in many places. Children are being taught that homosexuality is equal to heterosexuality and that gender is fluid so they can change sex if they choose to. This goes against Bible teaching that homosexual practice is against God's order in creation (Romans 1.18-32) and that humans are made in God's image as male and female (Genesis 1.27) and this cannot be changed.

We are told that modern attitudes to sex bring freedom and that God's laws are repressive. In fact, the opposite is true. Supposed sexual liberation has ended up with people being confused about their identity, often enslaved by destructive habits and desires, and living in insecure and often abusive relationships, where there is no real love or commitment. The breakdown of the family has resulted in great damage being done to children living in such situations. Modern culture has also sanctioned the mass murder of unborn babies in the womb through abortion with the deceitful slogan 'a woman's right to choose'. In fact, this denies the right of the unborn child to choose life.

God's commandments are given to us for our good. I once stood on the banks of the River Ouse in the low-lying area of East Anglia in England. At this point the level of the river is higher than the surrounding countryside. There are high banks, or levees, which keep the river within its boundaries and prevent it from flooding the surrounding countryside. The Lord showed me this as a picture of His commandments. If the river flows between the banks it is a force for good in the area. But if the banks are removed it becomes a force for destruction with a flood which will submerge the region and make it uninhabitable. The same applies to human sexuality. If it flows between the boundaries which God has set, with sexual activity kept within the marriage of a man and a woman committed to each other and to their children, it is a gift of God which is for good. But if those boundaries are removed it becomes a flood of evil, bringing destruction and misery to many.

In the book of Revelation, we read that when the judgements of God strike the world, most people will *'not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.'* Revelation 9.20-21

If you took murder and violence, sorcery (the occult), sexual immorality and theft (crime) out of much of popular entertainment today, there would not be much left. With so many evil influences in our culture, it is not surprising that people do not feel they need to repent of these things. But they do because these are bringing God's judgement on the world.

The result of all this is the kind of behaviour that Paul warned would dominate the last days of this age: *'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.'* 2 Timothy 3.1-5

The good news is that if we have sinned in this area of our life, we can find forgiveness and new life in Jesus: *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'* 2 Corinthians 5.17

'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1.7-9

Sign 5: The rebirth of Israel and the battle for Jerusalem

One of the most extraordinary events of modern times has been the rebirth of Israel. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust, the UN passed the resolution to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state in November 1947. This led to Israel becoming a nation again after nearly 2000 years of Jewish dispersion when David Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv on May 14 1948.

How can we explain Israel's remarkable rebirth in our time? The Bible teaches that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the book of Genesis, chapters 15 and 17. According to this covenant, Abraham would have a great number of descendants, like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the heavens. He would also inherit the land of Canaan (Israel). Years later at the time of the Exodus and the giving of the Law (Torah) at Sinai, God promised Moses that if the people of Israel were faithful to Him and His commandments He would bless them in the land and make them a great nation, but if they were unfaithful and worshipped idols they would be scattered to the nations of the world (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28). He also promised that even if they were scattered to the farthest nation He would bring them back to this land (Deuteronomy 30). The events of the Old Testament show how this covenant worked out in the history of the Jewish people. The Hebrew prophets foretold the dispersion of the Jewish people into the

nations and their return to Israel in the last days of this age. Isaiah speaks of a return of the people from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11.11-12, 43.5-6).

Ezekiel prophesies a time when the land would be desolate, but would become fertile again as the people of Israel return to it: *'But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield fruit to My people Israel for they are about to come.'* Ezekiel 36.8

This passage also implies that the return in the last days will be in unbelief, but that God will bring the people to new spiritual birth: *'For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all countries and bring you into your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. ... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.'* Ezekiel 36.24-26

According to Jeremiah chapter 30, the salvation of Israel and this spiritual rebirth will come about through a time of trouble, just as Jesus said would happen in the days before His return. Jeremiah says it will be like 'a woman in labour' (Jeremiah 30.6), which connects this to the end time period. At this time God will intervene to save Israel physically and spiritually.

The rebirth of Israel has coincided with changes in the Muslim world. The discovery of vast quantities of oil in the Persian Gulf region has brought wealth into this area. 70% of the world's oil reserves are to be found in the Middle East, about 25% of them to be found in Saudi Arabia. Wealth from oil has transformed what was once a neglected part of the world into a region which now has great influence in the world. Some of the money from oil is being used to fund the spread of Islam and the building of mosques around the world.

The restoration of Israel as a Jewish state creates a problem for Islam. As far as Islamic belief goes the destiny of the world is to be converted to Islam. Therefore, once a country has been ruled by Muslims it must remain Islamic until the end of days. Israel / Palestine was ruled by Muslims for most of the period from 638 onwards and so it should be ruled by Muslims not Jews today, according to the Muslim world view. This gives a reason for the hostility towards Israel from the surrounding nations prophesied in Psalm 83 which says that these countries will make a confederacy saying: *'Come let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more.'* The charter of Hamas calls for the destruction of Israel according to Islamic law. It begins with these words: Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it. Iran, which is backing the radical Islamist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, also calls for the destruction of Israel for reasons based on this Muslim world view.

The day after David Ben Gurion proclaimed the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 five Arab armies invaded Israel with the intention of cutting off the nation and removing the name of Israel from the map. Numerically superior and far better armed, they should have been able to do this easily, but Israel won its War of Independence and every war it has fought so far ever since. It has also ended up with more territory after the wars of 1948-9 and 1967.

