

# Twelve Signs of the End Times, part 1

Have you visited your local or online bookstore lately and looked for books about the signs of the end times? I did this week. Some of the books have rather sensational titles such as “100 Signs of the End Times,” or “65 Signs of the End Times.” There are many books with a similar title. Some of the books are just titled, “Signs of the Times.” In this study, we are going to learn about twelve signs that will help us know if the next event in God’s plan for the future is near. You will not need to pay for a book to discover them. They are clearly given to us in the Bible. The signs we are interested in are those that help us understand when the rapture and tribulation are near. With that information we know that the second coming of Christ will occur seven years later, and then the millennial kingdom will follow because they will follow each other back-to-back.

The reason we will be studying twelve signs that will occur before the rapture and tribulation is that our study is from 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and it is about two signs that will occur before the tribulation starts. Therefore, I thought it

would be helpful to add ten others for a total of twelve. But this has created a problem since it would make the message too long. So, we will study five signs in this study and the last seven signs in the next study.

**FIRST, APOSTLES WOULD DIE.** The first sign we will start with is found in Luke 17. Verses 22-25 say,

long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. They will say to you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ Do not go away, and do not run after them. For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.” Luke 17:22-25 (NASB)

If we continued reading through verse 34, we would discover that Jesus gave the disciples a series of signs about His second coming. Verse 22 is the beginning of this discussion, and Jesus is explaining to the disciples that they will long to see the days of the Son of Man. When Jesus said, “Days of the Son of Man,” He was referring to His second coming, and His kingdom.

When He said they would “long to see” His second coming, He was telling them that it would not happen in their lifetime. This is the first sign of His second coming. That is, the apostles would not see the second coming of Christ



before they died.

At first the disciples did not understand Jesus’ teaching. This is clear in Luke 19:11 where we are told they thought the kingdom was about to appear. The point is they were wrong. Then once again we learn they did not understand when Acts 1:6 says they wanted to know if Jesus was restoring the kingdom. Jesus answered,

And He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will

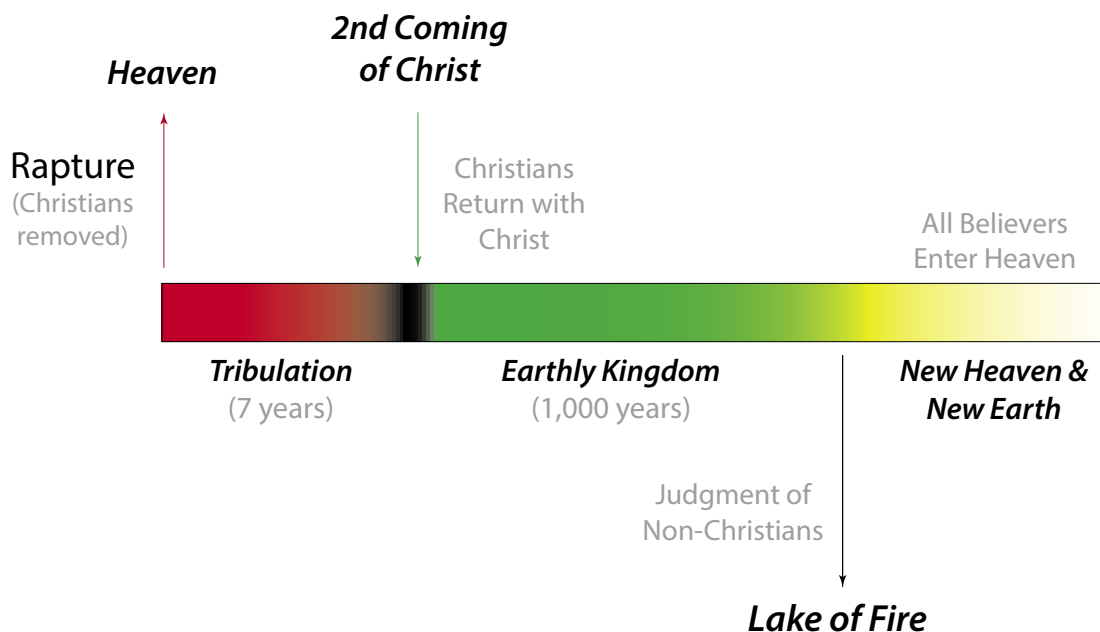
So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority . . . Acts 1:6-7 (NASB)

Then immediately Jesus ascended back to heaven in verse 11. Finally they understood Jesus’ teaching. How do we know they understood? The first example is found in 2 Peter 3:4. In this passage, Peter warns believers there will be false teachers

had already told Peter that he would die in John 21:18-19. Further, in 2 Peter 1:15 Peter told Christians he was about to die. That is, Peter would die before the second coming of Christ occurred.

