

Signs of His Coming

Matthew 24:3

Are you living each day in light of the seven step plan God has for this world that stretches from Now to Eternity? We have just completed our look at the plan God left for us. Those are what I call the:

Seven Steps: Now to Eternity

The last place we see in the end of the book is Heaven (#7); immediately preceding Heaven is the Final Judgment known as the Great White Throne (#6); that is right after the Millennium (#5); and that starts right after the Second Coming (#4); and that ends the Tribulation (#3); and that is preceded by the Rapture and Bema Seat finish line for the saints (#1 & 2).

RAPTURE	I THESS. 4	BE READY – Christ is Coming
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST	2 CORIN. 5	BE HOLY – Christ will test our lives.
TRIBULATION	REV. 6-19	BE THANKFUL – Christ will keep us from the hour.
SECOND COMING	REV. 19	BE PATIENT – Christ will right all wrongs.
MILLENNIUM	REV. 20	BE FOCUSED – Christ will perfect the earth
GREAT WHITE THRONE	REV. 20	BE FAITHFUL – Point people to Christ.
HEAVEN	REV. 21-22	BE INVESTING – Lay up treasure in Heaven.

Now as we open to Matthew 24 again remember what started this whole study. The disciples asked Jesus to explain the SIGNS of His Coming.

Jesus explained to us in Matthew 24, verses 8 and 33-34—that these events would begin at the same time, run concurrently, and crescendo like the pains of a woman giving birth—the closer we get to His Second coming.

Matthew 24:8, 33-34 *All these are **the beginning of sorrows**. 33 So you also, **when you see all these things**, know that it is near—at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

Matthew 24:8 All these are the beginning of **sorrows**. The Greek word *odin*, often translated as *sorrows* in Matthew 24:8, literally means *birth pangs*.

The list of Biblical Signs of Christ's Return will not actually be full blown until the Tribulation time. Each of these signs were captured by the apostles and prophets between 2,000 and 3,500 years ago. Now they are happening in our lifetime!

So, the Bible contains many specific events that would signal the end of days for life on planet earth as it has been for the past several thousand years.

The list of Biblical Signs of Christ's Return will not actually be full blown until the time of the Great Tribulation.

Each of the signs of Christ's Return He said--are trends.

These trends are speeding up—the last seconds of the countdown clock of Christ's return are clicking down.

Each day the prophetic picture Christ painted grows clearer.

But, in all of history--ONLY our generation has seen EVERY ONE of these events starting to unfold.

Jesus said these signs would not suddenly appear. He said that they would rather become a trend that amplified and strengthened until it became overwhelming like “birth pangs”.

Now that we have surveyed the seven major events to get each one clear in our mind, let me give you just a handful of the precise, clear, specific predictions that Christ's Words in this Book give us. You may be startled. Every one of the signs Christ gave are present in your world today. You are the first generation in all of history to experience these trends, these signs—all at once!

The Signs of the End of Days

There are more apes of the Old Testament devoted to the End of Days than the New so we begin in the great Old Testament prophet Daniel's inspired record of the “time of the end” as God called it.

#1: The Sign of Global Travel

Daniel was overwhelmed when he caught a glimpse of the number and speed at which people were moving about the planet.

Daniel 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

The Bible says that there would be many involved in travel, and today the transportation industry is one of the largest segments of the global economy. Prior to the industrial revolution, few individuals traveled beyond their community. Until recently, horse, foot, and boat were the only modes of transportation. Yet, in our day millions travel to and fro great distances every year.

When God who has written the future wants us to know when the end is here He says this event will be noticeable.

"many shall run to and fro"

Running to and fro speaks of traveling. How has travel changed on this planet? Unless you take a long view, someone living today has no idea how close we are to the end.

The pace of change is staggering. Think how much the world remained the same from Daniel's day to your great grandfather's day, consider this.

- **Five thousand years ago** NOAH built a boat and drifted around during the global flood.
- **Three thousand years ago** DAVID hired wooden boats, powered by wind to help bring special wood for the Temple. His son SOLOMON actually built and operated a fleet of wooden ships that sailed by wind power to carry on extensive trade with Africa, Europe, and parts of Asia. JONAH walked by foot to a port in Israel 2800 years ago and bought a ticket to sail to what is today Spain.
- **Two thousand years ago**, the APOSTLE PAUL traveled around the Roman World on mapped out highways by foot, by horse and chariot, or aboard a wooden ship moved along by wind power caught in the sails.
- **Five hundred years ago**, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS embarked for a journey across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a sea route to China. He also probably went to the dock on foot, and boarded a wooden ship not unlike that of David, Solomon, Jonah, and Paul's.
- **Two hundred years ago**, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN walked to a dock in America to board a wooden sailing vessel for his trip to France.
- **Just over one hundred years ago** things began to change abruptly. With the advent of steam man was no longer tied to animal power and wind power. With the steamship, the locomotive, the automobile, the airplane and so on—in just one generation the entire world changed!
- **Today** anyone can travel at 60 MPH (car), most at 600 mph (plane), some at 1000 mph (military) and few at 25,000 mph (space). There are routine, scheduled flights of airliners that make the trip from any of the six inhabited continents to another continent in a few hours.