In the Six Day War of 1967 when President Nasser of Egypt announced his intention to throw the Jews into the sea and make an end of Israel, the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were defeated again. Israel was victorious in just six days, gaining control of the Golan Heights, the Sinai, the whole of Jerusalem and the West Bank. The most significant area is Jerusalem and the West Bank, which is the heartland of biblical Israel, Judea and Samaria. This area has been the focus of world attention as the nation's seek for a settlement of who should rule Jerusalem.

This fulfils the prophecy of Zechariah 12:2-3 which speaks of Jerusalem being a 'burdensome stone, burdening all nations' – in other words a focus of world attention. In the past years we have seen numerous attempts to resolve the issue of who should rule Jerusalem involving the great powers of our age, the USA, the EU, Russia and the United Nations, seeking a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They want to divide the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem between the Jewish state and a proposed Palestinian Arab state. Joel 3:1-2 describes this as being the world agenda in the last days.

Another scripture which is in the frame for our time is Ezekiel 38-9, which describes a coming conflict scheduled for the last days of this age. This attack on Israel will be led by an alliance of countries coming down from the north in the battle known in the Bible as '*Gog and Magog*.' This alliance is led by a great power which comes from the uttermost north named as Prince of Rosh (or chief prince), of Meshech and Tubal. Bible commentators have identified the power to the north as Russia and Meshech as Moscow. This power comes against Israel with its allies including Persia (Iran) and Togarmah (Turkey). An alternative view is that Turkey and a Muslim alliance lead this end time attack on Israel, as part of the Muslim view of the last days and the coming of the Mahdi and return of the Islamic Isa. In Ezekiel's prophecy this army will be supernaturally destroyed by God on the '*mountains of Israel*'.

The Book of Revelation chapter 16 prophesies that the armies of the world will gather at Armageddon, which means the hill of Megiddo, a place in the north of Israel. A number of passages in the Old Testament, including Joel 3 and Zechariah 12-14, describe the last war as these armies move south to Jerusalem.

At this point Jesus will return to the earth with all power to bring an end to war and set up His Messianic kingdom, ruling the world from restored Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12.10 has a remarkable prophecy which says: *'And I will pour on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn.'*

Here we have a prophecy of one who has been pierced (died by crucifixion) and who comes to save the remnant of Israel both physically and spiritually in the last days of this age. This speaks of Jesus the Messiah who came once to save us from our sins by his death on the cross and who is coming again with all power at His disposal to save Israel and the world from destruction. The implication is that Jesus will be revealed to Israel as the Messiah in the days before His return.

This will be followed by the Second Coming of the Messiah to the earth. At His first coming Jesus fulfilled a number of Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. For example:

	Prophesied in	Fulfilled in
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7.14	Matthew 1.18-25
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5.2	Matthew 2.1-12
Performed miracles	Isaiah 61.1	Matthew 9.35
Taught in parables	Psalms 78.2	Matthew 13.34
Death by crucifixion	Psalms 22.15,	Luke 23.33
Buried in rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53.9	Matthew 27.57-60
Rose again from the dead	Psalms 16.10-11	Luke 24.5-6
Sacrificed for sin	Isaiah 53.6	1 Corinthians 15.3-5
Message for the world	Isaiah 45.22-23	Matthew 28.18-20
His sacrificial death for the sins of the world took place before the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD	Daniel 9.26	Luke 19.41-44

These are just some of the many prophecies of the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled with 100% accuracy at His first coming. We have a more detailed list of prophecies fulfilled by Jesus available on request. We have confidence that He will fulfil the prophecies of the reigning Messianic King at His second coming. The prophecies of the New Testament also indicate that in the days before His return there will be a rebirth of Israel as a Jewish nation, with its capital in Jerusalem.

Just before the crucifixion Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people to the nations Luke 19.41-44, 21.20-24. This prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70. He said this

would happen *'because you did not know the time of your visitation'* Luke 19.44. While the religious leaders mostly rejected Jesus as Messiah, many of the common people listened to what He said, and the Gospel went out into the world because of the witness of the Jewish disciples of Jesus.

The prophecy of Jeremiah 31.35-37 indicates that the Jewish people will remain a people as long as the sun, the moon and the stars still shine in the sky. It is clear that Jesus expected the Jewish people to remain an identifiable people during this age. He also said they would return to Jerusalem: *'Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.'* Luke 21.24

He said that the people living in Jerusalem at the end of this age would greet Him as the Messiah, with the words: *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'* (Matthew 23.39). This is the traditional Jewish greeting for the coming of the Messiah.

According to Zechariah 14.4, the Messiah will come and stand on the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem, the same place Jesus ascended into heaven from. The angel told the disciples that He would return in the same way He left the earth (Acts 1.11). He will then take up His reign as *'King over all the earth'* (Zechariah 14.9). Zechariah 14 shows the same sequence of events as Revelation 19, when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of lords with all power at His disposal to bring an end to war and the activities of the devil.

At this time, He will fulfil the prophetic hopes of the reigning King Messiah bringing peace to Israel and to the world. Revelation 20 tells us Jesus will remain on the earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20), during which time He will rule the world from restored Jerusalem and fulfil the prophecies of the reigning King Messiah (Isaiah 2.1-4, Jeremiah 23.5-6, Ezekiel 40-48, Daniel 7.13-14, Zechariah 14). At the end of this period He will cause the actual end of the world, when God will create new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3.10-13, Revelation 21).