Now let’s ask, “When did Peter write the epistle of 2 Peter?” The answer is that he wrote it about A.D. 66-68. This means the second coming of Christ had not yet arrived by A.D. 67-68. We also know the book of Revelation was written by the apostle John about A.D. 95. That book prophesied the coming of

## Timeline of The Future



who will claim the second coming will not occur. Therefore, in 2 Peter 3:4 Peter quotes these mockers. They were asking,

Where is the promise of His coming? 2 Peter 3:4 (NASB)

That is, they will claim the second coming of Christ is not going to happen. Therefore, Peter replied in verses 5-13 that Christ’s coming has not been delayed. It will arrive according to God’s plan. Obviously, Peter believed the second coming was going to occur, but it had not happened yet. Further, Jesus

would occur at some time in the future. Since John was the last apostle to die, this means none of the apostles saw the second coming of Christ. So, the first sign is that the second coming did not occur when any of the apostles were alive.

**SECOND, CHRIST WOULD DIE.** Then in Luke 17:25, Jesus gave a second sign when He said He would die before the second coming occurred. That sign has already occurred. Jesus has already died and was resurrected. Now, we have two signs that help us understand the second coming did not occur during the life of Christ and of the apostles. It would occur

sometime after A.D. 95.

**THIRD, BIRTH PANGS WILL OCCUR.** A long series of signs are found in Matthew 24. In verse 3, we are told the disciples asked Jesus about the signs of His coming. We will begin with verse 6. It is our third sign. Jesus said,

You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Matthew 24:6-8 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus refers to a group of signs as “birth pangs.” This group of signs includes wars, rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes. I did some research and discovered that NBC News reported in 2014 that,

The annual number of “great” earthquakes nearly tripled over the last decade, providing a reminder to Americans that unruptured faults like those in the northwest United States might be due for a Big One.

Between 2004 and 2014, 18 earthquakes with magnitudes of 8.0 or more rattled subduction zones around the globe. That’s an increase of 265 percent over the average rate of the previous century, which saw 71 great quakes, according to a report to the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America this week in Vancouver, British Columbia.<sup>1</sup>

The author of the article is “Thorne Lay, a distinguished professor of earth and planetary sciences at the University of California, Santa Cruz.” He has impressive credentials. Other reports can be found online that show a similar trend from 2014 to 2021. For example, Newsweek reported in 2018,

Over the past 100 years, there was a 25 to 30 percent increase in the number of significant earthquakes associated with a slow-

down in the Earth’s rotation.<sup>2</sup>

That is, earthquake activity has been increasing over the last one hundred years. They state the cause is due to the earth’s rotation slowing down. They forgot or did not know that God is slowing the rotation of the earth. This sign indicates the second coming of Christ is nearer than before.

**FOURTH, PEOPLE WILL INCREASINGLY BECOME MORE EVIL.** The fourth sign of the Lord’s coming is given by Jesus back in Luke 17:26-30. There Jesus said,

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. Luke 17:26-30

Notice that Jesus said we can know His second coming is near because the people in the world will be just like the people at the time of Noah and in the days of Lot. He said people will be preoccupied with drinking, eating, marrying, being given in marriage, buying, selling, planting, and building. That is, they will be given to sex, food, drink, money, and possessions. It is truly amazing to realize that Jesus did not refer to some other previous period of time. Instead, He chose the days of Noah and the days of Sodom in order to illustrate just how wicked people will be at the time of His second coming. Remember, they were so wicked that God destroyed them with a worldwide flood and fire from heaven. That means the people at the time of the second coming will be incredibly evil. People will be as evil as those back in the days of Noah and Sodom. This means our world is becoming incredibly evil. Our world today is not as evil as it is going to be!

In Daniel 12:10, the prophet Daniel prophesied this about

1. Thorne Lay. “Worldwide Surge in ‘Great’ Earthquakes Seen in Past 10 Years.” NBCNews. Oct. 25, 2014.

2. Dana Dovey. “2018 Could Bring Increase in Severe Worldwide Earthquakes.” Newsweek. 1/1/18.

the last days of the world with these words,

... the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. Daniel 12:10 (NASB)

Daniel used the perfect tense for the verb “act wickedly.” That is, the wicked will have been wicked and will continue to constantly act wickedly. This helps us understand Jesus’ words. Do you not see this sign already?

The apostle Paul echoed this sad reality this way in 2 Timothy 3:1-5,

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NASB)

Paul said the last days will be difficult. The Greek word for “difficult” is *chalepos*. To translate this Greek word as “difficult” misses its meaning. A better translation is “violence” or “dangerous.” Why will the last days be violent? Paul says men will be lovers of themselves. With this understanding, we can understand why all the rest of the sins in this list will occur. They will occur because love will be missing. Notice that Paul said they will love money. The main reason someone is boastful, arrogant, a reviler or speaks evil of others is due to a lack of love. In verse 3, Paul just says people will be unloving. They will be disobedient to parents because they do not love them. They do not honor them. They will not be grateful or thankful of others. In verse 4, he adds they will love pleasure. In verse 5, he adds they appear to be holy, but they are not. As we grow older, if we are wise, we learn by trial and error what behaviors offend people. Sadly, many people change their behavior to appear to be a good person, but inside they are wicked and not very loving. So Paul said it is going to become dangerous.

