

Section 5

Signs of the Last Days



Jesus said:

“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 roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25-26).

Why do we need Signs of the Last Days?

Thus far in our series we have considered prophecies relating to the Seven Dispensations, Israel's "70 Weeks", the Revived Roman Empire, and the Russian/Muslim Alliance. In this study we look at a range of predictions which indicate that we are in the last days and fast approaching the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 20th century has brought an explosion of knowledge and travel that has transformed society, yet Daniel, in 536 B C, spoke of "*the time of the end*" when "*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*" (Dan12:4).

Increased knowledge and travel, however, are only two of many signs that can be identified as sure indicators of the latter times. If we could only point to isolated prophecies, then we might have serious doubts about the imminent return of our Lord, but it matters not whether we look at the political, economic, military, social or religious arenas, all cry out with one voice, The coming of the Lord is at hand!

Even ungodly people, who never seriously read the Word of God, are aware that events overtaking the world dictate that sooner rather than later something major has to happen. History is obviously moving toward an inescapable terminus point, and many in society are dropping out as the landmarks of past generations disappear. Unemployment, the widening gap between rich and poor, threats of violence, revolution, and religious fanaticism, create such fear in the minds of the younger generation that many are escaping to the self-destructive oblivion of drugs.

In the midst of such insecurity, the Bible offers a message of hope. God is still in the business of saving souls and changing lives. When a man or a woman comes to the end of the tether and turns to Jesus Christ in true repentance and faith, the miracle of regeneration takes place, and immediately God begins to reveal His perfect plan. Instead of chaos, there comes order and purpose for living. Where guilt haunted the soul, there is the balm of God's forgiveness. The past is blotted out forever, and a new life begins which continues beyond the grave into an eternal blessedness that defies human understanding.

The purpose of this section of this book is to awaken many to the lateness of the hour, and to urge sinners to seek the only possible refuge in a Saviour who died for our sins, rose for our justification, lives in heaven, and who is coming again for those who know and love Him. We commend its message to the reader.

The 20th century has seen more changes than any previous century in the whole 6,000 years of human history. There has been more advance in scientific knowledge, more growth in world population, more warfare, and more travel than could have been imagined in man's wildest dreams just 100 years ago. We will now see that the dramatic changes which have occurred were predicted in the Bible over 2,000 years ago as signs of the last days.

The Sign of a Population Explosion

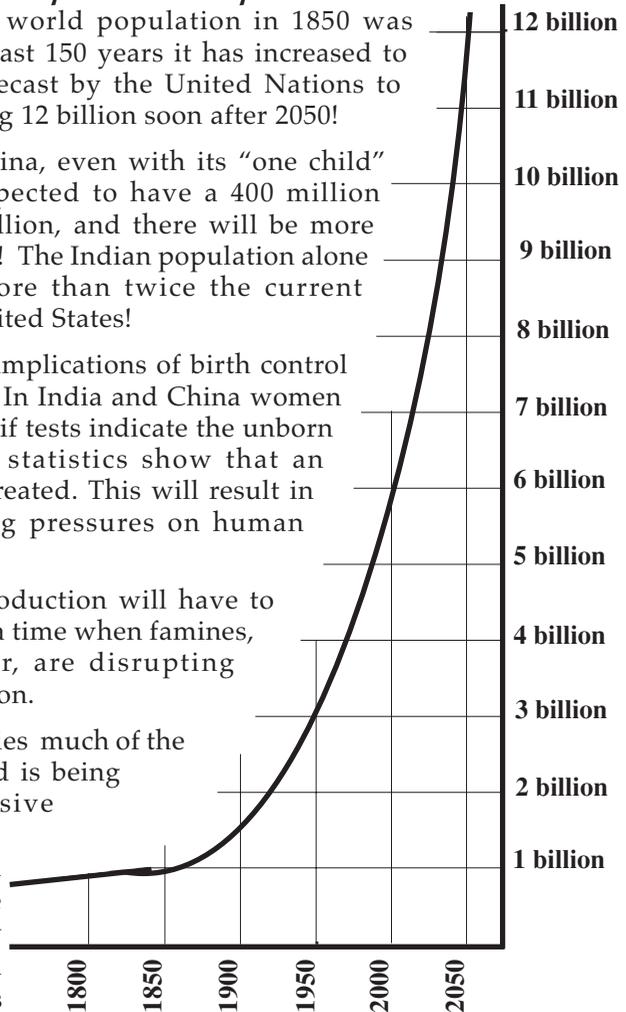
It is estimated that world population in 1850 was 1 billion, yet in the last 150 years it has increased to 6 billion and is forecast by the United Nations to double to a staggering 12 billion soon after 2050!

By the year 2045 China, even with its "one child" family policy, is expected to have a 400 million increase to 1,600 million, and there will be more Indians than Chinese! The Indian population alone will increase by more than twice the current population of the United States!

However, the social implications of birth control policies are horrific. In India and China women are having abortions if tests indicate the unborn babe is a girl, and statistics show that an imbalance is being created. This will result in serious destabilizing pressures on human relationships.

In addition, food production will have to more than double at a time when famines, pestilence, and war, are disrupting agricultural production.

In developing countries much of the best agricultural land is being absorbed by massive urban expansion. Unemployed rural workers flock to the cities and new residential and factory complexes replace vegetable gardens.



Graph of World Population Growth Estimates to 2050 AD

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

In the early 1990s it was estimated that there were 120 million unemployed rural workers in China, and 80 million of these had moved to the cities to seek work in the construction industry. The number of unemployed is expected to continue to rise as China modernizes its industries.

Developing countries face incredible labour problems as their industries modernize. Sooner or later wages will increase, and in order to compete on world markets machines will replace people. This trend is already apparent in Asian countries and is contributing to massive unemployment.

Between 1990 and 2000, ie the last 10 years of the 20th century, Indonesia's population grew by more than the population of Australia - by 20 million! Indonesia's population in the year 2000 was 210 million and still rising.

In countries such as Indonesia, where land is in short supply, the population explosion could lead to expansionist policies similar to what occurred in Timor and West Irian.

The 1995 *CIA World Fact Book* indicated that the world Population Growth Rate in that year was 1.5%, the Birth Rate 24/1,000, Death Rate 9/1,000, Infant Mortality Rate 64 deaths/1,000, Fertility Rate 3.1 children born/woman, and Life Expectancy 62 years. The world population in 1995 was estimated at 5.734 billion.

Based on a percentage growth rate of 1.5% per annum, we can expect to see the following increase in world population:

1995 base population	5.733 billion
2005 increase to.....	6.654 billion
2015 increase to.....	7.722 billion
2025 increase to.....	8.962 billion
2035 increase to.....	10.401 billion
2045 increase to.....	12.070 billion

The Bible says that a population explosion is one of the signs of the last days when Jesus Christ will come again. Jesus said,

*"As it was in **the days of Noah**, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all"*(Luke 17:26-27).

The days of Noah were characterized by a population explosion, and the Book of Genesis records that

*"Men began to **multiply** on the face of the earth... and every imagination*

of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen.6:1-12).

One result of the population explosion is a drift to the cities. The percentage of people moving to the cities has been increasing since the 19th century. Huge building projects are proceeding all over the world and some cities have populations approaching that of Australia! Jesus said,

*"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, **they builded**; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed**" (Luke17:28-30).*

The Sign of the Kings of the East

It is interesting to note that the Bible speaks of an army of 200 million coming from the kings of the east to join the battle of Armageddon in the land of Israel in the last days. Such a huge army would have been impossible 100 years ago, but today it has become a distinct possibility. Add the populations of China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and you have a staggering 3 billion people in 2005!

If average population growth continues at 1.5% per annum there will be an extra billion people on the earth in the next decade, and the largest proportion of these will be in the developing countries, mainly in Asia.

When China suffered defeat in the war against North Vietnam in 1979, it realized that modern weapons were needed and so it opened the door to Western technology. It was stated at that time that China would have to retrain its entire Militia in the use of modern weapons. This would involve everyone over 25 years; **the number quoted was 200 million!**



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

The facts concerning the current population explosion make credible the statements of Scripture about the rise of the kings of the east in the last days. These will play a major role in the battle of Armageddon, which occurs at the time of Christ's second coming.