Sign 6: Globalisation

Up until relatively recently in human history nations and continents were separated by great distances which only a few intrepid explorers and merchants ever crossed. Most people never travelled far from the area they were born in. Today we can travel round the world in 24 hours and send messages instantly to the other side of the world. There has been an explosion of technology, which has totally transformed every aspect of life.

The advances in science and technology have brought great benefits to many

but also new problems. As international travel, commerce and modern means of communication have shrunk the world into a 'global village', the problems of humanity have also become international ones - drugs, terrorism, spread of weapons of mass destruction, economic crises, environmental pollution, new diseases, international crime, gulf between rich and poor nations, refugees and asylum, and so on.

In order to deal with such problems, we see the growth of global institutions – the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Interpol, International bodies for refugees, human rights, the environment etc. We also see blocs of nations emerging, like the European Union. In recent years some EU countries have moved closer together with a common currency, its own president, foreign policy and legal system, while Britain has moved away from the EU.

There are a number of forces calling for a change in the way the world is run along the lines of some kind of global government. They say this will save the world from the ravages of climate change and the coronavirus. The World Economic Forum, a powerful alliance of business, political and economic forces, is working on a plan called Global Reset 2021: "Every country, from the United States to China, must participate, and every industry, from oil and gas to tech, must be transformed," wrote its founder Klaus Schwab. "In short, we need a 'Great Reset' of capitalism."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for "a new model of global governance, a new social contract and a new global deal to ensure that power, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level." This lines up with the UN's Sustainable Development Plan, Agenda 21, which it wants in place by 2030. According to UN publication "Agenda 21: The Earth Summit Strategy to Save our Planet:" "Agenda 21 proposes an array of actions which are intended to be implemented by every person on Earth... it calls for specific changes in the activities of all people... Effective execution of Agenda 21 will require a profound reorientation of all humans, unlike anything the world has ever experienced." If you follow through what it is saying it is looking for some kind of global government to redistribute wealth, reduce or end private property, control energy and energy production, transport, industry, food production, development, water availability, population size and growth.

Some see this as a good development, while others are afraid that it will lead to a global dictatorship. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation show that at the end of this age there will be a global form of government which will bring to power the Antichrist or the Beast, who will have control of the world system according to Revelation 13.

There are different views on what this empire will be – the European Union, the United Nations or an Islamic empire arising around Turkey. Concerning the EU there is a statue of the mythical Europa (a beautiful woman) riding the bull (the Greek god Zeus) outside the European Council building in Brussels. In Revelation 17.1-5 the image of the woman riding the beast is used of the end time Antichrist system. The European Parliament building in Strasbourg is modelled on a painting by the artist Breughel of the Tower of Babel. Revelation 17 connects the antichrist system to Mystery Babylon (Babylon = Babel in Hebrew). According to Daniel 7.7-8 and 9.26, the Antichrist will have a connection to Rome. Revelation 17.9-11 also implies the beast (antichrist) comes out of a revived Roman Empire.

Another view is that the antichrist arises out of a global entity like the UN. Revelation 17.12-14 speaks of ten kings who *'are of one mind and they will give their power and authority to the beast.'* Interestingly, there are globalist blueprints which divide the world up into 10 regions of the coming world government. It is likely that any such world government would be a fragile coalition which is what the Bible prophecies imply. In Daniel 2.42, we read of the 'feet of clay', a symbolic description of this 'kingdom': *'And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.'* As iron and clay do not hold together so this final world government will fragment in the last days.

The Bible prophecies imply that this final world government will come in offering good things – peace and safety to the people. But it will deliver the worst dictatorship in history, with its power coming from the devil: *'The dragon (Satan) gave him (the beast) his power, his throne, and great authority. It will last for 42 months or 3 ½ years. He was given great authority for 42 months ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation.'* (Revelation 13.5,7)

He persecutes those who believe in Jesus and has an image made of himself which everyone is required to worship (Revelation 13.7, 11-15). He brings in an economic system whereby you cannot buy or sell unless you have a number with the *'mark of the beast ... 666.'* (Revelation 13.16-18). His rule will be shattered by the Second Coming of Jesus in power and glory at the end of this age (Revelation 19.11-21).

Today we see signs that humanity is moving in the direction of the last days world government of the antichrist. The next sign also gives some indication of how this may come about.

Sign 7: Increase in technology

Until relatively recently in human history, if you wanted to travel anywhere in the world, the fastest you could go was the speed of a horse. If you wanted to send a message anywhere the fastest you could do it was to write it down and give it to someone to carry at the speed of a horse to its destination. If you wanted to kill people in battle you had to do it one by one with sword, spear or arrow. Now we can travel to the other side of the world in a day or two by plane and cross the average country in a few hours by car or train. We can send messages instantly anywhere in the world using phones and computers and see what is happening in distant countries as it takes place on our TV screens. Humans can kill thousands of people at the press of a button in one moment by missiles launched miles away from their target. Technology has made some spectacular advances in our time, many of which have brought great benefits to people, giving us possessions, labour saving devices and comfort which previous generations could only have dreamed about. Advanced medicine has given us better healthcare, longer lives and recovery from diseases which would have shortened our lives in previous generations. Computers and the Internet have opened up an almost unlimited amount of information for us.

