

Christ in Prophecy

Signs 9: Jesus is Returning Soon, Part 3

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Signs of the Times that point to the soon return of Jesus are abundant in nature. Do you know which ones Bible prophecy experts consider to be the cornerstone prophecies of the end times? Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Not long ago I was talking with a man about various stories in the Bible. After a while, he suddenly said, "Wouldn't it have been exciting to live in Bible times?" My immediate response was, "Sir, we are living in Bible times." When he asked what I meant, I pointed out that we are living in a time when ancient biblical prophecies are being fulfilled all around us before our very eyes.

And the point I have been making in my past two programs is that those signs indicate that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. Incidentally, if you missed those programs, you can find them posted on our website at lamblion.com.

I am presenting a series of programs on the topic, "Jesus is Returning Soon!" I spent the first program in this series presenting biblical evidence that although we cannot know the date of the Lord's return, we can know the season. And the reason we can know the season is because God has given us signs to watch for.

That point is so important that I want to return to it for a moment.

I want to prove to you with Scripture that we can know the season of the Lord's return. Let's begin with the letters that Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, and let's start with 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 1, and I want to show you proof positive that we can know the season of the Lord's return. The passage reads as follows: "Now as to the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." There's that statement I talked about at the beginning. He's coming "like a thief in the night!" Verse 3 says it will occur while people are saying, "Peace and safety!" At that time, Paul says, "Destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

Now, the fundamental point I'm leading up to is found in verse 4. Underline it in your Bible. Don't ever forget it. This is the crucial verse. The verse proves beyond a doubt that you and I can know the season of the Lord's return. The verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:4, says "But you brethren, believers, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."

Now, what is that saying? Paul is saying Jesus is coming like a thief in the night. But not for the brethren, not for Christians. He's coming like a thief in the night for the world. He's coming like a thief in the night for pagans. He's coming like a thief in the night for those professing Christians who do not have any personal relationship with Him, and who have never really been born again, and who refuse to believe the Word of God and study the Word of God.

But He's saying, "Let me tell you, if you have been born again, if you're truly a child of God, if you read the Word and believe the Word, there is no reason in the world why Jesus should come as a thief in the night." Look again at verse 4 it says, "But you brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do."

What do you think he means when he says, "We are sons of light and not of darkness"? I think what He's referring to is the fact that if you are truly a born again child of God, you have the Holy Spirit residing inside of you. The Holy Spirit is the one who wrote the Bible. And if you will lean on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will illuminate your mind and illuminate your heart and open your eyes to understand the mysteries of God's Word, including the season of the Lord's return. And so it is that the Bible says point blank, Jesus is not coming as a thief in the night for those who know Him and love Him.

There's a similar passage in Hebrews chapter 10. It says, "Do not forsake our assembling together as is the habit of some, but encourage one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

What day is he speaking of? Well, we are told in verse 27 that he is speaking of the day of judgement, the day when the Lord will return. It is the day referred to in verse 31 where we are warned that it is a "terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Note again verse 25 where it says that we are to encourage one another as we see the day drawing near. Folks, that means we can tell something about the season in which we're living. It means we don't have to be totally ignorant about the time when the Lord is going to return.

Jesus Himself also indicated that we could know the season of His return. He did so in the Olivet Discourse, as is recorded over in the book of Luke. He delivered this discourse on the Mount of Olives to His disciples during the last week of His life. He listed many end time signs that we were to watch for, and then He said: "But when these things begin, begin to take place, straighten up, lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Last week I began to focus on the signs of the times that indicate that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. I surveyed the signs of nature, the signs of society, the spiritual signs and the signs of technology.

This week, I want to take a look at two more categories of signs, and then reveal what I consider to be the most important sign of all.

The fifth category of signs are those that pertain to world politics. Let me just read you a statement that Jesus made in Luke 21. Speaking of the end times, Jesus said: "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among the nations. Men will faint from fear over the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of

the heavens will be shaken." Now folks, to me, that's a description of the splitting of the atom; the development of nuclear power.

Look at it again. It says "The powers of the heavens will be shaken," and "men will faint from fear." That's what's been going on ever since the first atomic bomb was detonated in 1945, people building bomb shelters; people storing up food; people concerned about the possibility of a nuclear exchange; books being published that show that if the nuclear button is ever pushed, hundreds of millions would die instantly and those left alive would envy the dead.

People think today, "Well, you know, the Russians are not dangerous any more. The Soviet Union has collapsed, and Communism is dead." Well, let me tell you something, the danger is even greater today. The danger is greater because the Russian leaders are determined to reestablish their nation as the world's greatest superpower.