At the battle of Armageddon all nations will be involved, but specific mention is made of the kings of the east. We read,

*"And the sixth angel poured out his vial (bowl) upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that **the way of the kings of the east** might be prepared.*

And I saw three unclean spirits...of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings... of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...And he gathered them together into a place called Armageddon" (Rev.16:12-16).

In Rev 9:13-21 we have details of the sixth trumpet judgment to fall during the Great Tribulation period. It too refers to the River Euphrates and to the mobilization of an army of 200 million which will destroy one third of mankind. This army is prepared for a specific time:

"for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (Rev. 9:15).

To mobilize such a massive army and to move it across Central Asia to Israel for the battle of Armageddon will be an amazing feat.



The exercise will take considerable time, and no doubt will involve aeroplanes, ships and ground troops. The ground forces will need to cross the River Euphrates, and Scripture says that its waters will be dried up to allow the huge army to cross (Rev.16:12).

It is interesting to note that a great deal of attention is being given by the World Tourist Organization (WTO) to the opening up of the old Silk Road, which was a maize of roads used as the major link between Asia and the Middle East in ancient times. It ran from Xian, in central China, to the Mediterranean, as shown on the adjoining map. Rail connections have already been established, and there are plans to construct a natural gas line from central Asia to China along this corridor. Fast-train technology, coupled with the desire to provide access to land-locked developing countries in central Asia, makes the proposal attractive.

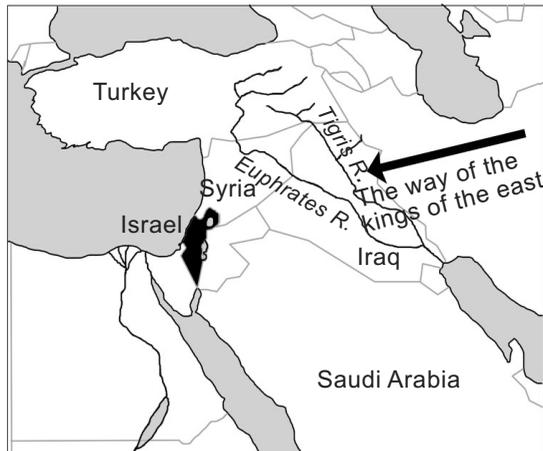
A glance at the map will show that the path to the Middle East along the Silk Road located south of the Caspian Sea **must cross the Euphrates River**, which, the Bible says, will be dried up to allow Asian armies to pass.

The Sign of Euphrates Drying Up

The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers rise in the very high country of eastern Turkey around Ararat and flow to the lowlands of Syria and Iraq, finally pouring into the Persian Gulf.

Already Turkey has harnessed the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris and has used the Euphrates as a political weapon against Syria by stopping the flow for a period of four days. A report by *Intelligence Digest* 3 May 1996, reads as follows:

"Last week we warned that Syria was likely to respond by increasing support for Kurdish anti-Turkish terrorism, and that Turkey in turn would likely respond by using the water weapon. No sooner was the ink dry on the paper than news came in that Turkey had done precisely that- reduced the supply of water flowing down the



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Euphrates to Syria. Turkey announced that it was to cut the flow of water for four days... for technical reasons."

(*Intelligence Digest* is available from The Stoneyhill Centre, Brimpsfield, Gloucester, GL4 8LF, UK.)

However, Turkey has much grander plans for the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris.

In 1996 Turkey announced a US\$32 billion scheme to build dams, hydroelectric power plants, and irrigation schemes along the Euphrates, and on 1 October 1997 the Turkish State Hydraulic Works (DSI) announced details of how this massive scheme would be implemented.

This development demonstrates how Turkey can influence much of the Middle East through the control of water supplies.

Turkey, a nation of 60 million people, has a powerful military force which neither Syria nor Iraq would dare to challenge, so these nations are virtually powerless to retaliate.

The report on Turkey's plans is described in *New Europe 11 October 1997*, and in view of the great significance of this development we print a substantial part of the following newspaper article.

"Turkey is planning a series of water projects stretching from Istanbul to its impoverished south-east in a bid to meet growing water and energy demands, a leading water sector official said last Wednesday (1 October).

"The country's State Hydraulic Works (DSI) unveiled details of a dam project worth US\$1 billion near Turkey's border with Syria and Iraq. Plans for a pipeline to carry water to Istanbul and a project to ship water from Turkey's southern shores to northern Cyprus were also in the offing...The dam is being negotiated by Sulzer, and the Union Bank of Switzerland is financing it."

Negotiations on the scheme to build a dam and a 1200mw (megawatt) hydroelectric power plant in Ilisu were scheduled for the first half of 1998. This dam, will be the largest on the Tigris River and is a part of the US\$32 billion energy and irrigation project centred on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers within south-east Turkey.

The South-East Anatolia Project (GAP) consists of a planned network of 22 dams and 19 power plants, with a capacity of 7,476 mw (megawatts).

The huge project has upset downstream neighbours Iraq and Syria, who fear that Turkey will be able to turn off their water supplies in

times of strife.

"Iraq's ruling Baath Party newspaper *al-Thawra* said, 'The country where these waters rise should not monopolize waters of such international rivers the way it likes'."

Furthermore, Turkey has plans

"for a US\$900 million pipeline to carry water from a stream in north-west Turkey to Istanbul."

In addition, Turkey plans to ship drinking water to Cyprus from Manargat in southern Anatolia. Israel and Libya have also been negotiating purchase of water.

The implications of Turkey's grand water plan are mind-boggling to say the least, and illustrate how easily the Scripture could be fulfilled, which says that the River Euphrates must be dried up during the Great Tribulation, "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (Rev 16:12). It's only a matter of turning the tap off!

The Sign of the Nile River Drying Up

Not only does Scripture indicate that the Euphrates River will be dried up in the last days, but it also states that the River Nile, the longest river in the world, will be so dry that men will walk across its bed dry-shod; without removing their shoes.

The Nile rises in the mountainous regions of Ethiopia where the Blue Nile contributes 85% of the water. *Islamic Affairs Analyst* Sept 1996, reported on Ethiopia's plans to build dams for large hydroelectric and irrigation schemes, and to use water as a political weapon against Egypt.

Egypt is already in desperate straits as indicated in the *ABC Lateline* program on 14 October 1997. The Nile is polluted, and the agriculture and fishing industries are drastically reduced as a direct result of the construction of the Aswan Dam.

Islamic Affairs Analyst 2Sept.1996 gave the following report:

"Ethiopia's ruler, Meles Zenawi, has developed a plan for controlling the headwaters of the Nile that will give Ethiopia the same power over Egypt



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

as Turkey now holds over Syria and Iraq through that country's control of the headwaters of the Euphrates.

First, he wishes to develop Ethiopia's economy to the maximum of its potential. To do this he hopes to build dams and reservoirs on the Nile that will eventually generate 20 million kilowatt/hours of electricity, four times the output of Egypt's Aswan Dam. The same projects will significantly increase Ethiopia's area of cultivatable land and its water storage capabilities.

Zenawi's second motive related to Egypt. Arab sources say that his (Zenawi's) assessment of Egypt's political and economic future is by no means positive. He believes that Egypt will by no means remain a stable regional power enjoying a close relationship with the United States. On the contrary, he considered that within a decade Egypt's serious economic and social problems will destabilize the country to such an extent that it might start to adopt aggressive stances toward its African neighbours, including the upstream Nile states such as Ethiopia.

Egypt currently obtains 55.5 billion cubic metres of water a year from the Nile, 85% of which comes from the Blue Nile which rises in Ethiopia, to meet the total annual water consumption of 58.5 billion cu. meters. So Zenawi believes that Ethiopia can best protect itself from bullying by developing control over a good part of Egypt's water supply."

²(Islamic Affairs Analyst available from Intelligence International Ltd, The Stoneyhill Centre, Brimpsfield, Gloucester, GL4 8LF, UK.)

Isaiah the prophet wrote of the days when God would "*assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth*" (Isa 11:12). This, of course, has begun with the return of Jews to the land after nearly 2,000 years of dispersion, and Isaiah goes on to say:

"And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, AND MAKE MEN GO OVER DRYSHOD" (Isa.11:15).

