

(New Wine in New Wineskins) 17. Signs That Point to the Return of Christ

by Zac Poonen

The speaker outlines 9 signs that point to the return of Christ, emphasizing the importance of being prepared and purified for His coming.

Scripture: Exodus 19:10-11, Daniel 12:4, Hosea 6:2, Matthew 24:7, Matthew 24:33, Luke 21:29-32, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:4, 2 Peter 3:8, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Signs Of The Times", "Readiness for Christ's Return"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the signs that indicate the imminent return of Christ, highlighting the significant changes in the world since 1939, including wars, famines, natural calamities, and a dramatic increase in knowledge and rebellion. He draws parallels between current events and biblical prophecies, urging believers to be observant and prepared for Christ's return. Poonen stresses the importance of personal purification and readiness, as well as the call to both unbelievers and believers to respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation.

Transcript

The world has never been the same since 1939. Something happened at that time that started a chain reaction in many areas that will end only with the second coming of Christ.

Jesus said that no one but the Father knew the exact day and hour when He would return. But He also said that it would be possible for us, if we were observant of the signs that He predicted, to know when His coming was near (Matthew 24:33, 36).

It is essential therefore that we should take note of these signs.

1. Wars

(Matthew 24:7) - Jesus said that the last days would be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). Violence was one of the pre-eminent characteristics of Noah's day. "The earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11, 13). That sounds almost like a description of the days in which we live. Terrorism, hijacks, riots, murders, arson and wars between nations are now an every day occurrence. There are many reasons for this. The abolition of the death penalty for murder (which God instituted in Genesis 9) in many countries has increased the murder rate. Violence openly and unashamedly depicted and glamorised on the cinema

screen has educated people from childhood onwards to be violent. The advent of television in the '50s and of the video tape in the '70s has helped spread the cult of violence far and wide. The popularity of 'karate' and other forms of martial arts (all of which expose people to demon possession) has also spread the message of violence. All of this has come like a flood since 1939 - when Satan unleashed World War II on this earth. The hatred and bitterness that was let loose at that time opened the door for a flood of evil spirits to invade humanity. Wars have been a constant feature of world history ever since 1939. The atom bomb exploded in 1945 ushered in the nuclear age with all its consequences.

The world has never in man's history, seen such violence or such a spate of wars as we have seen, since the Second World War.

2. Famines

(Matthew 24:7) - There have always been famines throughout man's history. But with the increasing world population, famines have, since World War II, slain millions - more than ever in world history. Drought and crop failures have become common since 1950, in many lands. These will be more common as we approach the end.

3. Natural Calamities

(Matthew 24:7) - Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and erupting volcanoes are also some of the natural calamities that we can expect to see increasing as we approach the end. These also have increased greatly since World War II. And it will be more so in the days to come.

4. Increase of Knowledge

(Daniel 12:4) - Daniel prophesied that knowledge would increase at the time of the end. All the scientific knowledge that man accumulated since the time of Adam and up to 1939, (that is, in over 5900 years) has increased by twenty times since 1939. A graph of man's increase in knowledge would show a very flat gradient for 99% of his history and then a sudden sharp rise upwards to twenty times the height in the last period of his history. Here is another clear pointer to the coming of Christ.

5. Worldwide Travel

(Daniel 12:4) - For 5800 years, man travelled at almost the same pace - mostly on animal-back. Even in 1900, the fastest speed at which man could travel was just 50 miles per hour. But today man has travelled in space at 24,000 miles per hour. Worldwide tourism and travel have become popular only after World War II. Daniel predicted this as one of the signs of the end - "many will travel to and fro".

6. Love of Pleasure

(2 Timothy 3:4) - Paul specifically stated here that men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God in the last days. Along with violence, sex was the other major preoccupation of people in Noah's day (Genesis 6:2). This is what we see in the world today too. There has always been sexual immorality among men since the earliest times. But never in human history has it been practised so openly and unashamedly as today. Here again there has been a progressive deterioration in moral standards worldwide since World War II. A flood of unclean demons have invaded the earth. Television, the cinema and video tapes have all served Satan's purposes in promoting the cult of pleasure seeking.

Paul said that one of the doctrines of demons in the last days would be the forbidding of marriage (1 Timothy 4:1-3). This is seen today in two extremes. One is the extreme asceticism of some groups that teach that one must remain unmarried to be holy. At the other end of the spectrum are those who no longer believe in getting married but in just living together. Since man would be "without natural affection" in the last days, it is not surprising that he feels that abortion also is perfectly right (2 Timothy 3:3). The hands of most doctors today are more bloodied with the blood of murdered babies, through abortions, than Herod's in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

Jesus said that the last days would be like the days of Lot (in Sodom). Homosexual relationships are now accepted as normal. "They declare their sin as Sodom. They do not hide it" (Isaiah 3:9). And so God has given them up. The terrible disease of AIDS is a part of God's judgment on this sin (Romans 1:26-28).

The ruining of millions of young people through drugs is another evidence that this pleasure-loving generation is rushing headlong to the pit of destruction.

