

## Lesson 34 – Signs of the End

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2Ti 3:1-5)

For all of human history there have been wars and killings. However, it has only been in the past few decades that man has had the capability of destroying the entire human race. During the cold War the balance of power was a deterrent. There were only a small handful of nations that had nuclear capabilities. Each of those nations knew that it would likely be destroyed if it “pushed the button” to start a nuclear war. None of these nations wanted to be destroyed. The tension from this balance of power kept the major powers in fear of starting a nuclear war.

Things are different now. Nuclear weapons are smaller and easier to develop. More nations have them. Radical Muslims don’t care if they live or die. They just want to destroy Christians, Jews and Americans. The thought of being destroyed is not a deterrent to these fanatics. Sooner or later, one of these maniacs will get enough nuclear fire power to destroy hundreds of millions of people. Remember, a number of the southern states of the former Soviet Union are heavily armed, nuclear and Muslim.

### Signs of the Soon Return of the Lord

The most important of these signs has to do with Israel., so we will spend a lot of our time on Israel – the people and the land.

1. The existence of Israel
  - a. The fact that Israel even exists today and that Jews are present in the world today is unparalleled in history.
    - i. A few ancient nations exist today
      1. Egypt
      2. Israel
      3. Ethiopia
      4. India
      5. China
    - ii. None of the ancient nations who were defeated and whose land was taken survive today – except the Jews. They were either exterminated or they lost their identity by assimilating with their conquerors.
      1. Hittites
      2. Edomites
      3. Ammonites
      4. Philistines
      5. Etc. etc. etc.
    - iii. The Jews
      1. They have always existed as an identifiable people – just as God had promised in His Word.

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2. They have survived numerous attempts by other nations to exterminate them.
  3. No other nation in history has lost its land and its self-rule, yet maintained its identity for over 2,500 years.
  4. This happened exactly as the Bible said it would happen, more than 3,000 years ago.
- b. God foretold, through His prophets, that the people of Israel would be removed from their land, would be scattered, and in the Last Days would be returned to their land.
- i. Their removal – Deut. 28:64
    1. The reason for their removal
    2. The historical fact of their removal
  - ii. Their dispersion – where they ended up
    1. Europe
      - a. Wherever Paul traveled in Europe, he found Jews.
    2. Asia
      - a. The Middle East
        - i. There were many Jews in the Land during the time of Christ, but they were under Roman rule.
        - ii. Jews also lived in other parts of the Middle East
      - b. China<sup>1</sup>
        - i. Evidence shows that the first Jews to settle in China came from Persia (modern Iran) along the Silk Road in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD.
        - ii. The first Chinese synagogue was built in Kaifeng in 1163 AD.
        - iii. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, Marco Polo wrote that there were a significant number of Jews in China.
        - iv. A Ming Emperor conferred 7 surnames on Chinese Jews. *Ai, Lao, Jin, Li, Shi, Zhang and Zhao*. Even today, all Chinese Jews have one of these 7 surnames.
        - v. The Chinese government today recognizes Jews as an official Chinese ethnic group.
      - c. India
        - i. As of 1927, there was a group of Indian Jews, known as *Beni Israel*, who claim that their ancestors went to Cochin china, after the destruction of the Temple and who give special attention to the descendents of ex-Hindu converts to Judaism.”<sup>2</sup>
  3. Other places
    - a. There is at least one tribe of black Jews in West Africa.<sup>3</sup>
    - b. Jews were discovered in New Guinea<sup>4</sup>
    - c. Jews in America

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Los Angeles Chinese Learning Center, [www.chinese-school.netfirms.com/Jews.html](http://www.chinese-school.netfirms.com/Jews.html)