They are currently expanding their borders to encompass all the territory that was lost when the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990's. And they are doing everything possible to establish their dominance over the Middle East. And then, of course, there is the ominous threat of Islam that rushed in to fill the power vacuum when Communism collapsed. We are now threatened on all sides by a radical theology of violence that relies on suicide bombers.

Adding to the fear is the rapid spread of nuclear technology, making it possible for outlaw states to acquire atomic weapons. The result of all these developments is that the world is tottering on the brink of nuclear disaster. But nuclear weapons are not the only sign on the world political scene today. We also have the sign of the pattern of world politics. Yes, the Bible prophesies that in the end times there will be a certain pattern of world politics that will come together. For example it says in Matthew 24 that in the end times there will be wars and rumors of wars, and we've had that constantly for 60 years, ever since the end of World War II.

Did you know for example that we've had an average of 40 wars going on all over the world at any given time since the end of World War II? Not only nation against nation, but also kingdom against kingdom, which is a reference to civil wars like the ones that have raged in the Balkans, Southeast Asia and throughout Africa.

Another part of the end time world political pattern is the uniting of Europe into a European confederation. This is prophesied in Daniel 2 and 7. This prophecy has been fulfilled before our very eyes as 27 nations in Europe have surrendered their sovereignty to produce the new world super-power called the European Union.

And as I mentioned before, the Bible speaks of an Eastern power sending an army of 200 million to the Middle East. One nation today, one nation, China, could easily do that. The Bible also speaks of a nation to the uttermost parts of the north namely, Russia and it says that nation will come down against Israel. Russia today is one of the most Anti-Semitic nations on earth, and it is closely allied with the Arab enemies of Israel.

Finally, the Bible speaks of Israel existing in the end times. Never before have all these parts of the end time world puzzle come together. Never! Now, they have coalesced for the first time. This pattern of world politics is a sure sign that we are living in the season of the Lord's return.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: The sixth and final category of signs is the most important one all, more important than all the rest put together. I'm speaking, of course, of the signs of Israel. These signs are more important than all the rest because Israel is God's prophetic time clock. What are the signs of Israel? Well, there are seven. Seven signs of Israel, seven prophecies being fulfilled before our very eyes that certify that you and I are living in the most exciting time in the history of mankind since the First Coming of Jesus.

The first of these signs is the regathering of the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth. This process began in 1900 and has continued to this day. Folks, there were only 40,000 Jews in Israel in 1900; there were 600,000 at the end of World War II; today there are more than 6 1/2 million, and they are continuing to come in unprecedented numbers from all over the world.

In Jeremiah 16 it says that when history is finished, the Jews will look back upon their history and they will consider what is going on right now, the regathering of the Jews from the four corners of the earth, to be a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian captivity. That is an amazing statement.

As a result of this regathering, the state of Israel was reestablished on May the 14th, 1948, clearly fulfilling the many prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that the nation of Israel will come back into being in the end times.

Jesus emphasized this point in his teachings about the end times. In Matthew 24 He said for us to "watch the fig tree." Now the fig tree is a common biblical symbol of Israel. Jesus said "when the fig tree re-blossoms," the generation that sees that will be the generation that will see all the end time events come to pass. The state of Israel came back into existence, it re-blossomed on May the 14th, 1948, and I believe with all my heart that someone who was alive in 1948 is going to see the return of the Lord. It may be someone who was two years old in 1948, and they may be 80 when the Lord returns, I don't know, but I believe someone who was alive then will see the return of the Lord. The first end time sign of Israel is the regathering of the Jewish people, the second is the re-establishment of their state.

The third is the reclamation of the land. Isaiah 35 and many other passages speak of the fact that when the Jews return to the land, it will be reclaimed, the land will come alive. Mark Twain visited Israel in the mid-1860's and wrote in his book, "Innocents Abroad" about what a barren wasteland it was. The trees had all been cut down. The land had been raped for 2,000 years by foreign conquerors who had no respect for it, no concern for it, no love for it. When the Jews began to go back in the early 1900's, the Arabs laughed at them for buying the land. Who, but a crazy Jew, they thought would want such a barren wasteland? But God promised in Ezekiel 36 that in the end times when the Jews were regathered to the land, it would become like the Garden of Eden.