Many shall run to and fro, and so we do without hardly even thinking about it.

No one in the history of this planet ever traveled like we who are alive today can travel. This is the time of the end of the world!

2: The Sign of a Global Explosion of Knowledge/Information

Now the last half of that phrase "knowledge shall increase". That is almost an understatement when you think about life today. Informational knowledge is really increasing. Each month we see some new advancement in information technologies. Each generation has basically doubled the processing speed and power. One IBM chip called the "Cell" doesn't double—it multiplies everything that the computer does by sixty times.

*Daniel 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, **and knowledge shall increase.***

- **Five thousand years ago** JOB cried for his words to be written on stone like the stone tablets God would later use to inscribe the Ten Commandments upon.
- **Four Thousand years ago** ABRAHAM lived and worked in Ur where commerce and literature was recorded on clay tablets by cuneiform.
- **Thirty-five hundred years ago** MOSES used scrolls to record the first five books of the Bible, most likely on papyri from Egypt.
- **Two Thousand years ago** PAUL sat and a scribe wrote his words on scrolls of parchment, animal skin and papyri.
- **One thousand years ago** PAPER appeared in China.
- **Five Hundred years ago** the PRINTING PRESS arrived.
- **Just over 50 years ago** the COMPUTER arrived—and nothing will ever be the same! For all of history up until our times individuals could only look at one book at a time, find what they needed and go on.
- **Today** we can search all the combined and collected storehouse of knowledge contained in 19,100,000,000 pages indexed and archived by Google in .42 seconds; and see the results of all of them on our screen where ever we are in the world at that moment. Today my daughter was tracking where we drove on a map on the screen of her phone and placing electronic push pins in that map so she could take our family back to those places.

Today, we sit atop a database containing what is arguably the sum total of the world's accumulated knowledge every time we sit down to browse the internet.

From wooden boats with sails to MP3's and DVD's that I can watch or create on the personal computer that can also be my phone, television, radio, stereo, workstation, word processor, electronic document file, movie studio, sound studio, telephone answering service, fax machine, copy machine and printer—and a million other things.

[Our] generation is unique in all human history. Never has humanity been forced to come to terms with so many issues simultaneously -- issues for which we have no historical precedent to use as a guide.

The explosive growth of knowledge has us reeling from what humanist writer Alvin Toffler terms "future shock." It is only in this generation that last year's encyclopedia is about as useful as last month's newspaper. It has been said that the sum of human knowledge from the Flood to 1850 doubled once. It doubled again following World War II. The doubling of human knowledge increases exponentially.

Listen to the language of the technology of increasing knowledge:

First we heard: **Bytes** [8 bits. 0.1 bytes: A single yes/no decision (actually 0.125 bytes, but I rounded)]

- 1 byte: One character
- 10 bytes: One word (a word of language, not a computer word)

Then we heard: **Kilobyte**

1,024 bytes; 2^{10} ;
approx. 1,000 or 10^3

- **10 Kilobytes: a typewritten page no formatting**

Then **Megabyte** (my first computer I bought in 1986 had 20 MB)

1,048,576 bytes; 2^{20} ;
approx 1,000,000 or 10^6

- 1 Megabyte: Small novel; 3-1/2 inch diskette
- 2 Megabytes: Photograph, high resolution
- 5 Megabytes: Complete works of Shakespeare; 30 seconds of broadcast-quality video
- 10 Megabytes: Minute of high-fidelity sound; digital chest X-ray; Box of 3-1/2 inch diskettes
- **100 Megabytes: Yard of books on a shelf; two encyclopedia volumes**
- 500 Megabytes: CD-ROM

Then **Gigabyte** (started to be standard measure of hard drives in PC's in 2001)

1,073,741,824 bytes; 2^{30} ;
approx 1,000,000,000 or 10^9

- 1 Gigabyte: Paper in the bed of a pickup; symphony in high-fidelity sound; or 75 minutes of broadcast quality movie
- **2 Gigabytes: 20 yards of books on a shelf**
- 20 Gigabytes: Audio collection of the works of Beethoven;
- 50 Gigabytes: Library floor of books on shelves
- 100 Gigabytes: Library floor of academic journals on shelves;

Terabyte (the first Terabyte hard drive introduced in 2007)

1,099,511,627,776 or 2^{40} ;
approx. 1,000,000,000,000 or 10^{12}

- 1 Terabyte: Automated tape robot; all the X-ray films in a large technological hospital; 50,000 trees made into paper and printed; daily rate of EOS (Earth Orbiting System) data (1998)
- 2 Terabytes: Academic research library
- **10 Terabytes: Printed collection of the U. S. Library of Congress (29 million books).**