The word "*dryshod*" is literally "in shoes", which indicates that it will not be necessary to remove one's shoes to walk across the dry riverbed!

Could the Nile dry up? Some might argue that sea water would replace the fresh water flowing down the Nile, but we note that the level of the land around the entrance of the Nile has dramatically changed before. For several years now archaeologists have been

excavating below the water-level in Alexandria's harbour for the palace of Cleopatra and the giant lighthouse which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. All of these treasures now rest 20 feet below the surface of the water as the result of an earthquake.

If the land formation has sunk to such an extent in the past, there is no reason why it could not change again - sufficient to prevent the sea flowing inland! The incidence of major earthquakes has been steadily increasing since late last century, and the Bible foretells massive earthquakes in the Middle East in the last days (Zech.14:4-5; Ezek. 38:19-20; Rev.11:13). The current damming of the River Nile is another sign that we must be in the last days!

Global Events

Just two days before Jesus died on the cross, His disciples showed Him the massive stones of Herod's Temple and Jesus told them that all of these would be thrown down. Later, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked, "*When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world (age)?*" Jesus indicated that there would be a number of **universal events** that would characterize the last days immediately preceding His coming again.

First, the Lord said that there would always be "*wars and rumours of wars*", but they were not to be troubled by them. "*All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Matt.24:6).

However, when a **global situation occurred**, then they were to take note, for all these would be the "*beginning of sorrows*", or "*travail pains*", which would herald the new world order over which Jesus Christ will rule as King of kings.



The travail pains are described: "*nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ...famines, and pestilences (diseases) and earthquakes, in divers places*"(Matt.24:7). This is called the "**Great Tribulation**", when Antichrist will set up his idol image in the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem. Immediately after the Tribulation, Jesus will come to reign.

The Sign of Global Warfare

Patrick Brogan, in his heavily documented 653-page book entitled "*World Conflicts, Why and Where they are Happening*", lists at least 97 wars between 1945 and 1992, which claimed the lives of somewhere between 15 and 30 million people.

In WWI (1914-18) 10 million died in action, but in WWII (1939-45) the figure was 24 million plus 40 million civilians, according to an "*Almanac of Historical Facts*" by Robert Stewart PhD. Of the 9 million Jews in Europe before WWII, only 3 million survived.

Pol Pot's decimation of Cambodia wiped out about one third of its 8.6 million people (3 million), and achieved total dislocation of the entire population. The Korean War claimed 2,884,000 lives including 2 million civilians, and the subsequent famine in North Korea claimed 2.5 million between 1996-98. Stalin's suppression of Ukraine left 14 million murdered.

The number of refugees, however, far exceeded the number of deaths. In Afghanistan for instance, between 1979 and 1989, the US Government states that out of a population of 15.5 million there were 1 million killed, but the number of refugees was 7.6 million. - 50% of the population!

The Bible says that one of the signs of the last days would be global warfare on an unprecedented scale. It will lead to the Great Tribulation. We read,

*"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...For **then** shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"* (Matt.24:6-21).

The Iran/Iraq War claimed 1 million lives with many more casualties, and what shall we say about the Arab/Israeli wars, the Gulf War, and the Falklands War. We could talk about the India/China War, the India/Pakistan War, the Vietnam War which left 2.5 million dead, and the China/Vietnam War which left 40,000 dead before the Chinese withdrew.

The attempted Communist take-over of Indonesia left 500,000 dead, and the continuing war in Algeria has left nearly 100,000 dead in the last 5 years alone. Four secessionist wars and famines killed up to 2 million in Ethiopia between 1972 and 1991. Bosnia, Hungary, the Kurds, Chechnya, Armenia, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor, Angola, Yemen, Congo, Chad, Sudan, Russia, Tibet, Burma, Laos, China etc have experienced bloody revolution or war.

Between 1945 and 1991 Patrick Brogan lists 97 wars, 253 coups and revolutions, and 199 attempted significant assassinations, of which only 12 failed. He concludes, **"It is fruitless to predict where the next calamities will arise."** The sign of global warfare is **unmistakably clear!**

The Sign of Global Famine

Immediately following the Lord's statement that global warfare would precede His second coming, He said,

"There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"
(Matt.24:7).

In 1974 the United Nations claimed that it would eliminate hunger within 10 years, yet the World Food Summit held at Rome on 13 November 1996 admitted that 800 million people around the world were still classified as undernourished! That means 1 out of 8 persons daily struggles for food.

In Africa 41% are "chronically undernourished",but the largest number of hungry people is in Asia where the population growth is the greatest. The number of undernourished in Asia is estimated at 500 million!

Most of China's grain (70%) is produced in the cold northern areas where the growing season is only 4 months and crops often have to be harvested green. Massive crop failures are always a possibility. The industrialization of China is seeing much of its farming land taken over for factories, and in the year 1996, 120 million rural workers found themselves unemployed. The number is expected to increase to 200 million. Many will move to the huge cities to join the construction workforce where they will contribute to the industrial spread and loss of even more rural land - and food.

The 1996 World Food Summit, attended by delegates from nearly 200 nations, could only achieve a statement affirming

"the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food,"
but,"no new funds will be forthcoming."

Global conflicts disrupt food production, and at the end of 1996 there were 30 wars in progress around the world. The dislocation of millions of people, as they flee the battle zones and end up in refugee camps, is a major factor in producing famine.

The *Guardian Weekly* 2 February 1997, reporting on a meeting of the UN Environmental Agency held in Nairobi, warned:

"Almost 3 billion people would be short of water within 50 years

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

...land covering 1.23 billion acres already had severe soil erosion in Africa...oceans were being overfished...and the world could not afford to burn fossil fuels if, as expected, population doubled in the next 50 years."

Changing weather patterns and global warming have been forecast. If this eventuates sea levels are likely to rise, and much of the low-lying coastal farmland will be inundated causing further loss in food production.

When all of the factors contributing to global famine are taken into consideration, what hope will the world have to feed an extra 6 billion mouths when world population doubles in 50 years time? History has a famine terminus, and we must be in the last days!

The Sign of Global Epidemics (Pestilences)

Global epidemics are also causing alarm. *The European* 27 March 1996 quotes the World Health Organization (WHO) as saying:

"Two years after WHO called a global warning on TB, the disease shows no sign of abating...40% of South Africa's population may be carrying the TB bacillus, and the air-borne disease is also on the rise in Europe, with increases in Denmark, Russia, Norway and Italy."

The *Guardian Weekly* 31 March 1996 reports:

"Tuberculosis is spreading rapidly throughout the world and is killing more people than at any time in history...the disease could kill 30 million people over the next 10 years."

Incurable diseases such as AIDS will also take their toll as moral standards drop and drug-taking increases. The *Guardian Weekly* 8 Dec.1996 carried an article by Dr Peter Piot, employed by the organization UN Aids. He stated,

"90% of the 22.5 million people living with HIV/ Aids today (1996) are in developing countries...many with no access to aspirin, much less anti-retrovirals."

The UN Aids organization has published a report entitled, *HIV/Aids: The Global Epidemic*, in which data has been provided showing that "the disease is spreading fast, entering entirely new regions, and strengthening its grip on areas already hit...skyrocketing in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union".

According to the report, the worst feature is that during 1996, 400,000 children contracted HIV/ Aids, largely by mother to child transmission.

The *Independent International* 12 May 1998 reported grave fears of an Aids epidemic in India:

“India can fairly be described as the Aids capital of the world...While the Aids watchdog, the National Aids Committee (NASCO), estimated that there were 70,000 HIV cases in the country and 6,000 Aids cases, the independent Indian Health Organisation (IHO) based in Bombay put the HIV number at 7 million and the full-blown Aids sufferers at 500,000. The head of IHO, India’s most prominent campaigner for Aids awareness, Dr IS Gilada, predicted that by 2001, in the most optimistic estimate, there will be 20 million HIV cases in the country and 2 million cases of Aids.”