In Matthew 24:9-12, Jesus described also what people will

be like closer to His return in another way. He said,

Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. Matthew 24:9-12 (NASB)

The Greek word Jesus used for “increased” in verse 12 has the idea of greatly increased. His point is that lawlessness will explode. We see that today. It is not just politicians who do not obey the laws, but also the people if they can get away with it. People steal at work by using the copier, or by not being productive. People lie to one another. People flatter for personal gain. Some people smile even when they hate us. Some adult children are disrespectful to their elderly parents. Some even steal. Increasingly, adults commit a wide range of sexual sins because no one is watching, and it feels good. They forget that God is watching. There are so many examples that could be mentioned, but I am confident that you already know of many examples. Maybe you even commit some of these.

Frankly, I am amazed at how lawless people are becoming! Today, that which is bad is called good and the good is called bad. Whatever people want to do is okay and others are expected to accept their wicked behavior. Let me ask a question, “Do you know why we are witnessing this tremendous increase in evil?” Daniel, Paul, and Jesus have already told us! People love themselves. They love their sin. Unbelievers want our approval for their sin. They are offended when we do not approve. Sadly, some who call themselves Christians would like to do the same things. Such desires reveal a serious spiritual problem. The truth is we are more wicked than we think. Jeremiah 17:9 says,

The heart is more deceitful than all else  
And is desperately sick;  
Who can understand it?  
Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB)

Therefore, we should not be surprised that Jesus proph-

sied lawlessness will dramatically increase as we move closer to His coming. As a result, Jesus said our love for others will decrease dramatically. Hurting people will be acceptable. We are experiencing that today. Wickedness will become so bad that God will pour out His wrath on an evil world during the tribulation. God is going to allow people to sin as much as they desire to prove that He is justified in destroying two-thirds of the world's population and most of the earth. Finally, He will defeat the demonic forces of the world.

So, the first sign is that all the disciples would die before the second coming. The second sign was that Jesus would be crucified and die. The third sign was that birth pangs would occur — war, famine, and earthquakes. The fourth sign is that people will become more evil.

**FIFTH, KNOWLEDGE WILL EXPLODE.** The fifth sign of the Lord's coming is given to us in Daniel 12:4. Michael the archangel states that in the end time,

... knowledge will increase. Daniel 12:4 (NASB)

We are seeing this happen today. David Russell Schilling wrote an article in 2013 that was titled, "Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months, Soon to be Every 12 Hours." Here is a part of what he wrote,

Buckminster Fuller created the "Knowledge Doubling Curve"; he noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the "internet of things" will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to realize that the author of the "Knowledge Doubling Curve," died in 1983. This means he created his theory before he saw the following invented: the explosion of

the Internet, personal computers become affordable, DVDs, digital cameras, smart phones, satellite televisions or the 1,295,973,827 websites in the world. (The number of websites was reported in Siteeefy in 2020.)<sup>4</sup> This prophecy is obviously being fulfilled.

**CONCLUSION.** We have learned about five signs that will occur in the days before the rapture, tribulation, and the second coming of Christ. The first sign was that the second coming of Christ would not occur during the life of the apostles. The second sign was that Jesus would be crucified before the second coming occurred. That is also true of the rapture. The third sign was a group of signs called "birth pangs." That includes war, rumors of war, earthquakes, Christians would be hated and killed, people would betray one another, and there would be many false teachers. The fourth sign is that people will become more evil. They will become as evil as people were in the times of Noah and in the days of Sodom. The fifth sign was that knowledge will explode. What do these signs reveal? They reveal that the second coming is quickly approaching. That also means the rapture and tribulation are too. They are only separated in time by seven years.

The study is almost finished. Each of us needs to think about the fourth sign. We can see the evil increasing. We can see that people love each other less. Our world is less forgiving and much more selfish. Our world is significantly less safe because evil is escalating rapidly. Our leaders are more evil. Justice is no longer blind. Sexual sins are much more acceptable. We are murdering babies at birth by abortion. Christians are less interested in sharing the gospel. There are fewer missionaries. Christians know less about their Bibles. Our conservative seminaries are reporting that the men coming for training know less about the Bible than the men twenty years ago. That means our churches are failing to teach the Bible to Christians. The estimate is that 50% to 70% of Christian men in our churches are involved in pornography and 30% of Christian women are. May I ask with what sins are you struggling? What sins are you striving to defeat? What sins do you no longer commit? Are you becoming holy, even as God is holy? 1 Peter 1:15-16 says,

3. David Russell Schilling. "Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months, Soon to be Every 12 Hours."

4. Nick Huss. "How Many Websites Are There Around The World? [2021]". February 25, 2021.

... but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also  
in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE  
HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)

Your holiness, or lack thereof, is a measure of your spirituality!