

Session 3 Overview of the Signs of the Times

I. INTRODUCTION

Tonight I want to give you just a snapshot of what I mean by the signs of the times and what others mean as well. Some of you in this Bible course might think, “Signs of the times? What exactly are those?” I want to give you some of tracks we are going to be running on. We are not going to go really in depth on any tonight, and we will not cover all of them, but just give you a sense of where this is going.

*There are a lot more details for each of the specific areas that the Bible indicates. I remember when I first began to teach on this and study it. It was literally forty years ago. I was at the university, and a lot of folks were focused on this subject. It was a big topic. There were a couple of movies that had just come out on the Lord’s return, back in the seventies. Nearly everybody was talking about it. A number of books were published. **The Late Great Planet Earth** came out and sold fifteen, twenty million copies, some giant number like that.*

Here is my point of saying this—forty years later, watching this and studying this, there are so many more details that have come to light in the nations. We are truly living in a remarkable time of history. I think that as we continue, as we go through this course, these twelve sessions, you are going to be inspired. I believe you are going to be alerted. I believe that you are going to connect some Bible verses with some things that are happening. You are going to say, “It is really happening.” Not only is it really happening, it is really happening for the first time. I mean for the first time in human history. There are a number of things that are really happening for the first time on a global level that have been indicated in the Bible.

- A. Many today neglect the subject of the biblical signs of the times despite many Scriptures that emphasize how important these signs are. Jesus, more than any of the apostles, emphasized the need to discern the times (Mt. 16:1-4; 24:32-44; Lk. 19:41-44; 21:34-36). He strongly rebuked those who did not pay attention to the prophetic signs that pointed to His first coming.

The subject of the signs of the times is neglected by many Bible teachers today. The Bible itself emphasizes how important this subject is. The reason I am pointing that out is not to be critical of Bible teachers. I appreciate anybody that teaches the Word of God full time or those are involved in the marketplace and are also teaching Bible studies, etc. I just want to alert you, as many of you are future Bible teachers and some of you current ones, that the Bible itself emphasizes this subject. This is not just some kind of a thing that a few of us are into. Jesus emphasized this subject more than the apostles did. As a matter of fact, He gave strong rebukes to the leaders of His generation—I mean strong ones—because they did not pay attention to the prophetic signs related to His first coming. There are a lot more prophetic signs related to His second coming. He held them accountable for not understanding them because they were leaders in the religious community.

- B. Jesus, the apostles, and the Old Testament prophets prophesied both event and trend signs. Over 150 biblical chapters in the Scripture have God’s end-time plan as the main subject. When we combine the prophecies in these chapters we get a fuller picture of biblical signs of the times.

We have three sources that we are drawing our information from, in terms of the Scripture. Jesus, the apostles, and the Old Testament prophets all prophesied about events as well as trends—those are two different things—that function as signs to a generation. The purpose of this course is to put all of those together because when we put what Jesus said about signs and trends with what the apostles and the prophets in the Old Testament said we get a far more complete picture of what the Lord intended us to understand as we approach that time frame.

- C. *“Never before in history have all factors been present for fulfillment of prophecy relating to end-time trends and events. Only in our generation have combined revival of Israel, formation of world church, increasing power of Muslim religion, rise of occult, worldwide spread of atheism as dramatic setting for fulfillment of prophecy. The road to Armageddon is prepared. The advent of globalism and technologies linking communications and cash systems, the growing spiritual apostasy worldwide, with longing for leader who can unite diverse religious and political factions are setting stage for Antichrist one-world government.” John Walvoord, **Israel in Prophecy** (p. 129)*

I wanted to give you this quote from John Walvoord. He was the president of the Dallas Theological Seminary. He was a very prominent scholar in his day. Dallas Theological Seminary is one of the main seminaries in the world, and he was its president for near thirty-five years, very prominent scholar. He wrote thirty books on the end times and theology together, mostly in the seventies and the eighties. He was leading the charge in that day. Now I do not agree with all of his views, but the fact that he was a noteworthy scholar and wrote thirty books on it, well, I have gleaned from him and I have learned some things.

Here is a quote. I am just going to read just a little bit of it. He wrote this I do not know when, probably in the eighties sometimes [actually in 1962]. “Never before in history have all the factors been present for the fulfillment of end-time prophecy, only in our generation,” he said. He said this maybe thirty years ago [actually 54 years ago]. The combination of—and he gives all these things—“the revival in Israel, the world Church” which means that is negative, “the increasing power of Muslim religion”—the rise of radical Islam is what we would call today—“the occult, the spread and increase of atheism” in a very intentional way. Many of these things have come together. Again he wrote this probably thirty years ago [54 years ago]. I have been paying attention to this subject and a lot more that was prophesied in the Bible is happening for the first time on a global level together in this hour of history.

- D. When studying the signs of the times, it is important to acknowledge that in the past few decades there have been poorly timed applications of various signs related to current events. Some past studies have been sloppy, imprecise, and lacking credible connections to Scripture, yet we should acknowledge the courage with which these bold voices served their generation by exploring a topic so often ignored by the Body of Christ. We must learn from past errors and pursue understanding of the signs of the times in a manner that is scripturally precise and responsible.

