

The Signs of the Times

While we cannot name the exact date of the Lord's Return its nearness may be known by the character of the Times. As to this the New Testament gives no uncertain sound. In Dan. 12:4, 9-10, we read, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the Book, even to the '**TIME OF THE END**': many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. . . . Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the '**TIME OF THE END**.' Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the **WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND**." These words declare that the prophecies of Daniel were to be "**shut up**" and "**sealed**" until the "**TIME OF THE END**." This expression does not mean the "**end of Time**," but is the angelic messenger's way of referring to the "Last Days" of the "Times of the Gentiles." At which time he declares that the Book will be "**unsealed**," and "**knowledge shall be increased**." What is here meant is "**prophetic knowledge**" of the things recorded in the Book of Daniel and other prophetic writings of the Scriptures. This is made clear by the statement that only the "**wise**" shall understand. That is, those who are enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and not those who merely have intellectual knowledge, for the **wicked SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND**. How wonderfully this is true of these days. The Higher Critics have labored hard to discredit the Book of Daniel, but without avail, for the Book is more studied than ever, and is being "**unsealed**" by Holy Ghost enlightened students of the Word of God, who clearly see that we have reached the "Time of the End," and are living in the closing days of the "Times of the Gentiles."

The "unsealing" began about 100 years ago, when the "**Midnight Cry**," "**Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh**," was heard in the "Revival of Premillennial Truth." For centuries while the Bridegroom tarried the Wise and Foolish virgins "**ALL slumbered and slept**," and the Church lapsed into a condition of spiritual apathy, and "The Blessed Hope" was eclipsed. But now all over the world the Blessed Hope has emerged from the shadow, and the virgins are "trimming their lamps" preparatory to going out to meet their Lord, but only the "wise" have oil in their vessels and in their lamps. We are now living in the "Fourth Watch of the Night," soon the "**MORNING STAR**" (Christ. Rev. 22:16) will appear and we shall be caught out at the Rapture to meet Him and go into the Marriage Feast.

Let us take a hasty glance at the "Signs of the Times."

POST- MILLENNIAL SCOFFERS

In 2 Pet. 3:3, 4 we read: "That there shall come in the '**Last Days**' **SCOFFERS**, walking after 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 the creation." How true this is of the present day. The Doctrine of the Second Coming is "scoffed" at, and those who hold it are looked upon as deluded fanatics, and sad to say, this opposition comes from prominent religious leaders of the Day.

APOSTASY

In 2 Thess. 2:3, we are told that "**THAT DAY** (the Day of the Lord) shall not come, except there comes a 'FALLING AWAY' first." This "**Falling Away**" is evidenced on every hand.

FALSE TEACHERS

In 2 Peter 2:1, 2 we are warned against "False Teachers" who shall privately bring in "**damnable heresies**," even denying the Lord that bought them, such as Christian Scientists, and that many

shall follow their **“pernicious ways,”** and sad to relate these “followers” are recruited from the orthodox church members, of whom the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:3, 4), saying: “The time will come when they **will not endure sound doctrine;** but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having **itching ears:** and they shall turn away their ears **from the truth,** and shall be turned unto **FABLES.**” This **“turning away”** is evidenced on every hand. There is a “turning away” in doctrinal standards, in the demand for a regenerated church membership, in church and Sunday school attendance, and in Sabbath observance. Many church goers will not endure “sound doctrine.” They will not go to hear those who preach the “total depravity” of man, the necessity of the “New Birth,” and the conscious and endless torment of those who reject Christ as a personal Saviour. They demand teachers who will **“itch”** (tickle) their ears with pleasing, novel and sensational doctrines.

SPIRITUALISM

In 1 Tim. 4:1 we are warned of a departure from the faith. That in the **“Latter Times”** (the Last Days of this Dispensation), some shall **“depart from the faith,** giving heed to **seducing spirits** and **doctrines of devils.”** This is being fulfilled in the increasing number of those who are forsaking their Christian belief to become followers of Spiritualistic. Mediums and to dabble in Psychical Research.

PERILOUS TIMES

Of these times Paul told Timothy. “This know also, that in the **‘LAST DAYS’ Perilous Times** shall come. **For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection** (for their own offspring), **truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God:** having a **FORM of godliness,** but denying the **POWER thereof.”** 2 Tim. 3:1-5. What a catalogue we have here of the “perilous conditions” of the times in which we live.

HEAPED UP TREASURE

In James 5:1-6, we are told that in the **“LAST DAYS”** there shall be a class of **“rich men,”** who shall have **“HEAPED treasure together,”** and that by **“FRAUD,”** and who shall use their ill-gotten gain in the pursuit of “pleasure” and “wantonness,” and that God will hear the cry of those who have been cheated of their just share of the profits, and will send a sore judgment upon the guilty. What a description we have here of the unprincipled speculative and profiteering spirit of the days in which we live, when men become millionaires, and multi-millionaires, in a few years. Truly we are living in the “Last Days” of this Dispensation.

A LAODICEAN CHURCH

In the Message to the Church of Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) we have a description of the last stage of the professing Church on earth. It is described as neither “hot” nor “cold,” but nauseatingly lukewarm, so that Christ says He will “spue it out of His mouth.” It boastfully will claim to be “rich” and “increased with goods,” and to have “need of nothing,” not even of Christ, for He will be excluded and will have to knock for admittance, and it will be ignorant of its true condition, that it is **wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.** Unspeakably sad it is that this is the condition to a large extent of the professing Church of today.