The downside of our technology is the pollution of the environment, the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' and its potential to create the means to enslave us in a technological tyranny.

The Bible gives us some interesting insights into this subject. According to Daniel 12.4 at *'the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.'* Daniel 12.4. In our time we have seen a great increase in world travel and in knowledge brought about by the development of technology. This verse in Daniel implies this will also be a sign of the last days. As people go 'to and fro', knowledge increases and a global economic and technical system is emerging. This has developed international institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and so on.

The advent of computer technology and the Internet has created new ways of bringing nations together. Information and knowledge are developing so fast that what was the latest piece of equipment a few years ago is already out of date. Now they are developing quantum computers, able to do calculations, solve problems, get information at millions of times the rate of present computers. Google revealed that its quantum computer took just over three minutes to answer a complex problem that would have taken an ordinary

computer 10,000 years to solve. Quantum computers can carry out an almost limitless number of different calculations at the same time, simultaneously sending billions of pieces of information to thousands of different destinations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the latest development in this field, now capable of collecting and storing vast amounts of data, which can be used to track and control human activity, as a result of which human activity can be continually monitored by the people in power. In the wrong hands this technology opens the way for a few powerful people to control the mass of humanity. This ties in with what the Bible says will happen in the last days immediately before the return of Jesus Christ.

Commentators on Bible prophecy believe these developments of technology are creating the conditions for a new economic system to come into place by which the famous 666 prophecy of the Book of Revelation could come into play.

In Revelation 13 we read of the Mark of the Beast prophecy: *'He causes all both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.'* Revelation 13.16-18

When John wrote Revelation, buying and selling was done by coins or barter and it was hard to imagine any kind of system whereby you could use a number or a mark on a person's body to do this. Today it is not so hard to imagine. Already we are seeing cash being replaced by credit cards which have a number unique to the person they belong to. We are now seeing developments in the area of biometric ID which make the rest of this prophecy a possibility too. This is not just happening in western nations, but is already being trialled and made to work in India, Russia, a number of African countries as well as China.

Technology has developed new systems for the control of finance and people. Money is able to pass from person to person and nation to nation electronically without any need for physical cash. In Sweden today it is possible to have a microchip inserted in your skin which you can use to buy and sell. China is working on a system which is gradually eliminating cash and making all financial transactions electronic. In the west people are saying that cash can carry the coronavirus, so some shops are refusing to accept cash and demanding payment with cards.

In China this system is being linked to a surveillance state that is able to track people wherever they go via ID systems linked to over 170 million hi

tech security cameras able to pick a single face out of a crowd, creating a mega-surveillance state, that reminds us of George Orwell's novel of the future '1984' - 'Big Brother is watching you.' This is linked to a computerised biometric ID system able to monitor people's movement and actions, and see whether they are behaving in the way the state wants them to behave.

The state is able to monitor mobile phone and Internet usage to pick up any comments critical of the regime and also use of certain phrases which they may consider incriminating. The Communist Party considers religious activity to be harmful to the state and so this is opening up China's millions of Christians and Muslims to new forms of control, checking on their activities and opinions. Information about their personality, habits, opinions and contacts is fed into a system called the Credit Score. This can then be used to prevent people who have the wrong opinions (according to the ruling Communist Party) from being able to buy certain things and to be able to travel. This sounds like the first stages of the 666 system of Revelation 13.

China is now introducing a new dimension to this system. It has said that using paper money is harmful as it can pass on the virus. Therefore it is now developing a state sponsored cryptocurrency known as DCEP (Digital Currency Electronic Payment). The aim is to eliminate paper currency and replace it with the new Chinese cryptocurrency. This will give the government insight into every financial transaction made, who is buying and selling what and where they are and so on.

Microsoft creator, Bill Gates, along with a number of powerful globalist organisations, has been working on ID2020, a project to give everybody on the planet biometric ID verification because "to prove who you are is a fundamental and universal human right." There is also a plan for a vaccine programme to counter Covid 19 and anything which may come after it. This can be tracked via the global ID certification and then check who has been tested and who has had the vaccine. Those who have been tested positive receive a so-called 'COVI-PASS' which will then give them access to the workplace and leisure facilities. Entry into society can then be linked to those who have ID and can show they have had the vaccine. 15 countries have already agreed to participate in the COVI- PASS programme.

They are also working on a new cryptocurrency programme, under Microsoft Patent 060606. The aim of the patent is to connect biometric information from a human body to a cryptocurrency processes within a digital network. The question has to be asked, 'Why has the patent been given the code number 060606?' Is it a coincidence or the deliberate choice of what is referred to in the Book of Revelation as the number of the beast, 666?

We cannot say for certain that this is how the mark of the beast system of Revelation 13 will work, but it is remarkable that advanced technology is developing a means of buying and selling without cash through a number on a device attached to a person's body. Never before in human history has anything remotely like this been thought of or proposed. The fact that is now a possibility in our time is another sign that we are living in the last days before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

In Revelation 13 the mark of the Beast is not just about exchanging money. The beast has an associate, known as the false prophet, who causes people to believe in the beast as a god, after he experiences a counterfeit death and resurrection (Revelation 13.3 and 12). He creates a new religion around his new world order, setting up an image which people are told to worship. They receive the mark of the beast if they worship the image of the beast:

He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Revelation 13.15

This means that taking the mark of the beast is not something you can do by accident, but only as a result of accepting the false religious system the beast and the false prophet set up. In previous times, the idea that an image could speak seemed impossible. In our time, it is easy to see how an image could be given power to speak by new technology. In fact most people spend their time watching a speaking image on TV screens. We now have instant communication via computers which can be given the power to speak a message to the people. We also have holograms whereby a person can project an image of themselves which can speak as though they were there present.