<sup>2</sup> L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Jew: God's Great Timepiece*, London: 1927 (Pickering & Inglis)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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- i. The first Jewish synagogue was built in Rhode Island, which was founded and governed by Roger Williams, a Baptist.
    - ii. It has been said that there are more Jews in New York City today than there are in Israel.
  - iii. Their return – Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31:7-10; Ezek. 37:22-21
    1. Their return and self-government was promised by God repeatedly in the Old Testament.
    2. Their return to the land began in 1897 when Theodore Herzl began the Zionist movement.
      - a. Jerusalem Population 1864:
        - i. 8000 Jews
        - ii. 15000 Total Population
      - b. Jerusalem Population 1914
        - i. 45,000 Jews
        - ii. 65,000 Total Population
      - c. Jerusalem Population 1995
        - i. 591,000 Total population
      - d. Many displaced Jews sought to move to the Land after World War II.
    3. The United Nations and the British created the Nation of Israel with the Balfour Declaration.
    4. On May 14, 1948, Israel officially became a nation again. Born in one day – Isa. 66:8
      - a. The ancient name of the Land was restored, *Israel*.
      - b. For the first time since 586 BC, (with the exception of about 2 months in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC) the Jews were in control of their Land.
      - c. Hebrew, which had been a dead language for almost 2,000 years, was restored as the official language of the Nation. Never in history had a language that had been dead for so long been revived. This was prophesied – Zeph. 3:9
      - d. Although Israel had control of much of the Land, the Old City of Jerusalem (the ancient part with the holy sites) was still in the hands of the Muslims.
    5. The 6-Day War, 1967
      - a. President Nassar, President of Egypt, led a coalition of Arab nations to war to “drive Israel into the Sea.”
      - b. Israel surprised the world – especially Egypt and Syria – by soundly defeating them and by taking 4 territories held by the Arabs:
        - i. The Golan Heights, in the North
        - ii. The West Bank – the area of Israel in the west side of the Jordan River, including the Old City.
        - iii. The Gaza Strip
        - iv. The Sinai Peninsula
          1. Israel later returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for peace.

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- c. The Arab Palestinians want all of the land that was taken in the war back. Does Israel owe the land to the Palestinians? Most of the world thinks so, but let's look at the facts...
    - i. Israel was trying to live in peace, and was not threatening its neighbors.
    - ii. The neighboring countries launched a surprise attack on Israel, with the intention of destroying the country and taking all the land. (They vowed they would never give it back).
    - iii. Israel took those areas of land when acting in self defense. This never would have happened had the Arab countries not started the war.
    - iv. The boundaries of many of today's nations include land that they took in war at some time in their history.
    - v. Israel claims the right to do the same thing – especially since they were not the aggressor in the war in which they acquired the land.
  - d. The Significance of the 6-Day War – Luke 21:24
    - i. Jerusalem was under control of the Gentiles since 586 BC until 1967.
    - ii. This is a very significant step in the restoration of the Nation of Israel.
6. The Yom Kippur War – 1973
- a. Again, Israel was attacked.
  - b. Israel was in big trouble. They came very close to losing it.
  - c. Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, called President Nixon for help in the middle of the night.
  - d. Nixon immediately sent help and Israel won the war.
7. What is Palestine, and who are the Palestinians?
- a. When Israel lost the land it came under the dominion of other nations
    - i. Northern area – Assyria – 722 BC
    - ii. Southern area – Babylon – 586 BC
    - iii. Persia
    - iv. Rome
    - v. After the fall of Rome, it was more or less tribal land, with both Arabs and Jews.
    - vi. There never was a nation called Palestine – it was just a name applied to the region.
    - vii. The name *Palestine* comes from the name of the *Philistines*, who lived there at one time.
    - viii. Palestine and the areas to the east of Palestine were conquered by the Turks – the Ottoman Empire in 1516 AD.
    - ix. After World War I, the British took over the area around Palestine. The French took over other parts of the area. Up until this time the land was rugged, and the inhabitants were few.

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- x. After World War II, the British gave the land to the Jews for self rule. All the other lands of the Middle East had been given back to the Arabs for self-rule. The Arabs got about 25 times as much land as the Jews got.
- xi. When the Jews began to build their nation, they hired a lot of Arabs to work for them. A number of Arabs migrated from Jordan and other areas to find employment.
- xii. The Arabs living in the land became known as the *Palestinians*.
- xiii. The ancient name of the land – Israel – was restored when it came under Israeli self-rule in 1948.
- xiv. Remember –
  - 1. *Palestine* is a territorial name. It never was a nation.
  - 2. *Israel* is a national name. Israel is a nation.
  - 3. *Palestinians* are not a separate people group. They are simply the Arabs who live in Israel.
  - 4. The Arabs were given self-rule throughout most of the lands of the Middle East – primarily the lands of their ancestors..
  - 5. The Jews were given self-rule in one tiny corner of the Middle East – the land of their ancestors.
  - 6. The Palestinians who want to destroy Israel are the Arabs who are not satisfied with 95% of the land in the Middle East. They want 100%. Some of the Palestinians are Arabs who moved there from Jordan, Iraq, Syria and other Arab lands..