Also, a definite link has been established between “mad cow” disease and CJD, a fatal brain disease in humans, which turns brain tissue into jelly, and we now know that other animal diseases are being transmitted to humans. The *International Independent* 11 August 1998 states that a livestock parasite, Old World Screw-worm, has infested two thirds of Iraq and poses a threat to Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

The report stated:

“The infestation which causes foul-smelling discharges after attacking wounds, scars and cuts, has already led to 40 deaths ... George Pumphrey, a biological warfare specialist based in Germany, said: Iraq is the latest victim in what appears to be a deliberate introduction of the screw-worm as a biological weapon. In Libya, where an outbreak occurred in 1989, 2,000 animals were killed. It was exemplarily combated, yet by the following year it covered 35,000 sq kilometres and killed 12,000 head of stock.”

The infestation is caused by the larvae of the fly *cochliomyia hominivorax*. The female fly lays about four batches of 400 eggs on the edge of a wound, cut, tick bite, castration wound, or new-born's navel, of warm-blooded animals including human beings.

The report goes on to say,

“In just 12 hours the larvae hatch and enter the body for feeding. THEY CAN CONSUME A WHOLE COW IN FIVE TO SEVEN DAYS!”

Pestilence is one of the signs of the end of the age, and in Zechariah 14:12-15 we are told of the plague wherewith God will smite the nations who come against Jerusalem. It will affect humans and animals. We read,

“And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away ...And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague" (Zech.14:12-15).

The 20th century has seen the development of viruses in laboratories for eradication of pests. Man is engaging in genetic engineering and, while there may be beneficial uses of this knowledge, the danger is that the viruses may not be contained in the laboratory. Viruses have been released to eradicate rabbits, but a number of nations now see the potential for the use of biological weapons for the eradication of humans. These weapons are now termed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Once pestilence begins to spread, it is hard to stop, and there is often a long lead-time required for the production of antidotes. History tells us about the Black Death Plague which struck Europe in 1347-1349. According to *The Almanac of Historical Facts* by Robert Stewart Ph.D.,

"...somewhere between one-quarter and one-third of Europe's people were carried off in just two years...victims succumbed within two or three days of being infected...(it was) almost always fatal."

The December 2004 issue of *Time* magazine carried a serious warning about the possibility of a flu epidemic which could infect 25-30% of the world's population. The warning was given by Dr Shigera Omi, regional director for the Western Pacific for the World Health Organization (WHO).

The virus known as "bird flu" strikes down people of all walks of life, and in the event of a pandemic would incapacitate one-third of the doctors, nurses, police, and volunteer relief workers. Dr Omi estimates up to 100 million could die.

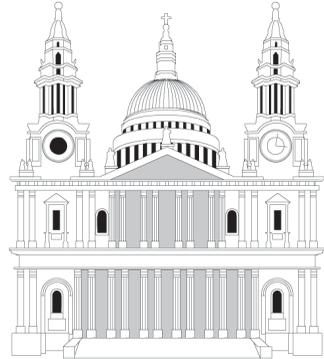
New techniques used to develop suitable vaccines to counter bird flu have been developed, but several months are required for clinical trials before they can be released.

To add to the problem, many of the countries where bird flu is likely to have a major impact are too poor to afford the vaccine and doctors will be able to do little more than watch their patients die; that is if they themselves survive. Whether Dr Omi's prediction is true, remains to be seen.

The Sign of Global Apostacy within Christendom

The Bible indicates that the last days will be characterized by a massive departure from the "faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The New Testament Church was built upon the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets (Eph.2:20-22). The closing verses of the Bible warn that "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev.22:18-19), yet history has shown that there has been departure (apostasy) from the doctrines taught by the apostles as recorded inerrantly by Divine inspiration of the Scriptures.



The Roman Catholic Church has for many centuries forbidden the reading of the Bible by the people, and its use of Latin until recent times made much of church liturgy unintelligible to the masses.

The doctrines of Rome have both added to, and taken from the Word of God. Doctrines such as purgatory, infant baptism, the confessional, prayers for the dead, salvation by good works, the continual sacrifice of the Mass, celibacy of the priests, prayers to the saints etc are pagan, and cannot be found in Scripture.

However, it was not until December 1854 that Pope Pius IX declared "the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary" to be a necessary dogma of the (Catholic) faith. Since then the veneration of Mary has grown, and today it is claimed she ascended to heaven and intercedes for those who pray to her. Some in the Catholic Church are even proposing that Mary be proclaimed **co-Redemptrix with the Lord Jesus Christ!**

The Protestant Reformation (1517) stood against the teachings of Rome and made the Bible available to the people. Many were liberated from the apostate system, but as the centuries have passed the Protestant denominations have embraced modernistic theology, denying the verbal inspiration of the Word of God, and many essential doctrines of the person of Christ and His substitutionary, sacrificial work on our behalf.

The Lambeth Conference (1998), which brought together 735 bishops of the Anglican Church worldwide, demonstrated how apostate mainstream Protestantism has become, when it debated whether the

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Church should bless same-sex marriages and ordain homosexuals to the priesthood! The proposal was defeated as only 520 bishops registered their vote for orthodox morality.

Some orthodox bishops threatened to walk out of the Conference in protest, and the Rt Rev Alexander Malik, Bishop of Lahore, Pakistan, is reported in the *Guardian Weekly* 16 August to have voiced the horror of many bishops at the idea of same-sex unions and the ordination of active homosexuals. He said,

“It is not gay-bashing to uphold the authority of Scripture. It is a matter of faith and dogma. What will we do at the next Lambeth Conference when people ask for blessings for union with their pet animals?”

The Times on Line 22 November 2004 reports that contrary to the decision of the Lambeth Conference some Anglican clergy are conducting private marriage ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples. It appears that some bishops have found a way around the decision of the Lambeth Conference and are conducting a “blessing” for homosexual couples. The report states:

“The Church of England is yielding to increasing pressure to conduct gay ‘weddings’ as the Civil Partnerships Act recognizing same-sex unions comes into force next year (2005).

Ceremonies by Anglican priests blessing lesbian and gay partnerships increased by 10 percent last year to 300 in England alone.

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) is increasing its print run of same-sex liturgy in anticipation of a thousand blessings a year when the law changes. Nine out of ten such ceremonies are conducted by heterosexual priests.

Despite efforts of conservatives in the world-wide Anglican hierarchy to maintain a strictly Biblical line, the Western Church is heading inexorably down the liberal road.

Bishops are turning a blind eye to gay ceremonies...Officially, churches will refuse to accept civil partnership ceremonies on their premises, but there are plans to offer ‘**gay Christians**’ (emphasis ours) an unauthorized Anglican ‘pink wedding’ afterwards.”

No doubt there will be strong opposition from evangelical elements in the Anglican Church, and this could result in many members leaving and forming independent congregations.

Another form of apostasy manifests itself in emotional displays accompanied by extraordinary claims of miracles, healings, “holy

laughter", tongues gibberish, "slaying in the spirit", exorcism and prophecies. It is generally referred to as the "Toronto Blessing" because of its connection with the Vineyard Churches at Toronto, Canada.

The Toronto Blessing and associated movements have become very large and have spread worldwide, infiltrating many mainstream Churches. Some of these groups practice what is called the "End-Time Deliverance Ministry". Basically, they believe that every sin is really a demon, and that we can be perfectly sinless by having our sins (demons) cast out. This is undoubtedly a "*doctrine of demons*".

Their theory is that a company of people will by this means be made sinlessly perfect in the last days, and this group will constitute the bride of Christ. They teach that only perfect Christians will participate in the Rapture!

The Bible expressly warns us of this form of apostasy in the last days:
"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim.4:1).

Jesus warned us that the last days would be characterized by false prophets who would deceive many. When asked what would be the sign of His coming, He said,
"Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt.24:11).

Jesus also warned,
"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"(Matt.7:22-23).

When we see Ecumenical Christendom with its idolatrous system, its humanistic belief, its emotional substitution for spiritual reality, and its tolerance of homosexuality, it is clear that we are in the last days!

The Sign of the Nation of Israel

Of all the signs that indicate we are approaching the Lord's "*coming, and of the end of the world (age)*"(Matt.24:3), none is so clear as the sign of the nation of Israel.