Whatever the image and the mark of the beast turns out to be, if you find yourself living at the time when it comes into being, do not take the mark, because those who do so will be damned. Revelation 14.9-11 says:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Up until our present time people could not really have any idea of how

such things could happen on a worldwide basis. Now that we see these two signs of globalisation and the development of technology coming together in our time, we can see a way in which this really could happen.

Sign 8: False Prophets and Messiahs

Jesus said: *'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ" (Messiah) and will deceive many. ... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and s and wonders to deceive if possible even the elect.'* Matthew 24.4-5, 24

Despite the fact that we live in an age that is on one level very secular and materialistic, there is a great search today for spiritual experience. There are hundreds of different cults which claim to be spreading the truth but actually sow confusion. Islam is also on the march and gaining influence in countries which were previously nominally Christian. New Age gurus and psychics are in great demand and there is a fascination with witchcraft and magic. People are being told they can discover the 'god within' by doing meditation and yoga. In the western world more people believe the Hindu idea of re-incarnation than the Christian teaching of the resurrection of the dead. Some people are saying that Jesus may have been the Messiah for his time but we need a new Messiah for our time. Some are even claiming to be that Messiah.

The globalisation process also means that peoples of different races and religions now find themselves living alongside each other. Religion often causes tension and strife. With this in mind, many are saying that the religions of the world need to work together and unite to save the world. In 2003 the UN convened an 'Alliance of Civilisations' aimed at bringing together politics and religion into a common cause for a new global civilisation. The United Religions Initiative Charter has called for a unification of religion in this cause.

There are many forces today promoting the idea that all religions are the same and should come together. Freemasonry and the New Age movement are looking to unite all humanity in a new spiritual consciousness. Much of the professing church is going down the same road, with leaders like Pope Francis calling for religions to come together to end wars and poverty and save the environment.

Pope Francis has made a number of calls to bring all religions together including a document he signed in 2019 with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the most important representative of Sunni Islam, called "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." This is actually a loose blueprint for uniting the various religions of the

world. At one point in the document it specifically says that the fact that there is such a diversity of religions in the world has been “willed by God in His wisdom”. In other words, this document is saying that God is pleased with all of the religions of the world and that they exist because it was His will for them to do so and that they all lead to God and heaven.

On the basis of the idea that ‘all gods are equal,’ the Pope is on record as saying that Christians should not evangelise people of other religions and that God accepts people of all faiths and no faith as long as they do good. He told a meeting of young people to ‘cultivate together the dream of a new humanism that goes beyond religion to engage all people, whether or not they believe in God.’ He wants them to do this in order to create “a common ‘covenant,’ a process of global change. One in which not only believers but all men and women of goodwill, beyond differences of creed and nationality, can participate, inspired by an ideal of fraternity attentive above all to the poor and excluded.”

On September 18th 2019 the Pope called for a supranational, legally constituted body to enforce United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. He wants this body to deal with “the great contemporary challenges of climate change” and said that the world needs a different kind of economy, “one that cares for the environment and does not despoil it.” Reading between the lines the pope’s call is for nations to surrender their powers to a central authority, the UN, in order to deal with climate change, population control and refugees.

If you look carefully at what he is saying it sounds like a call for a world religion to back a world government. Christians who try to preach the Gospel that there is one way to God through Jesus Christ are accused of disturbing this agenda and come in for severe criticism from this Pope. The Pope wants to change the world through a religion based on faith in humanity (humanism) not faith in God through Jesus Christ. He wants this to go beyond ‘differences of creed and nationality,’ therefore Christians should not try to bring people of other faiths to believe the Gospel.

This kind of thinking is present in many Protestant churches today and is part of the end time apostasy or turning away from the true message of the Gospel by those who profess to be Christians. Today we see church leaders of all denominations opposing the preaching of the Gospel and publicly denying the basic teaching of the New Testament, questioning the virgin birth of Jesus, His sinless life, His death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and His resurrection from the dead. Above all they question His promise to come again.

In Peter’s second letter we read: *‘But there were also false prophets among the*

people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 Peter 2.1

The Book of Revelation shows that a false religious system will dominate the world in the last days. This interfaith union, 'Babylon', will bring together all faiths in a union that will cooperate with the Antichrist during the first half of the tribulation. In Revelation 17, we read of a woman riding the beast, which is a symbol of this alliance which will persecute true believers in Jesus:

'And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement.'
Revelation 17.5-6

These churches will deny the blood of Jesus as the only means whereby sins are forgiven and be willing to make a compromise with other faiths in an interfaith union. The Bible teaches that God loves all people and wants them to be saved. In Acts 4 Peter declared that faith in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the only means whereby God offers salvation to humanity: *Nor is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.* Acts 4.12. Jesus never said that all roads lead to God and that all people have salvation. He said: *'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'* John 14.6. He says that He is the only one who can bring us to God as we repent of sin and believe that He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and rose again from the dead. No other person in history has done this or can do this for us.