### c. The Land

- i. In ancient times it was fertile
- ii. It had two rainy seasons – Jer. 5:24
  - 1. The Former Rain – around the time of planting in the Spring
  - 2. The Latter Rain – in the Fall
- iii. God said the land of Israel would become a wasteland during the time of the dispersion of the people. – Deut. 29:23-28; Ezek. 36:8-11, 33-36
- iv. After the Captivity in 586 BC, God “turned the rains off,” and the land became barren.
  - 1. Mark Twain visited the land in 1867. He described what he saw:

“...[a] desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds—a silent mournful expanse....A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action....We never saw a human being on the whole route....There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of the worthless soil, had almost deserted

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the country.”<sup>5</sup>

- v. God promised He would restore the former and the latter rains – Joel 2:23

I was told that it had not rained in Israel for 7 years before May 14, 1948, when Israel again became a nation. A few hours after the ceremony at 4:00 PM, it began to rain. It rained on and off again for 7 days.<sup>6</sup>

- vi. God prophesied that in the future it would “bloom like a rose.” – Isa. 35:1
1. Israel exports almost \$1 Billion of fresh produce to the rest of the world each year.
  2. More than half of the flowers sold in Europe today are imported from Israel.
  3. Forests of cedar, acacia, myrtle, oil, cypress, pine and box trees – Isa. 41:18-20

### Other Signs of the Soon Return of the Lord:

2. Global Travel – Dan. 12:4
3. Increased knowledge – Dan. 12:4
  - a. Specifically refers to knowledge of Bible Prophecy
  - b. Increase of scientific and other knowledge also implied
    - i. Anthony D’Angelo estimated that knowledge doubles every 14 months.
    - ii. Many of the things we consider routine knowledge today did not exist a few years ago.
4. Global Telecommunication – Rev. 11:9-10
  - a. When the two witnesses are killed, the whole world will be able to see them.
  - b. This was unconceivable when it was written in 90 AD.
  - c. It was impossible until a few decades ago.
    - i. Bible students knew that it would happen
    - ii. Nobody understood how it could possibly happen
    - iii. Skeptics didn’t believe it could happen.
    - iv. Now everybody knows it can happen.
    - v. The Bible was ahead of natural human knowledge by 1,900 years.
5. Warfare all over the world - Matt. 24:7
  - a. There are many armed conflicts in the world today.
6. Global arms race – Joel 3:9-14
7. Global hatred of Biblical Christianity – Matt. 24:9
8. Global evangelism – Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10
  - a. Technology makes it possible for us to get the Gospel anywhere.
  - b. The Bible has been translated into 2,300 languages
9. Worldwide interest in Jerusalem – Zech. 12:3.
10. Weapons of Mass Destruction with the capability of wiping out the human race – Matt. 24:21-22.
11. Nuclear weapons

<sup>5</sup> Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*. London: 1881 (New American Library, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Taken from research by Evangelist Ed Vallowe and presented in his sermon, *The Budding of the Fig Tree*, around 1972,

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- a. Zech. 14:12; 2 Peter. 3:10
- 12. World Government and the rise of the Revived Roman Empire - Dan. 2:40-44; 7:23
- 13. Russia as a world power – Exek. 38
  - a. Magog = Russia
  - b. Meshech = Moscow
- 14. The Prince of Persis – Daniel
  - a. At the time of the writing of Daniel, nobody would have know that Persia (Iran) would become the greatest threat to world peace on earth.
- 15. The Eastern Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem would be closed until the return of Christ – Ezek. 44:1-3
  - a. It was sealed shut in ancient times
  - b. It remains sealed shut today, waiting for the coming of Messiah.
- 16. Israel will be one nation, not two, as in the days of the Divided Kingdom – Exek. 37:15-17, 22
- 17. The Euphrates will be dried up = Rev. 16:12
  - a. Turkey completed the Ataturk Dam in 1990 that has the ability to hold back the entire Euphrates River.
  - b. The river will be dried up to allow the armies of the East to advance on Israel.
- 18. Addiction to pleasure – 2 Tim. 3:1-5
- 19. Rise of homosexuality – Luke 17:28
- 20. Economy based on account numbers, and not cash – Rev. 13:17-18

Clearly the prophetic events taking place today have never been seen in the history of the world. They show us tha the end is rapidly approaching. It behooves each of us to be very serious about our relationship with Christ and what we can do for Him during these remaining days or years we have here.

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*