God made a covenant with Abraham about 2,000 BC and promised him, and his seed after him, the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (Gen 17:1-8). He confirmed the promises to Isaac and to Jacob, whose name He changed to Israel (Gen.26:1-5; 27:26-29).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Under the Mosaic Covenant, about 1,500BC, the children of Israel became a nation, and God established the Levitical priesthood to *"be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations"*(Exod.40:15).

At the conclusion of the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, as they prepared to possess the land which God had given to them, God clarified the terms under which the land could be occupied in what is known as the Palestinian Covenant (Deut.28-30). God said three things to Israel:

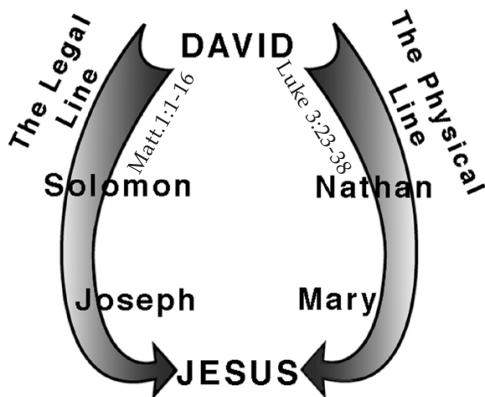
- 1) If you obey Me, you will be blessed **in the land** (Deut.28:1-14).
- 2) If you disobey Me, you will be besieged, **driven out of the land**, and become *"a proverb and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee"*(Deut.28:37).
- 3) If, after all these things have come upon Israel, they return to the Lord, then God will have compassion and **gather them back to the land** *"from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered"* them (Deut.30:1-3), in order to fulfil His promises made to Abraham (Deut.30:20).

About 1,000 BC, God made a covenant with David that his seed would always have someone to reign over Israel (2 Sam.7:11-29). God said, *"Thy throne shall be established for ever!"*(2 Sam.7:16), and history records how the descendants of David continued to the time that Israel was judged by God for its sin and taken to Babylon. The last king of Judah was Zedekiah, but he was rejected as the *"profane wicked prince of Israel"*(Ezek.21:25-27), and all of his sons were slain by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.52:10-11). Zedekiah was the brother of the former king, Jehoiakim, not his son. Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, had already been carried away captive to Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion, and it was his descendants who maintained the line,

providing heirs to the everlasting throne promised to David.

The line of David is traced to Jesus Christ, the son of David, through Joseph His foster father (Matt.1:1-17), and to Mary His mother(Luke 3:23-38).

Jesus Christ is heir to David's throne, as the angel declared:
"Thou...shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and



the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”(Luke 1:31-33).

When Christ presented Himself to the nation as “*Messiah the Prince*” (Dan.9:25), and King of Israel, the leaders rejected Him and had Him crucified on a Roman cross. Then 38 years later (70AD), in fulfillment of Dan9:26, the Romans under Titus destroyed the city and the sanctuary and the Jews were scattered throughout the world, where they have continued until the 20th century.

This scattering out of the land was exactly as foretold in the Palestinian Covenant (Deut.28:15 to 29:29). The reason, was the rejection of Messiah!

Many Scriptures have foretold the return of Israel in the last days. Israel is at the heart of God's plan for the ultimate blessing of this world, and without a godly nation of Israel the kingdom of God cannot be established on earth. God said to Abraham,

“I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen.12:2-3).

Ezekiel prophesied of a day when Israel would return to the land in the “*latter years*” (Ezek 38:8,16) but they **would come back still in unbelief** (Ezek.36:24-27; 38:22-29). AFTER they returned to the land they would pass through awful tribulation called “*the time of Jacob's trouble*”(Jer.30:7), which God will use to finally bring them to repentance and to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Messiah. When Jesus Christ comes at the end of that Great Tribulation the remnant of Israel will be a saved nation, and the Lord says,

“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech.12:10).

It is a miracle that the people of Israel have maintained their identity during nearly 2,000 years of dispersion among all nations, and then reassembled in their own land as an independent nation among the nations of the world. No other nation in the history of the world has done such a thing.

On 14 May 1948, at 4.00pm, David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence, and at 6.10pm on the same day America recognized the State of Israel. Massive immigration followed, as refugees poured in from all over the world. The first census in 1948 showed a total population of 713,000 Jews and 69,000 Arabs.

According to CIA World Fact Book 1 January 2004, the population of Israel was 6,199,008, which includes 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, about 20,000 in the Golan Heights, more than 5,000 in the Gaza Strip and about 177,000 in East Jerusalem. Broadly speaking, in 2004 there were about 5.2 million Jews and 1 million Arabs in the land.

Israel can boast of victories over enormous numerical odds in major conflicts with its Arab neighbours. In 1948-9 the War of Independence was won. The Suez Crisis followed on 29 October 1956, then the Six-Day War on 5 June 1967, and later the Yom Kippur War on 6 October 1973.

Israel is recognized as one of the most advanced nations of the world and leads the world in many fields of technology. With a Jewish population about the size of Sydney, Australia, it has its own spy satellites, 200 nuclear warheads, an air force that is the envy of the world, a defence industry which competes on world markets for the supply of sophisticated state-of-the-art weaponry, and its own missiles which match the best produced in USA or Russia!

All of this is fulfilment of Bible prophecy which foretold that Israel would become a military power in the last days:

"And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem..."(Zech.14:14), and *"the land of Judah shall be a terror unto the land of Egypt..."*(Isa.19:17). *"In that day I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about....and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place"*(Zech.12:6).



The Temple at Jerusalem to be Rebuilt

Jerusalem is the place where God has chosen to put His name, and is the only place where Israel was permitted to offer their "burnt offerings...tithes...heave offerings...vows...freewill offerings, and the firstlings of ...herds and...flocks" (Deut.12:5-6). There Solomon built the first Temple, which was later destroyed by Nebucadnezzar in 586BC. After the 70-year Babylonian captivity Zerubbabel rebuilt it in 517BC, but King Herod reconstructed it commencing 20 BC. It took 46 years to build as recorded in John 2:20. The finishing touches were still being applied at that time.

In 70AD the Temple was destroyed by the Romans and the collection of the holy half shekel, which was the atonement money paid by each male Jew over 20 years for the maintenance of the Tabernacle (Exod.30:11-16), was discontinued.

The Bible says that the Temple must be in existence during the Great Tribulation, which lasts for seven years before Jesus Christ comes to reign. This is referred to in Matt.24:15; 2 Thess.2:4; and Rev.11:1-2. The Gentiles will be permitted to occupy the court of the Temple (Rev11:1-2), but after Israel repents in the first half of the Tribulation the Roman prince, Antichrist, will turn on Israel, occupy the Temple, and install his idol image. This is what is called the "abomination of desolation"(Matt24:15; Dan 9:27).

Another grander Temple will be constructed at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ, as described in Ezekiel 40 to 48. Priestly service will be recommenced and burnt offerings offered by the priests.

Any moves by the Jews toward construction of the Tribulation Temple must therefore be of immense significance, and indicate that the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, is at hand. The Rapture of the true Church, which precedes the Day of the Lord (1Thess 5:1-9; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 3:10), must be even closer.

During 1997 it was announced in *Jerusalem Post* that minting and collection of the holy half shekel, as prescribed by Moses in Exodus 30:11-16, would begin. Advertisements state that it is "a special fund for the upkeep of Jerusalem"

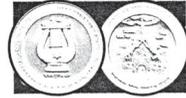
One headline reads,

If you are a Levite age 25-50 you are hereby called to
לויים לדוכנם! **ACTIVE DUTY** לויים לדוכנם!

Why is this Passover different from the last 1928 Seders?

THE EXILE HAS ENDED

We will not be so brazen as to say that the next stage of Redemption has begun, nonetheless, we can say without ambiguity, the Exile has ended. When we lost sovereignty over the Land of Israel, and the Temple in Jerusalem, 1928 years ago, in the year 3830 (70 CE), we lost the ability to safeguard Hekdesh. Today we have that ability.
There is Hekdesh once again in Jerusalem!



