Grace Evangelical Free Church December 11, 2022

**1 Peter 4:7** Signs of the Times

In our last study we saw that the “**blessed hope**” of the Christian is the personal return of Christ, and that He will return first in the air **for** His own via the Rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**), and then to the earth **with** His own (**Jude 14**; **Zechariah 14:4**; **Acts 1:11**) at the end of the Great Tribulation (last 3.5 years) which is preceded by the Tribulation (first 3.5 years). The question arises: is there guidance as to **when** He will come to rapture His saints? Peter states:

**1 Peter 4:7**: **“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.**”

* **Grammatical Usage:** “**is at hand**” or in the Greek perfect-tense, “eggizó” meaning, “extreme closeness, immediate imminence”; a double imperative involving two attitudes: “**self-controlled**” or “sóphroneó” meaning, “thinking shrewdly, acting moderately”; “**sober-minded**” or “néphó” meaning, “free from illusion; uninfluenced by intoxicants.”
* **Literal Interpretation:** **But the end of all things is imminent; so reason clearly (Biblically) and be free of illusions and influences by prayerful circumspection.**
* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. We would, of course, be foolish and wrong to try to fix the exact day and hour of His return (**Zechariah 14:7**; **Matthew 24:36**; **Mark 13:32**; **Acts 1:6-7**), but the Word of God mentions certain signs or indications that we are nearing the end of the present age as **Luke 21:28** states, “**Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.**” If we take our Bible and make a careful study of the scripture references tabulated below, we shall discover that (1) The World Signs; (2) The Church Signs and (3) The Jewish Signs all proclaim the Lord’s coming to be near at hand:

1. THE WORLD SIGNS

* An increase of sin and lawlessness and conditions similar to the days of Noah and Lot: **2 Timothy 3:1-5**; **Luke 17:26-30**; **Genesis 6:11**
  + Great national distress, perplexity and fear: **Luke 21:25-26** and, in particular, the fear of nuclear war: **Matthew 24:3-6**; **2 Peter 3:10**
* Famine, pestilence and earthquakes: **Matthew 24:7**
* Labor problems, strikes and widespread commercial and industrial unrest: **Zechariah 8:10**; **James 5:4**
* An amazing increase in travel and knowledge: **Daniel 12:4**; **Nahum 2:3-4**; **Isaiah 31:5**; **60:8**
* The amassing of wealth: **James 5:1-3**
* Conflict in the Middle East: **Joel 3:2-14**; **Ezekiel 38:1-6** 
  + Collectively, the prophets foresee Israel back in the land but under constant threat of attack.
* Much talk of peace, and the holding of peace conferences: **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3**

Are not these signs evident in a very marked degree today? Do not these world signs proclaim the nearness of our Lord’s return?

1. THE CHURCH SIGNS

* The increase of apostasy: **2 Thessalonians 2:3**; **1 Timothy 4:1**;

**2 Timothy 4:3-4**

* Hypocrisy and much empty profession: **2 Timothy 3:5**
* Lukewarmness in the Church: **Matthew 24:12**; **Revelation 3:14-20**
* Many who scoff at the Truth: **2 Peter 3:3-4**
* False prophets and a great increase in false religions and demonism (the occult): **Matthew 24:11**; **1 Timothy 4:1**; **2 Timothy 4:3-4**; **2 Thessalonians 2:7-10**; **2 Peter 2:1-2**
* Much persecution of the faithful ones: **Matthew 24:9-10**; **Mark 13:9-13**
* Worldwide evangelism: **Mark 13:10**.
  + Even with so much aligned against it, the growth of the church and world evangelism will continue until the body of Christ is complete. No prophecy tells us exactly how long the church age will last. It will continue until the Lord returns to receive the church at the rapture.

Do you not agree that these signs are evident in a very marked degree today? Do not these church signs proclaim the nearness of our Lord’s return?

1. THE JEWISH SIGNS

* Please read **Luke 21:29-33**. In this scripture our Lord compares the Jewish nation to a fig tree, and He tells us that when the fig tree begins to bud and bear fruit, we may be sure that His coming again is near at hand. The budding of the fig tree is taking place today.
* Over the past decades, the Jews have been returning to Israel in fulfilment of many prophecies: **Isaiah 11:11-12**; **Ezekiel 36:24; 37:21**; **Jeremiah 23:3-8**; **32:37-41**; **Amos 9:14-15**; **Luke 21:24**. Jews from all parts of the world have been regathering in the land of Israel. Week by week, month by month, by ship and plane, great throngs of the sons and daughters of Abraham have been arriving at the ports of Israel.
* There are wonderful industrial, agricultural and cultural developments in Israel, in fulfilment of prophecy: **Isaiah 35:1-10**; **Jeremiah 30:18-22**; **31:7-14**; **Zechariah 14:9-11**; **Hosea 3:4-5**

This is a truly significant Jewish sign that proclaims the nearness of our Lord’s return.

* Conclusion: “**Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;**

**7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon**” **Isaiah 55:6-7**