

Program 62 Teaser

When the warning comes, only the foolish ignore it. And when the hurricane or tornado is finished, so are the foolish who didn't take that warning seriously. Finished! Often Dead! Another warning was given 2000 years ago by the greatest authority that ever walked the earth. Jesus Christ who came to die for your sins and mine was resurrected to guarantee that He alone is Messiah and Savior of the world. "I will come again", He told His frightened followers, and gave them certain signals to watch for that would announce His guaranteed return. For those who love Him, His words "I will return" are a glorious promise. To those who do not yet know Him comes the warning to repent and receive Him. Signals prior to Christ's Return. Tom Hughes and Frank Eiklor are about to go into Part 2—on what really is More Than Talk.

SIGNALS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN (PART 2)

PAGE 1 A Prophesied Invasion

There is no book like the Bible. That's because there is no God like God. He's the one and only—omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal. And He once walked the earth as Jesus Christ the Son of God who called Himself the way, the truth and the life. It was all backed up by prophecies written hundreds of years in exact detail. His birth. His miracles. His death. His resurrection. And the next guaranteed prophesy—His return to rule and to reign forever! God has told us exact and incredible things that will happen before man's futile attempt to govern the earth comes to an end. What are some of those signals?

We already discovered five of them. 1) The birth of Israel. 2) Jerusalem as front page news. 3) The unchanging deceitfulness of the human heart. 4) Unending famines, plagues, violence and war. 5) An exponential increase in killer earthquakes. Let's take the next one.

Signal # 6—EZEKIEL'S VISION OF A LAST DAY'S INVASION OF ISRAEL

Once again, skeptics laughed at the possibility of Israel being invaded from the north in the last days. They did not believe there would even be an Israel after the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel by the Romans in 70 AD.

Only the believer in the Word of God could hold to the truth of the Ezekiel vision in chapters 38 and 39 of the prophet's book. Israel would indeed be resurrected as a nation (Ezekiel 37) and a great attempt to annihilate the Jewish nation and people would follow in the "latter days". Christians argue about the identity of "Gog", "Magog", "Meshesh" and "Tubal"—but all agree they have one purpose—to conquer Israel and reap the spoils.

Only recently, there was a giant "Soviet Union" to Israel's north who armed Israel's enemies in wars fought by Arab leaders to erase Israel from the map. Soviet leaders vowed never to release millions of Jews held against their wills in the vast Soviet Empire. It is as if God heard the Communist leaders say, "As long as there is a Soviet Union, no Jews will leave". It appears that the sovereign God of history then said, "Then there will be no Soviet Union. Let my people go!"

Today millions of Jews have left Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union—great numbers going to Israel. Most of the new countries now out of the Soviet orbit are Islamic. I am not predicting “who” or “when”. But watch the Mideast as the pot is already beginning to boil. An invasion will take place and the nations—and Israel—will see visibly the awesome hand of God. Armies will be destroyed and strong men will tremble. Israel will be delivered—and their rebellion against God will be broken forever. Study carefully chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel. And keep your spiritual eyes open even while you share the love of God with Jew, Arab and all.

“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know *it*? Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 38:14, 15, 16)

“So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that *I am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. So the house of Israel shall know that *I am* the LORD their God from that day forward.” (Ezekiel 39:7,22)

SIGNALS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN (PART 2)

PAGE 2 There She Blows!

Signal #7—A THREATENED NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

How skeptics must have laughed for centuries at the Apostle Peter's description of the end of the world. The sky passing away with a great noise? Earth's elements evaporating through unimaginable heat? Earth itself dissolved?

They laugh no more. Now God's description of how He will destroy the old earth and create a new one makes perfect sense. The splitting of the atom turned many skeptics into believers. After all, look what man himself is capable of doing with the atom and hydrogen bombs. Now the fear is that nuclear weapons are being placed in the hands of madmen who wish to annihilate their enemies. The world fears and trembles over this threat of nuclear destruction. A desperate cry is building for some great leader who can guarantee the world peace and prosperity by controlling governments, economies and weapons. We will look at this probability in our next point.

“But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.” (2 Peter 3:7-11)

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SIGNALS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN (PART 2)

PAGE 3 The Call For "Prince Charming"

Signal #8—A CALL FOR A CHARISMATIC LEADER

How often you hear the words, "There are no great leaders today. Our world is ready to explode. We need a great leader who can bring us all together."