Sign 9: The attack on the faith

According to the second letter of Peter, one of the features of the last days of this age will be a denial of the teaching of the Bible. Peter writes:

'Knowing this first: 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 they wilfully 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. 2 Peter 3.3-6.

This passage tells us that in the last days people will scoff at the idea of the second coming of Jesus. They will also deny that God is the

Creator who made the world and the Flood is an event in history that really happened. They will believe evolution explains how we came to be here - that things have continued to exist for millions of years and that all life as we know it is the result of a continuous ongoing process over a vast length of time. The Bible teaches a 'catastrophic' view of the history of the earth - that the original 'very good' creation of Genesis 1 has been drastically changed by two events which took place over a short period of time. The first is the Fall of man described in Genesis 3; and the second is the Flood, described in Genesis 6-9.

Today the media, the education system, the scientific establishment and sadly most of the church reject the Bible's teaching on Creation and accept evolution. If evolution is true, then the Bible is not true and there is no meaning in the central teaching of the New Testament, that Christ died to save us from our sins and from death. Evolution assumes that there were millions of years of death and destruction before humans entered the world. However, the Bible teaches that death is the result of Adam's sin:

'For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

1 Corinthians 15.21-22. See also Romans 5.12-21.

The modern evolutionary view teaches that in the beginning there was nothing, that nothing exploded, that the universe came out of that explosion, that life originated out of non-life, and that incredibly complex life forms came into being as a result of random chance processes. Since none of those things can be observed as happening or ever having happened, belief in evolution is as much a matter of faith as believing what the Bible says: *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'*

In fact there is far more evidence to believe that the ordered world we live in and the amazing design and complexity of all life forms is the result of God in creation rather than evolution. In recent times a number of Christian organisations have come into being teaching the literal creation as written in Genesis. Many of these have PHD Scientists on their staff, who are able to give good reason to believe the Word of God is the truth. [Further information available on this subject on request.]

Evolution in its modern form originated in the 19th century along with a number of ideas which attacked the beliefs of the Bible such as

Marxism, various racist and fascist ideas, and Freudian psychology. In the 20th century the attack on Christianity took shape in the Communist regimes of the Soviet bloc and China and in Nazi Germany. Although the Communists and the Nazis were opposed to each other, both had their roots in 19th century ideas opposed to Christianity, both caused rivers of blood to flow and both sought to eliminate Christianity.

The Nazis also sought to eliminate the Jewish people and thereby prevent the purposes of God for Israel from coming to pass. God says that as long as the sun, moon and stars are shining in the sky, so long will Israel be a people before Him (Jeremiah 31.35-36) and promises that He will bless those who bless Abraham and his descendants (the Jewish people) and curse those who curse them. So anti-Semitism is also a part of the war on God's people and its increase and the desire to eliminate Israel is another sign of the last days (see Jeremiah 30 and Daniel 12).

Persecution of Christians has increased in various countries of the world, with many martyrs for the faith. One of the signs of the last days, according to Jesus, is such persecution: *'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.'* Matthew 24.9

Now that we are in the 21st century we see a worldwide hostility to Christians who seek to spread the Gospel and bring others to know the Lord. The worst place in the world to be a Christian is the Communist regime of North Korea. China is now stepping up its persecution of Christians, using the digital technology we have already mentioned to monitor and control what goes on in churches. There is severe persecution of Christians in Islamic countries around the world. Despite this, many people from a Muslim background today are finding salvation through faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

But it is not just under Communism or Islam that the true message of the Gospel is opposed. All over the world there are reports of extreme opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, often causing violence against believers. This may come from Hindus, Buddhists, members of Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. This opposition happens when people come to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord from these backgrounds.

In the western world there are constant attacks on Christianity through the media, the educational system and 'political correctness'. Permissive ideas on sex and morality have radically changed how people view marriage, how to bring up children,

crime and punishment etc. Bible believing Christians are often portrayed as intolerant, bigoted and old fashioned. The idea that anything is 'right or wrong' is rejected as people are encouraged to do whatever they feel like doing. 'If it is right for you, it is right.'

In the name of freedom society has torn up God's commandments. Instead of finding freedom, however, we now have a growing social chaos in which people are enslaved to fears, disease and despair. As families fall apart, young people are left without guidance or love and end up getting into drugs, alcoholism, violence and gangs. Older people are afraid to go out of their homes. Prisons are full and lives are ruined.

This kind of society eventually leads to loss of freedom and towards dictatorship. If people will not be restrained by conscience and a fear of God and respect for His commandments, in the end they will find themselves living in a society which is falling apart. They will then accept some kind of dictatorship. The kind of technological developments in our time will give the state enormous powers to control behaviour and crack down on lawless behaviour.

The real answer to the moral and spiritual chaos of our time is to be found in the message of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. He offers us forgiveness and a new start. This message is considered 'politically incorrect' by many in control of our institutions today. It is said to be offensive to people of other faiths to say that Jesus is the one way to forgiveness and peace with God. In places where this message really needs to be heard - in the media, in the schools, universities, prisons etc - there is a growing hostility to biblical Christianity and suppression of the Gospel. You do not have to look far to see that western society, too, is heading for a time of persecution of real Christianity.