- 50 Terabytes: Contents of a large mass storage system
- 500 Terabyte = WalMart's data farm as of 2004

Petabyte

1,125,899,906,842,624 bytes or 2^{50}

approx. 1,000,000,000,000,000 or 10^{15}

- 1 Petabyte: 3 years of EOS data (2001)
- **2 Petabytes: All U. S. academic research libraries**
- 20 Petabytes: 1995 production of hard-disk drives
- 200 Petabytes: All printed material; 1995 production of digital magnetic tape

Exabyte

approx. 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 or 10^{18}

- 1 exabyte is the equivalent of about 50,000 years of DVD quality video.
- **5 Exabytes: All words ever spoken by human beings in text form;** if in audio form 42 zettabytes..

Zettabyte

approx. 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or 10^{21}

Yottabyte

approx. 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or 10^{24}

In short, the trend of global information increasing (not knowledge) is exploding.

#3: The Sign of Global Weather gone wild

Jesus foresaw the time when weather would be so bad that not just a few, but the whole world would be troubled, fearful, and killed by the fear of chaotic weather that would become prevalent.

Jesus said that in Luke 21, and as we turn there, go back in your memory to the day after Christmas 2004. I was sitting at my computer. As I awaited a document printing I turned to Google News. All of a sudden the earthquake reports began to stream in: First, a quake, then a rather large quake, then it struck Sumatra; and then the news said that some people may have died, and on it went until what has been called perhaps the greatest disaster of this generation, unfolded. Look at:

*Luke 21:25-26 "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**; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

Did you catch that everyone online that Sunday 4 years ago **SAW** that quake, within minutes of it striking? Seismic stations picked up the magnitude of the event, and news

stations spread the word electronically at the speed of light. ***That is knowledge increased!*** Think about it.

We all remember how the power of this quake triggered one of the worst tsunamis in history. The event also made our planet “vibrate”. Here is what the head of Italy’s National Geophysics Institute reported.

The earth wobbled on its axis and the regional map of south Asia was permanently altered. The island of Sumatra moved 100 feet. Time stood still for three microseconds. The impact of the 500 mile-per-hour waves was equal to one million atom bombs.

What caught my attention as I watched the news over and over again replaying that tsunami was what one survivor reported. He said that they were drawn to the beach as the waters receded back so far, that boulders the size of houses could be seen where the ocean had once stood.

Then he heard it, like a roaring freight train—a wall of mud and water crashing towards him. His heart nearly stopped as he ran for his life and made it to a building where he climbed high enough to survive the waves of death.

The devastation of the earthquake and tsunami 4 years ago—have given us a ***tiny*** insight into what the world will be like at the end of the age.

We were touched as a planet with a glimpse of **the end of the world**.

Even secular writers and news reporters have used words such as “apocalyptic” and of “biblical proportions” as they tried to describe the devastation and death they were witnessing. Some have even begun to talk about what if there was a catastrophe so big, so deadly that it could wipe out life on our planet—an asteroid, a comet, a complete climactic shift away from a life sustaining world. In other words—people are briefly thinking and talking about—**the End of the World**.

The world ended for at least one hundred and fifty thousand people the Sunday after Christmas of 2004. The only difference between South East Asia’s disaster and the description God gives is—the Tribulation will have at least **20,000 times as many deaths**.

Staggering Numbers

Don’t miss these numbers—they are staggering to our human minds.

- The world has over six billion people alive today.
- God's Word says that more than half of the population of planet earth will perish in the Great Tribulation. Most scholars believe this occurs in the second half which lasts for 3 ½ years.
- So three plus billion people perish in 42 months or 3 ½ years.

- Would that be equivalent to an event as big and deadly as that tsunami **daily** for three and a half years? **No** an event like the tsunami each day would not be big enough to equal the death toll of the Tribulation. For 150,000 to die a day for 42 months only equals 189 million deaths.
- If half the world's population were to die by quake and tsunami in 42 months—**there would need to be a Great Tsunami striking each hour, 16 hours per day, for three and one half years.**

No wonder Jesus said that weather going wild would cause people to die from fear of what they saw coming!

#4: The Sign of Global Telecommunication and Television

God's Word explicitly declares that mankind will be able to see and hear globally. When the world fastest know means of travel was the speed of a horse—God says the whole world will see an event and all at the same time, celebrate that event!

Truly global communication was foreseen.

- *Revelation 11:9-10 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations **will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days**, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 **And those who dwell on the earth** will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*
- *Revelation 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And **those who dwell on the earth will marvel**, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

The Bible predicts that the entire world will "see" certain events unfold. The invention of the television and the deployment of global satellite networks during the 20th century allow news to travel the world at the speed of light for the first time ever.

Remember that in the Apostle John's day, news traveled at the speed of horseback. We live in a time when the whole world experiences events at the same time!

What does God ask us to do in times like these?

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.