Since the world wants peace and prosperity in order to better enjoy their lives of sin, they do not choose Jesus. However, they will approve of a leader who is coming on the scene with a golden tongue and the heart of a devil. Christ had warned the religious leaders that though they would not receive Him coming in His Father's name, they would receive another coming in his own name.

This demonic personality will arrive to lead a new world order. He will be the anti-Christ himself whose rule will first appear powerful and then turn hellishly violent. Christians argue: "Will the Church be here—or gone—when anti-Christ comes?" I shall not join the argument but continue to teach Christians, "Live as if Jesus will return tomorrow—and prepare your soul as if there is great suffering ahead."

"Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

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SIGNALS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN (PART 2)

PAGE 4 The Man Who Would Be God

Signal #9—THE CALL FOR A REBUILT TEMPLE

With their temple destroyed in 70AD, pious Jews have prayed for—and prepared for—the day when they would again construct their temple on the original site. Today Muslims control the Temple Mount and vow there will never be another Jewish temple. Yet Scripture indicates that God will allow the Jews to rebuild their temple and that it will be the place the false Christ will enter to declare himself to be God. Watch the Mideast carefully. Perceptive hearts will see certain signals that will be warnings that our Lord's return grows nearer and nearer.

“Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”
(2 Thessalonians 2:4)

Signal # 10—A TRAVEL AND EDUCATION EXPLOSION

Let's take another signal of the end. The prophet Daniel spoke of a travel and knowledge explosion. But just look around at what “smart people” are doing to the world.

Giant banking companies are collapsing in the United States. Our government—already buried in debt—makes more guarantees in loans to try to avoid a financial catastrophe. Many thousands of people are losing their homes. Gas and oil prices have caused a frightening price increase in other fields of commerce like air travel and food.

Many experts say that if the present course continues, there is calamity ahead—not only for the USA but also for the world. And the fear of nuclear and environmental destruction is spreading worldwide as poverty, wars and disease grow like a terrible cancer.

“Peace and prosperity!” is what the masses cry for. And if Satan himself can deliver “peace and prosperity”, the world's leaders will one day (soon?) choose him.

God warned us in advance what signs would precede the end of time. Jesus gave specific signs that would tell His followers that His return was near. We are studying 12 of those prophetic signs of the times. This is not the hour for Christ's followers to cower in fear, but to get our priorities straight and share the good news of salvation and a glorious future with all who will listen

The prophet Daniel received incredible visions concerning the last days of planet Earth. One interesting word from God is that man's knowledge would greatly increase even while his spiritual eyesight would be reduced to near blindness. Look at what the centuries have brought. From camels to cars. From paths in the deserts to planes in the skies. From splitting logs to splitting atoms. From times with limits to technologies without limits.

Yet while we are discovering new planets, we cannot uncover the secrets to true happiness and peace. Man is lost—terribly, hopelessly lost from the Creator who made him. That Creator is Jesus Christ. So man will grow intellectually smarter even while remaining spiritually stupid.

“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.” (Daniel 12:4)

“Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (Timothy 3:7)

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SIGNALS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN (PART 2)

PAGE 5 God Always Has The Last Word

Signal #11—A CULT AND DEMONIC EXPLOSION

He was another in a long list of false messiahs saying, "I am the Christ!" This one was on my television screen: a short, balding man, perhaps in his sixties, from Brazil. He was proud of his number—666—and he was surrounded by young and beautiful women. Here we go again!

Jesus said many would come in His name and deceive the hearts of the simple, sinful and proud. Eastern mysticism and meditation is a big thing in the gullible West. And one day a "world leader" will appear on the scene with the persuasion of a god and the heart of a devil.

Jesus warns His children to know the Scriptures, live in obedience to the Father's will, and stay alert to the signs of the times.

Matthew 24:24,25

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." 1 Timothy 4:1

Signal #12—WORLD EVANGELISM

It would be easy to think that with so much evil taking place, surely Christ's followers would be stopped in their tracks. But the opposite is true. An increase in evil and suffering makes many people hungry for life that only God can give. What often appears as the "devils time" just as often turns out to be God's "harvest time" as great multitudes cry out for mercy and forgiveness. That brings us to the final signal in our study—that the world will be fully evangelized before Christ signals "The End."

We have the privilege of hastening that day by obeying our Lord's "Go ye" command to carry His gospel to all the world. Let the Holy Spirit use your life to bring His life to others. The Day of Celebration is growing nearer!

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)