Today, the Arabs want the land back because God has touched it, and God has made it a beautiful land once again, just as He promised. Today, Israel is the bread basket of the Middle East. The Israelis have planted over 300 million trees all over the land, and rainfall has increased over 450 percent. It's a land of milk and honey once again. God has kept His promise, and it's a sign that Jesus is coming soon. And so we have the regathering of the Jews; the re-establishment of the state; and the reclamation of the land.

This brings us to the fourth sign of Israel and that is the revival of the language. You see folks, when the Jews were spread all over the world they stopped speaking Hebrew. The Jews who

settled in Europe started speaking Yiddish, a mixture of Hebrew and German. Those who settled in the Mediterranean basin developed a hybrid language called Ladino, which was a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish.

But God promised in Zephaniah 3:9 that in the end times He would establish their language of Hebrew, He would reestablish it, and He did so in the 20th Century through a man by the name of Eliezer Ben Yehuda. This man was a single-minded fanatic who spent his life trying to revive the Hebrew language, a language that hadn't been spoken in almost 2,000 years. He had to invent thousands of new words based upon ancient Hebrew root words. It seemed to be an impossible task, but he accomplished it, and today, biblical Hebrew is the official language of Israel. It's one of the greatest miracles of modern history, and its proof positive that Jesus is coming soon.

Okay, let's review. We have first the regathering of the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth. Second the re-establishment of the state of Israel. Third the reclamation of the land. Fourth, the revival of the Hebrew language.

The fifth Jewish sign is the resurgence of the military. In Zechariah 12 the Lord says that in the end times, when He puts the Jews back in the land, they will be militarily superior to all their neighboring nations.

Zechariah says they will be like a fire pot among pieces of wood, consuming all the surrounding nations. Amazingly, Israel's military is considered to be among the ten most powerful in the world, even though Israel is one of the smallest countries on the face of the earth. And many experts consider Israel to be number one in the effective use of military power. The Israelis have fought war, after war, after war and they have withstood their foes each time, despite an overwhelming disadvantage in numbers. What a miracle for a nation smaller than the state of New Jersey and with a population less than the greater Houston, Texas area!

The sixth Jewish sign is the refocusing of world politics on the nation of Israel. In Zechariah 12 it says that in the end times all the nations of the world will come together, all of them come together against Jerusalem, and Jerusalem will be like a heavy stone hanging around their necks.

The focus of world politics shifted to Israel in 1973 when the Arabs pulled the Arab Oil Boycott on the West during the Yom Kippur War. That boycott brought us to our knees. We went to the Arabs with our hat in our hands asking what we would have to do to get oil. And they said two things: "Number one, you're going to pay two times more for it than you've ever paid before; and number two, you must line up with us in our obsession to annihilate the state of Israel."

Overnight all of Western Europe flip-flopped and turned against Israel. We were the only nation that stood by them, and we continued to do so until October of 1990, when in our desperate attempt to pull together an Arab coalition for the Persian Gulf War, we turned against Israel and began to sponsor resolutions of condemnation in the United Nations. Soon after that, we started forcing them to trade land for peace.

Well, the final of the seven signs of Israel is the reoccupation of the city of Jerusalem. I consider this to be the most important sign of all because it came from the lips of Jesus Himself. You will find it in Luke 21. He said: "The Jews will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive among all the nations." That happened in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Jesus then added, "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Well, my friends, that's exactly what happened. Jerusalem fell to the Gentiles when the Romans destroyed it. The Romans were followed by the Byzantines, the Byzantines were followed by the Arabs, the Arabs were followed by the Crusaders, the Crusaders were followed by the Mamlukes, the Mamlukes by the Turks for 400 years, the Turks were followed by the British, the British by the Jordanians. And then, on June 7, 1967, praise God from whom all blessings flow, the Jews re-occupied the city of Jerusalem for the first time in 1,897 years.

And when those Jewish soldiers went to the Western Wailing Wall and began to weep before that wall, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief Rabbi of the Israeli Army, came up to the wall blew a shofar. Then, he lifted his hand and he said, "I proclaim to you the beginning of the Messianic Age." You see folks, the Orthodox Jews know from the prophecies in their Scriptures that the Messiah is coming soon. They are not going to be surprised by His appearance. They are going to be surprised by His identity.