**The Holy Half Shekel
This year in
Jerusalem,
next year in the
Holy Temple!**

The holy half shekel is sold to Jews around the world, who then donate them once a year to be dedicated or "separated" as "Temple treasure". Before Israel became a Sovereign State property sanctified to the Temple (hekdesch) could not be safeguarded, but now that Israel has its own security system the way is made clear for safe storage of the holy half shekel. At a ceremony in Jerusalem on 26 March 1998, the first of the coins were donated and Reuven Prager, who has worked on the project for 15 years, is reported to have declared:

"With the sound of this coin dropping (into a special casket), THE EXILE OFFICIALLY ENDS."

According to the ancient *trumot ha lishkah* ceremony, *hekdesch* was stored in a special room and used to pay for the daily communal sacrifices and the remainder went to pay for preparing Jerusalem for the three pilgrimage holidays and for building up of the walls of the city.

We know that King Joash, who reigned about 856BC, collected the holy half shekel to repair the Temple building which had fallen into disrepair. Reuven Prager claims to be a Levite, and says, "We've got a role to fill. Our duty was to create the vessels and maintain them. That's my job. I just create the vessels."

According to *Your Jerusalem* April 1998, Reuven Prager wants: "To take an active role in trying to rebuild the Temple and bring the Messiah...His version of the rebuilding of the Temple does not concur with ideas espoused by other organizations calling for the same goal. He insists that he would never dream of destroying the mosques which sit on the Temple Mount; rather he believes that a careful reading of the Koran yields the view that Moslems should also favour the rebuilding of the Temple."

This is exactly what the New Testament teaches. During the Great Tribulation John is told to "Measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship

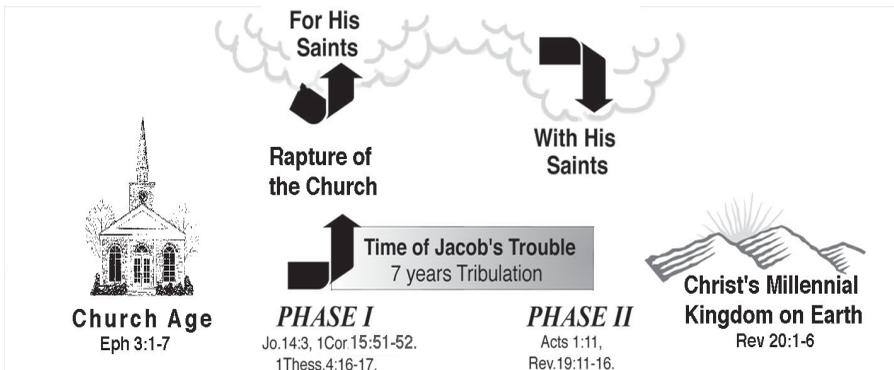
therein. But the COURT which is WITHOUT THE TEMPLE LEAVE OUT, and measure it not; FOR IT IS GIVEN UNTO THE GENTILES: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months”(Rev11:1-2).

The Oslo Peace Accord

The Oslo Peace Accord is a "land for peace" deal agreed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and signed in Oslo, Sweden, in September 1993. The Declaration of Principles (DOP) calls for two phases. The first phase hands back to the PLO Jericho, Gaza, Hebron and portion of the West Bank. The second phase deals with the question of Arab refugees and the status of Jerusalem. Simply stated, it is dividing the land as foretold in Scripture! Joel says, *"In those days... when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations...to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and PARTED MY LAND!" (Joel 3:1-2).*

Daniel tells us that Antichrist will not only plant himself "in the glorious holy mountain", "magnify himself above all", and acknowledge "a strange god", but he will "DIVIDE THE LAND FOR GAIN" (Dan.11:36-45).

As already indicated, Antichrist will come out of Europe, from the Revived Roman Empire which we see forming up under the banner of the EU. Daniel tells us that he will "confirm" or "strengthen" a 7-year covenant with Israel, which he then breaks after 3½ years and causes the Temple sacrifices to cease. The current moves to rebuild the Temple therefore indicate that we must be drawing close to the end of the age! Could the Oslo Accord or a subsequent agreement be the treaty to be confirmed?



A Jewish Sanhedrin and a Monarchy

In October 2004 the Orthodox Jews re-established the Sanhedrin comprised of 71 scholars, and these began meeting on a regular basis to advise the nation on issues affecting its future. Prime Minister Sharon's Disengagement Plan, which would see Jewish settlements removed from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has been condemned, and soldiers and police forbidden to participate in the removal of settlers.

The new Sanhedrin would like to see a monarchical system of government replace the present democratic system. Steps have been taken to identify suitable persons who can trace their lineage back to David, and already many have been able to do this.

Scripture indicates that they will not achieve their objective, since Ezekiel wrote that the throne of David would be overturned and "***be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him***" (Ezek.21:27).

The angel Gabriel said Christ would be given "*the throne of his father David*" (Luke 1:32).

However, the Jews will succeed in identifying the "*family of the house of David*", which will be present when Christ, the Son of David, returns. The genealogy of Jesus Christ is already established in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Zechariah wrote of that time:

"And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart" (Zech.12:12).

Global Terrorism

There are over 1 billion Muslims in the world, and since 1979 when the Islamic fundamentalist revolution began there has been a new kind of security threat confronting the nations of the world. On 11 September 2001, terrorism assumed a new dimension when the twin towers of the World Trade Center were demolished by Islamic fundamentalists who hijacked American passenger jets. This event goes down in history as a turning-point in world affairs.

When the Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah of Persia he effectively began a war that could not be won by conventional military tactics alone. The balance of military might and power is so heavily in favour of Israel and her allies that alternative means had to be pursued in order to achieve his goal of Islamic world supremacy. In backward areas such as the African continent conventional military tactics would prove successful, but against the sophisticated weaponry of the US or EU other less expensive forms of war had to be organized.

The fundamental Islamic goal is to totally destroy Israel and any nation which supports her. This immediately identifies America as a target.

For terrorists to be effective against the US they need to have access to chemical, biological or nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which can be obtained relatively cheaply, and the delivery system needs nothing more than a few thousand suicide fanatics willing to sacrifice their own lives in order to strike fear and confusion into the non-Islamic people of the free world.

All of this is fuelled by an intense hatred for Israel and a burning desire to obliterate every Jew from the face of the earth.

We know from Scripture that there will be a massive Islamic attack on Israel in the first half of the Tribulation, but even with support from Russia this would be futile unless America can be neutralized. In 2001 America spent \$396.1 billion on defence, which constituted nearly 50% of world expenditure. The percentage spent by the Islamic nations identified with the fundamentalist revolution in that same year was only \$83 billion if we include Russian expenditure; \$23 billion (2.8%) if we exclude Russian expenditure (See the table on page 130).

For several years now *Jane's Intelligence Digest* has been warning that Iran is planning a conventional war on Israel and that she intends to neutralize American support for Israel by locating WMD in cities throughout the US. If America comes to Israel's support, then the WMDs would be released creating total chaos and confusion. This is terrorism on a vast scale, and the President of the US is obviously aware of the threat and is taking measures to prevent it happening.

Early in the Tribulation, as the second seal is opened, John sees a red horse and

*"power was given to him that sat thereon to **take peace from the earth**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev.6:4).*

This could indicate a universal state of anarchy, but it could also be closely connected with global terrorism. Terrorism has a total disregard for the rights of innocent people, killing indiscriminately in order to create fear and thus remove any sense of safety. Peace and security is taken away from people by terrorism.

What we might expect is that as we draw nearer to the Tribulation the threat of terrorism will increase, and will reach a climax soon after the Rapture.