Sign 10: The spread of the Gospel

Jesus' last words to His disciples before His ascension were: *'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo I am with always, even to the end of the age.'* Matthew 28.18-20. He said: *'This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.'* Matthew 24.14

Despite the opposition to the Gospel, the message is spreading around the world. While there may be spiritual decline in traditionally Christian parts of the world like Europe and North America, there are many coming to faith in Africa and South America. The persecuted Christians of the Soviet Union lived to see the end of Communism and new opportunities to spread the message in Russia. Despite continued opposition from the state, there are now millions of Christians in China, many meeting in unregistered house churches, but with a vision to spread the faith through central Asia.

Even in the Muslim world there are remarkable stories of people coming to faith in Jesus with many seeking to understand the truth and finding Jesus, sometimes through dreams and visions, and then reading the Gospel to understand His message. In Israel and the Jewish Diaspora many Jewish people are understanding that Jesus is the promised Messiah, who came the first time to suffer and die as a sacrifice for our sins, and who is coming again in power and glory to judge the world in righteousness at the end of this age.

This is the one positive sign which God wants us to be involved in. The last days will be a difficult time to be alive, but they will also be a time when many will cry out to God for salvation. The world today is like a sinking ship which has so many holes in it that no one can save it. The only hope is to get on the lifeboat of salvation and trust in God to save us through the Messiah He has sent, Jesus Christ. The Bible says: *Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Joel 2.32, Romans 10.13.

We need to make use of the opportunities of this time now to spread the message that Jesus has come once to save us from our sins and is coming again to judge the world in righteousness according to how we have responded to the message of the Gospel. Now is the day of salvation and now is the time that God want us to tell people how to be saved before the time of judgement comes on the earth. We should make use of the time that remains to us and get this message out to the people of the world.

The Rapture of the Church, the Great Tribulation and the Millennial Reign of Messiah

According to the prophetic scriptures, the following events will take place at the end of this age.

1. The Rapture of the Church

Jesus said there is a day coming when a large number of people will suddenly be taken out of the world:

'I tell you on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.'

Luke 17.34-36

Jesus compares this event to the days of Noah, when the Flood came, and the days of Lot when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Both events happened suddenly when life was going on as normal. People were doing ordinary things like eating and drinking, buying and selling, building and planting, when the disaster struck. So it will be at this time.

In 1 Thessalonians 4.16-17, Paul describes it like this:

'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.'

The people who will be caught up to meet the Lord are those of us who believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins and rose again from the dead. This event is known as the rapture of the church. The word 'rapture' is taken from the Latin form of the Greek word 'harpazo' used in 1 Thessalonians 4.17 for 'caught up'. To be a part of this event you must repent of your sin now and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. If you have never done this please read on to the last section of this booklet where you will find an explanation of how to be saved from the coming judgement of God.

We will then experience the most dramatic life-changing event of all time. We will receive new resurrection bodies which will never again experience sin, sickness and death (1 Corinthians 15.50-

58). We will meet the Lord Jesus in the air and He will take us to heaven. From this time onwards, we will be forever in His presence.

We will pass before the judgement seat of Christ where our works done on earth will be judged. *'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.'* 2 Corinthians 5.10. This judgement will be for reward not for heaven or hell.

We will attend the wonderful event known as the 'Marriage Supper of the Lamb' (Revelation 19.6-10) where the Lord and all those who have been saved through the ages will be present. For those who have this hope based on a living faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord there is a future which is so wonderful that no words can describe it:

'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' 1 Corinthians 2.9.

Those taken in the rapture of the church, along with those who died in Christ between the Day of Pentecost and the rapture, will return with Jesus Christ in glorified bodies and be part of the glorious time when Jesus reigns on earth in the Millennial kingdom and then live forever in the new heavens and new earth.

2. The Great Tribulation

There will be a seven-year period known as the Great Tribulation, during which the world will face a crisis of such enormous proportions that it will threaten to wipe out all life on earth. Jesus described it like this:

'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.' Matthew 24.21-22

The world will come under the power of a world leader known as the beast or Antichrist. To begin with he will offer peace and safety to a world terrified by the events taking place. He will be controlled by Satan and will have an assistant known as the False Prophet who will cause people to worship him as a god. Despite the evil of this time there will be a great number of people who will come to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. 144,000 Jewish people specially sealed

by God will receive the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah and, through their witness *'a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues'* will be saved (Revelation 7). Many of these will be martyred for their faith. They will then be resurrected after Jesus returns to the earth at Armageddon.

In the first half of the tribulation period the Beast or the Antichrist will rise to power. He will be possessed and energised by the Devil. Half way through the seven-year tribulation period he will experience a counterfeit death and resurrection which will cause people to worship him as god. The False Prophet will perform supernatural signs and set up an image of the beast which people will be told to worship. He will give those who worship the image of the beast a number which will enable them to buy and sell (666). Those who refuse to worship the image will not receive the number and so will not be able to buy and sell. You can read about this in Revelation chapter 13.

Setting up the image of the beast will cause God's judgements to fall on the earth. Terrible sores will afflict all those who receive the mark of the beast and they will be eternally damned. If you are reading this booklet during the tribulation period, know that you must not take the mark. It is better to trust in Jesus and face martyrdom than take the mark of the beast and go to hell. Finally Satan will gather the nations together to Armageddon, the battle which will take place in Israel and bring Jesus back to the earth (Revelation 16.12-19). Jesus will then return riding on a white horse as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will utterly defeat the armies of the beast and the false prophet, who will then be thrown into hell. Satan will be bound in the abyss for 1000 years, during which time he will be unable to deceive the nations (Revelation 20.1-3).