This is a note to those who are teaching the Bible now, whether you are teaching two or three people or twenty or thirty or 200 or 300. It does not matter the scope, but many of you are called to teach the Word and a number of you are teaching the Word now. I think that, when we teach this subject, we do need to acknowledge just for honesty’s sake and credibility’s sake that in the past there have been some poorly timed applications of events. Like I remember in the seventies there were nine nations in the European common market. Everybody thought the tenth nation would make it the ten nations of the Antichrist. A lot of main guys were saying that in the seventies because there were eight nations, then nine nations. They said, “Oh my gosh, we are one nation away!” Then 1981, Greece became the tenth nation and they said, “The Antichrist is here.” Well it was a misapplication.

So we do not want to be sloppy and imprecise as we approach this subject or overly enthusiastic to try to force events into Bible prophecies. Yet having said that about some of those in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, I do acknowledge their courage and their boldness and that they really brought this topic to the forefront or at least into the global conversation in the body of Christ. For that I honor them because they did not ignore the topic.

They did apply a few things wrongly. I remember when credit cards began to become more widespread. Some of them thought that was clearly the mark of beast. “Just do not get those credit cards!” Well, now there, you have it, okay.

So as Bible teachers you want to pay close attention to be precise and responsible. Neither do we want to go the other direction that so many have gone where they just abandon the topic all together because some people were over-enthusiastic in the seventies and the eighties.

II. THREE CATEGORIES OF SIGNS

A. Three main categories of the signs of the times—sign events, sign trends, and cosmic signs.

Now when I look at the signs of the times, there are so many items. Particularly tonight, just because it is a real quick glance so you have a feel for where this course is going, I will focus mostly on what I call sign events and sign trends. I have studied a lot more detail and a lot more topics than we have here.

1. **Sign events:** These are actual events predicted in Scripture that alert us to the timing of Jesus’ return. They include political, spiritual, economic, and religious events, such as the rebirth of the state of Israel, the future 10-nation confederation, the abomination of desolation, the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, etc. Sign events are the most faith-building.

What I mean by sign events, these are actual events that will take place. Some of them have taken place. Some of them are spiritual events, some political events, some religious events, and some economic events. These are actual events that will take place. The most remarkable was the rebirth of the state of Israel. That is a political event that actually took place in 1948. That is one of the most remarkable fulfillments of biblical prophecy because for nearly 2,000 years Israel was not a nation. Bible teachers thought there was not much chance that Israel was ever going to get back to the land. For 2,000 years nearly, 1900 years, the land lay quite desolate and dormant. Suddenly in one hour in 1948 it became a nation. It just shocked the Body of Christ around the world. I have heard older Bible teachers talk about it. They said it was stunning that in a day Israel became a nation on May 14th, 1948.

Well, there are several really dramatic events, and we are going to look at them. Some have happened, and some are yet to happen. Those are the ones that really build your faith because they are so clear, they are so easy to measure, and they are so dramatic.

2. **Sign trends:** Both positive and negative sign trends signal the generation of Jesus’ return. Examples of positive trends are the gospel being preached in all nations, the global prayer movement, and the Church walking in power, purity, and unity, and standing with Israel even in persecution. Negative trends include an increase of escalating violence, famines, and persecution of the saints, and the falling away. Trends are not as overt or faith-building as sign events, because the way they occur is not as clearly defined as a dramatic event.

Number two, the other thing that we are going to spend a bit of time on as well in this course is what I call the trends, the sign trends. What I mean by signs is that they are meant to be signposts. Meaning Jesus and the prophets and the apostles meant that the people of God would understand them and that is the point of them.

Now when we look at the sign trends, there is a category of positive ones. Some are spiritual, some are political, some are economic, and some are technological. A whole lot of these trends are negative. They are again political, spiritual, economic, religious, etc.

An example of a positive trend is the fact of the gospel being preached to all the nations, or things like the body of Christ walking in greater power and greater unity. There are trends of that; we see some increase in those things. Or the body of Christ standing for Israel, a whole lot more are standing for Israel than they were forty years ago. It is a biblical trend, and it is increasing dramatically. We are still not far enough on many of these, but the trend there is dramatic and it is measurable.

Well, there are negative trends as well. Again political ones, social ones, economic ones, and I have just a few of them there. Now trends are not as overt as an event, meaning if you measure them over decades or generations, then you can see the increase clearly. Well, if you take a step back and look over a hundred years or 2,000 years, the trends are really clear. So they are not quite as dramatic as the events. I mean the events are really moving and are very clearly defined. The trends can be seen if you take a step back and look at them. Again, do not get over-enthusiastic and make them fit where they do not fit.

So this will be the kind of roadmap that we are operating on: events and trends.

3. **Cosmic signs:** There will be dramatic signs in the heavens that will cause many to fear.