World Military Expenditure AD2001

(In billions of dollars)

USA and Allies

US	396 .1
Canada.....	7 .7
Israel.....	9 .0
Australia.....	6 .6
Saudi Arabia.....	27 .2
Taiwan.....	8 .2
Emirates.....	3 .9
Kuwait.....	2 .6
Sth Korea.....	11 .8
Singapore.....	4 .3
<u>Philippines.....</u>	<u>1 .1</u>
Total (11).....	<u>\$478 .5 -58.5%</u>

European Countries

UK.....	34 .0
France.....	25 .3
Germany.....	21 .0
Italy.....	15 .5
Spain.....	6 .9
Netherlands.....	5 .6
Sweden.....	4 .2
Poland.....	3 .7
Greece.....	3 .3
Norway.....	2 .8
Denmark.....	2 .4
Belgium.....	2 .2
Portugal.....	1 .3
Czech Republic.....	1 .1
Luxembourg.....	0 .9
Hungary.....	0 .8
<u>Yugoslavia.....</u>	<u>0 .5</u>
Total.(17).....	<u>131.5 -16.0%</u>

South America

Brazil	17 .9
Argentina.....	3 .1
Colombia	2 .1
<u>Cuba.....</u>	<u>0 .7</u>
Total.(4).....	<u>23 .8 - 2.9%</u>

Russia and Muslims

Russia.....	60 .0
Iran.....	9 .1
Turkey.....	5 .1
Pakistan.....	2 .6
Egypt.....	2 .1
Iraq.....	1 .4
Libya.....	1 .2
Syria.....	0 .8
<u>Sudan.....</u>	<u>0 .7</u>
Total(9).....	<u>83 .0 -10.15%</u>

Kings of the East

China.....	42 .0
Japan.....	40 .4
India.....	15 .6
Vietnam	1 .8
<u>North Korea.....</u>	<u>1 .3</u>
Total(5).....	<u>101 .1 - 12.4%</u>
<u>Grand Total....\$817.9 billion</u>	

Source:

Center for Defense Information.

As we look at the table above, we are reminded of Joel's prophecy concerning the last great battle before Christ returns:

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong..."(Joel 3:9-10).



Tsunamis

*“Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; **THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING**; men’s heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:25-26).*

The above verse is part of the Lord’s reply to the disciples’ question, “*What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?*” It is clear from the Lord’s answer that disturbances will occur in the oceans at the end of the age, and that this will cause great anxiety among the nations. The 2004 Boxing Day tsunami off the coast of Sumatra constitutes a fulfilment of the signs of the last days, but according to Scripture much worse is to follow during the Tribulation.

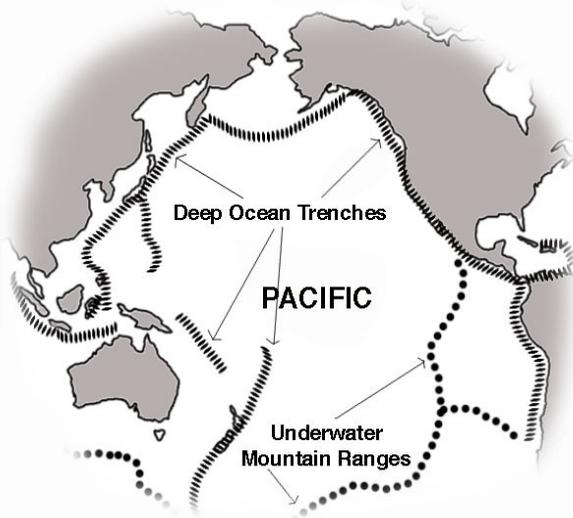
When Paul wrote to the Hebrew believers he urged them not to forsake *“the assembling of ourselves together...but exhorting one another: AND SO MUCH THE MORE, AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING”* (Heb.10:25).

Paul has indicated that **it will be possible** for Christians to “*see the day approaching*”. Someone has said that “coming events always cast a shadow”, and as we draw near to the Day of the Lord (the Tribulation) we can expect to see the storm clouds gathering.

It is also clear from Scripture that calamities will **intensify** as we draw near to the end of the age. Jesus referred to the first half of the 7-year Tribulation as the “*beginning of sorrows*”, or “*beginning of travail*”. Travail pains become more frequent and more intense as the moment of birth approaches. It is not unreasonable therefore to expect a growing number of catastrophes at more frequent intervals as the Lord’s return draws near.

An examination of the records of past tsunamis indicates that the December 2004 tsunami was caused by the greatest earthquake (9 on the Richter scale), produced the greatest devastation over the largest area, and took the greatest number of lives of any former tsunami. Even the aftershocks recorded 7 on the Richter scale, and that would normally be considered a major earthquake. Twelve days after the initial earthquake an aftershock of 6 on the Richter scale was recorded.

Tsunamis are common in areas where seismic activity is frequently experienced along the earthquake zones which run under the ocean from Alaska past Japan down to Indonesia, past Papua New Guinea



and down to New Zealand. Another deep trench runs from north to south off the west coast of North and South America.

The relatively thin crust of the earth is floating on molten magma and buckles and bends as the moon passes, just as the tides rise and fall. Earthquake zones are also areas of frequent volcanic activity, and eruptions can be the cause of tsunamis.

Krakatoa 1883

A notable case was Krakatoa, an island off the coast of Indonesia, which erupted in 1883 sending a tsunami 120 feet high along the coast of Java and Sumatra that killed 36,000 people. The population of Indonesia was much less in 1883, and tourism was not advanced as it is today.

Krakatoa was an explosion of gigantic proportions. Before the eruption the island rose from 1,000 feet below the ocean to 2,660 feet above sea level. It exploded sending 21 cubic km of rock into the air and depositing rock and ash over 800,000 sq. km (300,000 sq. miles). The ocean was so full of floating pumice stone (lightweight gaseous expanded rock) that shipping was interrupted. The noise of the explosion could be heard in Sydney and Tokyo, and sound waves reverberated around the globe for years.

As bad as Krakatoa was, it is minuscule compared with what will occur during the Tribulation when, as John foresaw:

“A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed” (Rev.8:8-9).

When one third of sea creatures (trillions) are destroyed by such a violent upheaval their blood will discolour the oceans, just as a whale’s blood turns the water red when it is harpooned. Imagine the tsunamis that will race across the oceans of the world when such a disturbance occurs.

A NASA scientist speculated that when the December 2004 tsunami occurred the axis of the earth had been shifted by one inch. His assertion had not been verified in early January 2005 and awaits measurements from satellite instruments, however, Scripture indicates that the earth will “wobble” during the Tribulation. Isaiah wrote:

“The earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage” (Isa.24:19-20).

Scientists tell us that the axis of the earth already “wobbles” within certain limits, but nothing compared with what will happen during the Tribulation.

Worst Tsunamis in History

Apart from Krakatoa, none of the worst tsunamis come near the December 2004 Indonesian tsunami for severity or loss of lives and property. The following is a list of some of the worst previous tsunamis from records compiled by the University of Southern California and other sources (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/tsunamis/>).

- 1293 Japan - 23,000 killed
- 1498 Japan - 26,000 killed
- 1690 Virgin Isles - 3,000 killed
- 1707 Japan - 30,000 killed
- 1746 Peru - 18,000 killed
- 1755 Portugal - 60,000 killed
- 1765 China - 10,000 killed
- 1771 Japan - 13,000 killed
- 1782 Taiwan - 50,000 killed
- 1815 Indonesia - 10,000 killed
- 1868 Chile - 26,000 killed
- 1883 Indonesia - 36,000 die - In 2004 Krakatao same height as 1883
- 1896 Japan - 27,000 killed
- 1908 Strait of Messina, between Italy and Sicily - approx 60,000 died.
- 1917 Indonesia - 15,000 killed
- 1941 India - 5,000 killed
- 1946 Aleutian Isles, Alaska - 165 killed
- 1960 Chile - Estimates of between 490 and 2,290 died
- 1975 Hawaii - Over 122 killed



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

- 1976 Philippines - 8,000 killed
- 1992 Nicaragua - 170 lives lost and extensive damage. 9.7m waves and quake measured 7.2 on Richter scale (RS).
- 1992 Indonesia - 1,000 lives lost and extreme damage. 26m waves and quake measured 7.5 RS
- 1993 Japan Sea - 330 lives lost and \$1.5 billion damage. 31m waves and quake measured 7.6 RS.
- 1994 Indonesia - 250 lives lost and \$2.2 million damage. 14 m waves and quake measured 7.2 RS.
- 1994 Kuril Islands, eastern Russia - 11 lives lost and some damage. 9m waves and quake measured 8.1RS.
- 1994 Indonesia - 238 killed
- 1994 Alaska - one death reported and \$21 million damage. Waves measured 10 m.
- 1994 Philippines - 62 lives lost and \$25 million damage. 10 m waves and quake measured 7.0 RS
- 1996 Irian Jaya - 161 killed
- 1998 Papua New Guinea - up to 3,000 lives lost. 15m waves and quake measured 7.0 RS
- 2001 Peru - approx 100 lives lost. 7m waves and quake measured 8.3 RS
- 2002 Papua New Guinea - 5 lives lost. 5.5 m waves.
- 2004 Indonesia - over 168,000 lives lost, 5 million refugees, billions of dollars of damage and a quake measuring 9 RS. The impact will be assessed for a long time.