Well, we've talked about a lot of signs pointing to the soon return of Jesus: the signs of nature, the signs of society, the spiritual signs, the signs of technology, the signs of world politics, and the signs of Israel. But, believe it or not, I have not yet mentioned the most important sign. It is the sign of convergence. What I mean by that is that for the first time ever, all the signs have converged. They have all arrived on the scene at the same time, clearly indicating that we are living in the season of the Lord's return.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: The first time Jesus came, the Gentiles recognized Him; and the Jews did not. Folks, this time, the Jews are the ones who know the Messiah is about to come. And that's because they know Old Testament Scriptures, and from them, they know that the Messiah will come when the Jews are back in the land and back in their city. The Orthodox Jews are waiting for the Messiah, expecting Him any moment. They're yearning for Him. Yearning for Him.

And the Church? Well, the Church is sitting on the side lines yawning instead of yearning. That's right, the Jews are yearning while the Church is yawning. The Church does not seem to be aware of the significance of the miracle of the regathering of the Jews. Nor does it seem aware of the significance of the reestablishment of Israel or the incredible significance of the reoccupation of the city of Jerusalem.

My friends, Jesus is coming soon, and the bottom line, the bottom line question is this: Are you ready? All the signs of the times point to it: the signs of nature, the signs of society, the signs of a spiritual nature, the technological signs, the world political signs, and the signs of Israel. God is in the heavens shouting, "My Son is coming soon! My Son is coming soon!" Our gracious God does not wish that any should perish but all should be brought to repentance.

So my question is: Are you ready? Are you? Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? My friend, let me tell you something, the Bible says, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord." That means everyone! The question is when. If you do it in this life, it means life eternal with God; if you do it after the resurrection, at the Great White Throne Judgement portrayed in Revelation chapter 20, it means consignment to Hell. God is serious about sin. He's going to deal with it, and as I've said before He deals with it in one of

two ways, either grace or wrath. If you are under the grace, under the blood of Jesus Christ, if you have received Him as your Lord and Savior, then when Jesus breaks from the heavens, He will come as your Blessed Hope, and in the words of the prophet Malachi, "You will go forth leaping like a calf released from a stall."

But if He comes and you are under wrath, He will come as your Holy Terror, and you will crawl into a hole in the ground and cry for the rocks to fall upon you, so great will be the wrath of the Lamb of God.

I urge you to simply bow your head in prayer, and confess to God that you are a sinner, and then receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you have already received Jesus as your Savior, I have a message for you too, because the Second Coming of Jesus is like a two-edge sword. It has a message that slices one way for the unbeliever and slices the other way for the believer.

The message for the unbeliever is "Flee from the wrath that is to come by fleeing into the loving arms of Jesus right now." The message for the believer is "Receive Jesus not only as your Savior, but receive Him also as your Lord."

You see folks, the Church today is full of people who have received Jesus as Savior but have never made Him Lord of their lives. He's not Lord of anything. Not Lord of their music. Not Lord of their food. Not Lord of their drink. Not Lord of their recreation. Not Lord of their reading material. Not Lord of their T.V. or movies or anything. They're walking with one foot in the church and one foot in the world, living a schizophrenic spiritual life.

Are you one of those? Do you need to make Jesus Lord of your life? Do you need to commit your life to holiness? That is the call of the Holy Spirit upon believers in these end times to commit their lives to holiness, and then share the Gospel with as many people as they can, as quickly as they can. The key words for believers are holiness, evangelism, and yearning, yearning for the Lord's soon return.

Listen to these glorious words from 2 Timothy chapter 4 which Paul wrote from prison right at the end of his life. He wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; and in the future there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Think about it. Think about it my friends, a special crown, a crown of righteousness will be given to every person who lives this life loving the appearing of the Lord. Will you receive that crown? Are you living your life yearning for the Lord to return? My friends, Jesus is coming soon, and I cry from the depths of my heart, "Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha!" Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Closing

Dr. Reagan: As we bring this program to a close, I want to invite you to attend our annual Bible conference which will be held this year in mid-July. The specific dates are Friday evening and all day Saturday, July 12 and 13. The conference will be held at the Plano, Texas Event Center, located in the Dallas area.

Our theme is going to be Contending for the Faith. We will begin the conference on Friday evening with a concert by the very gifted Messianic musician, Marty Goetz. He will be followed by our keynote speaker, Kelly Shackelford, who is the president of the largest law firm in America that is devoted solely to the defense of Christian liberties.

The next day, we will have five additional speakers: Mike Riddle will speak on "Defending the Genesis Account of Creation." Mike Gendron will talk about "How to Defend the Bible and the Gospel." Ron Rhodes will defend Jesus' promise to return again. Eric Barger will speak about "Defending the Church from Apostasy." And my topic will be "Defending the Deity of Jesus."

And best of all, the conference is free of charge. However, you must register in advance at our website or by calling our office.

Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

End of Program