3. The Millennium and the new heavens and new earth

When Jesus returns to the earth He will fulfil the words of Revelation 11.15:

'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Messiah), and He shall reign for ever and ever!'

Jesus will return in person this time as King of kings with all the power of God. He will rule the world for 1000 years from a restored Jerusalem during a wonderful period known as the Millennium or Messianic Kingdom. Satan will be confined in 'the abyss' and be unable to influence the nations (Revelation 20.1-3). This age will be

free from war and the negative aspects of modern life and technology. People will live in peaceful communities with the Lord present to make sure that evil is restrained and there is safety and plenty for all. This will be the fulfilment of the vision of the Hebrew prophets:

'For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more.' Isaiah 2.3-4

'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' Isaiah 11.9

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released for a short while. He will gather together those born during the Millennium who reject Jesus and resent having to live under His rule. Jesus will swiftly crush this last act of rebellion by Satan and cast him into hell. Then there will be the final Great White Throne judgement:

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20.15

This will be the end of the world, when the permanent division between the lost in hell and the saved in heaven will be sealed. *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.*
Revelation 21.1

All those who are saved will then live in the presence of God forever in the New Jerusalem: *'Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away.'* Revelation 21.2-4

When does the rapture happen?

People who believe these scriptures have different views about whether the rapture of the church happens before, in the middle or at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. The pre-tribulation view is that the rapture must come before the tribulation because this is the

time of God's judgement on unbelievers. Those who believe in Jesus will be delivered from this time. People who hold this view point out that the prophecies teach that this event is imminent and could happen at any time, which would not be the case if it happens at the end of the tribulation. The mid-tribulation view is that the rapture happens half way through the seven-year period, after the Antichrist has risen to power but before the mark of the Beast system is put into place (i.e. 3½ years before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth). The post- tribulation view is that the rapture happens at the same time as the second coming of Christ to the earth and that the church will be present for the events of the great tribulation as described in the book of Revelation.

I believe there is good reason to take the view that the rapture happens before the tribulation; however, I also understand why people take opposing views. According to the pre-tribulation view, the second coming is indeed the 'blessed hope' of the church (Titus 2.13) – when Jesus will come and take all those who believe in Him to Himself and be with us for ever more (1 Thessalonians 4.16-18). The pre-tribulation view means that Jesus could come at any time and therefore we must be ready now to meet Him. This makes sense of Jesus' word,

'Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.' Matthew 24.41-44

We should also be ready to meet the Lord at any time because we do not know the day or hour of our death. So whatever view we take on this issue, it is important that we are ready to meet the Lord Jesus at any time by accepting Him now as Saviour and Lord. We should also be ready to suffer for Him if called to do so, as Christians are doing now in lands where there is persecution of the church. We may die before Jesus comes back anyway so we all need to be ready every day to meet the Lord should this day be our last.

Decision time.

For those who have not yet received Jesus as Saviour and Lord, now is the time to make that decision. If you reject this message there is only a terrible future before you as God sends His judgements to the earth and you die and face eternity separated from God in hell. Revelation 20.15 tells us:

Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

To be written in the Book of Life you must believe in Jesus as Saviour. In the book of Romans we read:

'If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ... For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10.9, 13

The good news is that the Bible says we can know for sure that we are saved and have eternal life if we put our faith in Jesus Christ. Here is what we must do:

1. Understand that God loves us and wants to give us eternal life:

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'
John 3.16

'I (Jesus) have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.' John 10.10

2. Realise that by nature we are all sinners and separated from God because of sin:

'For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.'
Ecclesiastes 7.20

'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' Romans 3.23

'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 6.23

None of us is good enough to get to God by our own merits. We all fail Him in some way – in our thoughts, words or deeds or in things we fail to do.

3. Accept that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for sin:

'But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.' Romans 5.8.

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15.3-4

Jesus said 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' John 14.6.

Jesus came from heaven as Son of God and lived a perfect life on earth as Son of Man. His death on the cross was the sacrifice for the sins of the world, and the only way which God accepts to pay the price of our sin. He rose again and is alive forever to give eternal life to all who accept this.

4. Receive Jesus personally as Saviour and Lord.

As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1.12.

We receive Christ by faith:

We receive salvation by faith in what God has done for us through Jesus' death on the cross, not what we have done for God:

For by grace (God's undeserved favour) you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2.8-9.

When we receive Christ we are born again spiritually, as Jesus said in John 3.5-7:

'Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again."

All of us have 'flesh' / natural life as a result of being born as human beings. To have a relationship with God and enter heaven we must have spiritual life by receiving Christ as Saviour. A little child can do this and so can an old person about to die. But we have to do it as a personal act of repentance for our sins and faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Jesus says to us:

'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.'

Revelation 3.20.

If you have not yet done this, and would like to, here is a prayer you can pray to accept Jesus as your Saviour:

Dear Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place, shedding His blood to pay for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. I am willing right now to turn from my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you and ask you to help me become the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you Father for loving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tell someone what you have done, and start to read the Bible and have time every day to pray to God. Join with a fellowship of believing Christians and share your faith with others. If you need help with this, please get in touch with us at the address below.

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