7. The Spirit of Rebellion

(2 Timothy 3:2) - The world has never seen rebellion on such a scale, by children against their parents, students against their teachers and servants against their masters (in offices, factories, etc.), as it has since World War II. Higher education has made today's young people arrogant and discourteous to their parents and to older people in general. This spirit of rebellion has penetrated Christendom too. Hence we see the spectacle all over the world, of pastors and elders at the mercy of young people in their congregations, having to please them in everything.

Women have started going to work outside the home - more than ever in human history, since World War II. They have started earning on their own, and this has made the average woman today arrogant and independent and unwilling to accept her God-appointed place under man's headship. This spirit has penetrated into Christendom too. All this but goes to show how widespread and deep-rooted the spirit of rebellion against authority is.

Women today, no longer desire to be mothers primarily. Just as women have become prime ministers around the world, since World War II (a thing that was almost unheard of prior to that time), even so, women have also started becoming elders and priests and teachers in Christendom. This is the spirit of Jezebel (Revelation 2:20) and must be opposed in the church by the spirit and power of Elijah, as in the Old Testament times (1 Kings 20:21-23).

8. Falling Away from the Faith

(1 Timothy 4:1) - This is a very significant verse, particularly when read in its context. The Spirit emphatically states that some will depart from the faith in the latter times. The previous verse refers to the secret of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16). It is godliness that Christendom has fallen away from first of all. This has led to Christendom falling away from obedience to the commandments of Jesus (particularly the ones listed in Matthew 5-7). This in turn has led to the preaching of false grace. All this was present even in the first century. But it has increased tremendously since World War II.

The ecumenical movement, false cults, counterfeit gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc., have all multiplied greatly in the last forty years.

Jesus spoke thrice of deception in relation to the last days (Matthew 24:5, 11, 24). He spoke there of how false prophets would try to deceive even the elect with signs and wonders. There has been a spate of signs and wonders by various so-called 'healing-ministries' in Christendom since 1945 - much of which has been a part of this counterfeit working that Jesus specifically warned us about. We see today that even many believers are deceived by these signs and wonders - because they are done in the name of Jesus. They do not bother to verify if the man doing them is God-fearing and leading others to obedience to all of Jesus' commandments like the apostles did. This is why they are deceived (Read Deuteronomy 13:1-4).

9. Israel

(Luke 21:29-32) - Jesus spoke here about all the trees putting forth leaves (nations becoming independent). This has never happened in the history of the world on the scale that it has happened since 1945. India became independent in 1947. Many other nations also gained their independence after 1945. But above all, Jesus told us to watch the fig tree, Israel (Luke 21:29). Jesus came to Israel, looking for fruit on that fig tree. All that He saw however, were the leaves of empty religious rituals; and He cursed the fig tree and it withered up (Matthew 21:19). Forty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, God allowed the Roman army led by General Titus, to enter Jerusalem and destroy the Jewish temple. The Jews were then scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth. For nearly 1900 years, this fig tree remained withered.

But Jesus said that we were to watch for the time that the same withered fig tree would put forth leaves again. The slaughter of millions of Jews in World War II set aflame world sympathy for the Jews, that ended with their coming back to their homeland in May 1948. In June 1967, they recaptured Jerusalem as well. The fig tree had begun to put forth its leaves. Jesus had stated that Jerusalem would be ruled by Gentile (non-Jewish) nations until the "times of the Gentiles" were fulfilled (Luke 21:24). We are now living in that time of which Jesus spoke.

God's Time Table

God gave man six days to labour and ordained the seventh day to be a day of rest. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8). This gives man 6000 years to labour. The seventh millennium (1000 year period) will be the millennium of rest, when Jesus rules on earth as King. From Adam to Christ's coming was about 4000 years. Now we are nearing the end of the 2000 years since Christ came, that completes man's 'six days'.

The Israelites were given two days in the wilderness to sanctify themselves and then on the third day the Lord came down into their midst (Exodus 19:10, 11, 16). The church also has been given 2000 years (2 days) to sanctify and prepare herself for the coming of the Lord. "On the third day, He will raise us up" (Hosea 6:2).

Our Responsibility

To be ready for Christ's return, you must first of all turn from all the sin that you know of, and acknowledge to God that you are a guilty sinner. Then believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died to take punishment for all your sins, and that He rose again from the dead and is living in heaven today. Ask Him to come into your life as your Saviour and Lord, to forgive your sins and to make you a child of God.

"Everyone who has the hope of Christ's return will purify himself just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

According to this verse, the only evidence that we have the hope of Christ's return is that we purify ourselves. And we do not stop purifying ourselves until we attain our Master's standard of purity. This is why the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost - that He may show us the glory of Christ in the mirror of God's Word and progressively transform us into that likeness from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Two Calls of the Holy Spirit

The Bible closes (in its final book) with two calls of the Spirit:

To the world of unbelievers: "Come" (Revelation 22:17), repent and believe in Christ.

To believers: "Overcome" (Revelation 2:7 to 3:21), and be a part of Christ's bride.

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/new-wine-in-new-wineskins-17-signs-that-point-to-the-return-of-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net