THE FIG-TREE SIGN

When Jesus' Disciples asked Him, after He had foretold the destruction of the Temple: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the SIGN of THY COMING, and of the end of the world (Age)?" (Matt. 24:1-3), Jesus gave as a "Sign" of His Coming the "Fig-Tree Sign." The "Fig-Tree" symbolizes the nation of Israel, and its "budding" the revival of Israel as a nation. Here again we have evidence of the nearness of the Lord's Return for the revival of Zionism, and the passing of the Land of Palestine into the hands of a Christian nation, opens the way for the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the fulfillment of the Fig-Tree Sign. The fact that the City of Jerusalem surrendered without the firing of a shot is significant. Jesus said that Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles until "The Times of the Gentiles" should be fulfilled (Luke 21:24), and the taking of Jerusalem at this time may signify that "The Times of the Gentiles" is drawing to a close.

THE DISTRESS OF NATIONS

In Luke 21:24-27 Jesus tells us that as the "Times of the Gentiles" come to a close, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth **DISTRESS OF NATIONS**, with **perplexity**; the sea and the waves (the peoples of the earth) roaring; men's hearts **failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the 'Powers of Heaven' (the Principalities and Powers of Evil, Eph. 6:11, 12), shall be shaken. And **THEN** shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." In the prophecy of Haggai 2:6, 7, we read: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a **little while**, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will **SHAKE ALL NATIONS**, and the **DESIRE** (Christ) **OF ALL NATIONS WILL COME**." This has never been fulfilled as yet, and the present "**Distress of Nations**," the uprising of the masses in "National Revolutions," the "Tottering Thrones" and other indications that the nations are **Being Shaken**, is still further proof that we are living in the times just preceding the appearing of the Son of Man, the "**DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS**" who will bring peace to this troubled earth.

NOAH DAYS

The last "sign" that we would mention is the "sign" of the "Noah Days." Luke 17:26-30. As it was in the days of Noah, they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. Where you say is the sin in doing these things? They are not only commanded, they are necessary. That is true. The sin was not in "doing" them, but in doing them "**UNTIL the Flood came**." That is, they did nothing else. They forgot to worship their Maker. So today men and women are so busily engaged in doing the good things of life that they have no time to worship! God. They are so busy building homes for themselves on earth that they are neglecting to secure a home in heaven. They are more anxious that their children should make a good match on earth, than that they should be united to the Lord. They are so much concerned, about their case in Court, that they have forgotten that they must stand at the Judgment Bar of God.

LOT DAYS

In the same connection with the "**Noah Days**" is classed the "**LOT DAYS**." Lot was Abraham's nephew. Gen. 12:

The herdsmen of Abraham and Lot could not agree, and to prevent a quarrel between them, which would have been a scandal in the eyes of the heathen in whose land they dwelt, Abraham suggested a separation. Gen. 13: 5-13. Lot, with the thought of worldly advantage for himself and family,

first **“looked”** toward Sodom, then **“pitched his tent”** hear it, then became a “dweller in Sodom,” and though he was a **‘righteous man** (not a holy man) and daily vexed his soul with the filthy conversation of the wicked (2 Peter 2:6-10), he entered into the political life of the city and became a judge. The result was that Lot lost his **“TESTIMONY.”** And when he made a plea to the Sodomites to save his “Angel Visitors,” and to his “Sons-in-Law” to flee, with their wives, with him, they **“MOCKED”** him. Gen. 19:1-38. Nevertheless, because he was a child of God, though a backslidden one, he was saved **“out of Sodom.”** So today there are many true Children of God who have become entangled in the world, of which Sodom is a type, and have **“lost their TESTIMONY,”** and as a result will lose the salvation of their loved ones even though they themselves, like Lot, shall be **“saved by FIRE.”** 1 Cor. 3: 11-15. But while Lot was saved from being consumed in Sodom, Sodom could not be destroyed until Lot was taken out. So, the Wrath of God cannot fall upon a wicked world until the Church is “caught out.” 2 Thess. 1:7-10. There are many Lots in these days.

WAITING

There are some who would distinguish between the words **“Wait”** and **“Watch”** as applied to the “Second Coming,” referring the word **“Wait”** to the “Rapture” and the word **“Watch”** to the “Revelation.” While the word “Wait” is used only in connection with the “Rapture,” 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Thess. 3: 5, the word “Watch” applies to both. The word “Waiting” is a blessed word **freighted** with **HOPE**.

1. **GOD THE FATHER** is waiting to be gracious to the Sinner.
2. **GOD THE SON** is waiting for the completion of His Bride – the Church.
3. **GOD THE HOLY GHOST** is waiting to escort the Bride to her Heavenly Home.
4. **THE DEAD IN CHRIST** are waiting the call of the Archangel.
5. **THE LIVING SAINTS** are waiting to be “caught out.”
6. **THE SOULS AND SPIRITS OF THE JUST** are waiting in Paradise for their resurrection bodies.
7. **THE JEWS** are waiting for their Messiah, and restoration to their own land.
8. **CREATION** is waiting for the removal of the Curse.
9. **THE CHURCH** is waiting not for a “Love Letter” from her Beloved, not for “Precious Gifts” that will display His Riches and Bountiful Provision for her happiness, not a “Wireless Message” that will convey the thought that He, in the Person of the Holy Ghost, is with her, but she is waiting for His Personal, Bodily, and Visible Return. **Come, Lord Jesus, COME!**