Other Natural Disasters

As bad as the December 2004 tsunami was, it is not the worst natural disaster in history. *Time* magazine 10 January 2005 indicated that the greatest of all natural disasters occurred in China when the Yangtze River flooded in 1931, drowning 145,000 and killing a staggering 3 million through the famine and disease which followed.

More recently, in 1970, cyclonic floods claimed 300,000 lives in Bangladesh, and back in 1923 a massive earthquake in Japan took an estimated 140,000 lives in Tokyo and Yokohama.

Disease the worst Killer

The greatest of all global catastrophes, apart from the Biblical Flood in Noah's day, was undoubtedly the Black Death (Bubonic) plague of 1347-50. Within 20 years approximately one third of the population of England, Europe, and the Near East perished. The total number of

dead cannot be accurately stated but estimates range up to 40 million; 25 million in Europe and up to one half of England alone. Numbers in Russia and the Near East are uncertain.

So great was the loss of life that there was a labour shortage, and new conditions of employment were demanded by the peasants, who saw the opportunity to revolt.

The Black Death plague came from the Far East on ships and was transmitted by flea-ridden rats at every port.

The Great Plague of London was a significant disaster and took 70,000 lives in 1665, according to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of World History*.

Following WWI the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918 took **22 million** lives, far exceeding the deaths of the Great War. In WWI, 8.5 million died, 21 million were injured, and 7.5 million were prisoners and missing, according to *Timetables of History* by Bernard Grun.

The AIDS epidemic currently ravaging Africa and Asia could prove worse than all previous plagues. As yet science has no answer, although large sums of money are being spent on research.

A great deal of research on tsunamis is being carried out to provide early warning systems. About half of the American population of 280 million live within 50 km of the coastline, and since tsunamis travel at the speed of a jet liner it is imperative that efficient early warning systems be set up to allow maximum time for evacuation.

The countries bordering the Pacific have invested in an early warning system, however, countries around the Indian Ocean had determined not to instal detection and warning devices and as a result tens of thousands received no prior notification of the 2004 tsunami. Early warning systems are being installed and population in the region will receive some early warning in the future.

Help from wealthy nations such as USA, UK and Australia was generous and medical teams began arriving in disaster areas after the first week, but that was too late for many survivors who suffered horrible injuries. In the unsanitary tropical conditions disease threatened the lives of many and authorities feared that the death-toll could double. Fortunately that seems to have been averted.

Complaints were made that relief was arriving too slowly, but with road and rail systems destroyed it was left to helicopters and naval craft to reach the needy with food, water, and medical supplies. It seems to have been forgotten that there was earthquake damage prior to the tsunami.

The Worst is Yet to Come

If the relief effort is hampered when only one major calamity occurs, what will it be like in the foretold coming days when calamity follows calamity? Jesus indicated that for the seven years after the Rapture there will be such devastation on earth that *“except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved”* (Matt.24: 22). Imagine what it will be like with the following events occurring in quick succession within a short 7-year period:

1) Peace will be taken from the earth and there will be wars, famine, and disease that will wipe out 25% of world population (Rev.6:4-8).

2) Great earthquakes will shake the globe and *“the cities of the nations fell”* (Rev.16:19). Mega cities like Tokyo, Shanghai, Los Angeles, Mexico City, etc, now have populations running into many millions of people. Men will flee into the rocks of the mountains and want to die for fear of those things which are coming on the earth (Rev.6:12-17).

3) A great island mountain will plunge burning into the sea and one third of all sea creatures and ships will be destroyed (Rev.8:8).

4) The world will be tinder dry from a drought that will last for at least 3½ years, and hail and lightning will ignite a bushfire that will destroy one third of the earth’s trees and grass (Rev.8:7; 11:6).

5) Russia, and a Muslim alliance of Iran, Turkey, Libya and Sudan will attempt to occupy the Middle East, but will be destroyed by God on the mountains of Israel as that nation repents of her rejection of Messiah (Ezek.38-39; Joel 2).

6) Demon activity will reach a new level as the bottomless pit (Greek *“abussos”* meaning abyss) is opened, and spirit beings will attack humans (Rev.9:1-11).

7) A world ruler who will arise from the revived Roman Empire (Europe) will attain global influence and establish himself as God in a rebuilt Jewish Temple at Jerusalem. At this time all Jews will have turned to Christ, and Antichrist will attempt to annihilate the nation. He will also seek to destroy every religion on the face of the earth so that he alone is worshipped (Rev.13:1-18; 2Thess.2:1-12).

8) Asia will erupt in awful warfare that will cause the death of one third of the world’s population. An army of 200 million will converge on the Middle East (Rev.9:14-21).

The foregoing judgments are only some of the terrible things which the Bible predicts will happen in just 7 years before Christ returns to judge the nations and set up His everlasting kingdom on earth. Any attempt at providing relief in these circumstances will be futile.

Jesus warned that the Great Tribulation would bring "*distress of nations, with perplexity*" (Luke 21:25). In the Greek text the word "*distress*" means "*anxiety*", and "*perplexity*" means "*to be in a quandary, at a loss as to what to do, to have no way out*" (See Strong's Greek Dictionary).

Preparing for the Last Days

It is quite clear from the signs already discussed that we must be approaching the end of the age and the second coming of Jesus Christ. While we may see further developments in Israel, Europe, Russia and the Muslim world, many of the prophecies yet to be fulfilled could occur after the Rapture and during the 7-year Tribulation period. Events are accelerating, and since much that happens is not reported in the media, things could be further down the track than we think.

There is one event, however, that will trigger the Great Tribulation (Day of the Lord), and it is referred to by Jesus in the Olivet discourse.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:40-41).

These verses are part of the Olivet discourse which occurred **before the Church age** and was spoken to **Jewish disciples**. To them, the Rapture of the Church was simply "missing persons". It was not until God revealed the mystery of the Church to Paul that the identity of the missing persons was understood to be the Church (Eph. 3:1-7).

Once the Rapture takes place there will be a company of 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel who will believe in Jesus Christ and be sealed by God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, i.e. that the King is coming to establish His kingdom (Matt. 24:14). Persecution will be intense, and Antichrist will demand the worship of the world. Many who refuse to wear his mark will be put to death (Rev. 7:1-17; 13:1-18; 20:4).

The true believers in this Church age will **not** pass into the Tribulation. Paul says,

*"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day** should overtake you as a thief...For God hath not appointed us to wrath (of the Day of the*

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Lord), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep (die), we should live together with him" ie. at the Rapture (1Thess.5:4,9-10).

The question is, "Are you ready?" If the Rapture took place at this moment, would you be caught up to meet the Lord (1Thess.4:13-18), or would you be left behind for Great Tribulation? "*One shall be taken, and the other left*"!

How can you be ready?

The Bible says. Jesus Christ came from heaven on the first Christmas Day. He was Immanuel, "*God with us*", but He was also Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. He came not only to show us how to live, but He came to die a substitutionary death on a cruel cross where He, the sinless Son of God, bore our sins in His own body on the cross. The prophet Isaiah wrote:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...all we like sheep have gone astray... and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:5-6).

Christ shed His precious blood to make an atoning sacrifice, thus satisfying the just demands of God's perfect law which we could not keep. Now there is salvation in no other name,

"for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The choice is yours, dear reader. What will you do with Jesus, who is called Christ? You can accept Him by simple faith, repenting of your sin, or you can reject Him to your eternal loss.

The time is short, and the Rapture is approaching, after which the events of the Great Tribulation will swiftly run their course.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa.55:6).

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1John 5:12).

A suggested prayer: "Dear God, I know I am a sinner and Christ died for me. I now receive Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord". God will hear your cry, and promises that

"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED" (Rom.10:13).