¹¹*“There will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.” (Lk. 21:11)*

There is a third category that we will look at as well—that is the cosmic signs up in the heavens. Now not so many of those have happened, but the indication from Scripture is that there are going to be a good number of those happening. Those will take care of themselves when they happen. They will be obvious. Nobody is going to have to draw everyone’s attention to them. You know it is like the one guy said, “You do not need a sign that says ‘This is the Grand Canyon.’” It is pretty obvious. When those cosmic signs happen, it will be pretty obvious to believers and unbelievers alike that something very unusual is taking place, especially when they happen a growing number of times, an unusual number of very unusual events happening in a short period of time, in the course of a generation.

III. JESUS IDENTIFIED 12 NEGATIVE SIGN TRENDS

- A. Jesus gave **12 negative sign trends** that will bring distress to the nations and indicate the generation of His return (Mt. 24:4-14; Lk. 21:11, 25). Matthew described nine; Luke added three more. These trends include **deception** by false christs/prophets (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24), **ethnic conflict** (Mt. 24:7), **economic warfare** (Mt. 24:7), **famines, pestilences, and earthquakes** (Mt. 24:8), **hatred of believers** (Mt. 24:9), **relational breakdown** in society (Mt. 24:10), **lawlessness**, or an increase in sin and rebellion (Mt. 24:12), **fearful sights** (Lk. 21:11), great signs in the **sky** (affecting the sun, moon, and stars) and disturbances in the **sea** (Lk. 21:11, 25).

⁵*“Many will come...saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many...⁷For nation will rise against nation [Gk. ethnos, or ethnic conflict], and kingdom against kingdom [economic warfare]. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places...⁹and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰And then many will...hate one another...¹²And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” (Mt. 24:4-12)*

¹¹*“There will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven...²⁵in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring...” (Lk. 21:11, 25)*

Now I am just going to mention these really briefly. Again we are just getting a feel for the course. Later we are going to look at each one of them with some detail. Jesus mentioned twelve negative trends. These trends were meant to be signs. That is, He meant us to understand them as signs, as signposts. Each one of these trends has a message from the Lord in them. In essence, He is saying, "I am talking to you. I want you to respond to me as you see these trends increase."

Of course if you do not know what they are, you cannot watch them increase. You are not alert to them. You are not paying attention to them. That is why it is important to take time to study them. Twelve sessions might seem to some like that is a lot of sessions. Really we can only scratch the surface. There is a lot more detail that would take longer than twelve sessions. I am saying that to say there is that much information out there that is relevant, and it is inspiring and builds your faith as you see it happen.

Well, the twelve negative trends—He talks about positive ones as well but—here are deception, ethnic conflict, economic warfare between nations, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, hatred of believers. There is a bit of that happening in the world now, but this is really going to increase. It is increasing right now, but it is really going to increase in the days to come. Breakdown in society, it is not just hatred of believers, but hatred of one another. Just hatred of people in society, which is not against the Church, but just civil unrest is what this is about. Lawlessness, fearful sights, great signs in the sky, disturbances in the sea. These are the twelve that Jesus identified.

Of course you can find those twelve if you read Matthew 24 and Luke 21. Put them together and you will find the twelve. I have the passages right there just for you to get a quick read of it. Let's look at just a little bit of this in verse 5. Jesus said, "Many will come saying I am the Christ. They will deceive many. Nation will rise against nation."

*I want just to highlight this and we will look at this a lot more in the future classes. The word **nation** is **ethnos**, and it is the word we get **ethnic** or ethnic group from. So nation against nation does not by any means only mean, for example, one nation in Europe fighting another nation in Europe or in the Middle East or America is battling at war in Afghanistan. It is not that kind of thing; it is far more detailed. There are 12,000 people groups on the earth right now, about 12,000 ethnic groups, people groups. Jesus is talking about the collision of these groups. That involves racial tensions and ethnic tensions on borders. Even the people of the same race, but different people groups of the 12,000.*

Then when it talks about kingdom versus kingdom, I think their military is involved in that, but right now one of the primary ways that nations war against each other is economically. There is a whole lot of economic warfare going on right now in the nations. The intrigue is increasing. Nations are holding people and other nations hostage to their agendas by economic warfare. So when I read kingdom against kingdom I think of economics, not only military. Then the other ones are pretty straightforward. Again we will break them down and look at them.

- B. Some of these trends have always existed, but in the end times they will have a distinct intensity that will make global headline news; they will constitute a prophetic sign with a message from the Lord that can be discerned by the Body of Christ worldwide. Now, for the first time, most of these trends and the developments leading to all the sign events are happening on a global basis.

Some of these trends have existed throughout human history. I mean there have always been earthquakes, there have always been some famines, and there have always been some wars. Jesus was not talking about what happens all through history. Because if it is trends that have been going on 2,000 years or 6,000 years, then

there is no sign in them. He is talking about something that is distinct enough on a global level, recognizable enough on a global level, that it constitutes a sign so people can say, "Oh, the Lord's coming is near."

So some Bible teachers will reduce these signs to what has happened for 2,000 years or 6,000 years. They remove the sign element out of it, but these are meant to be signs. They have a message and are meant to be discerned by the body of Christ across the whole globe. I mean that they have a global dimension to them.

Now the important part that I want to highlight here in 2016 is that for the first time—I mean these last couple decades—these trends are increasing together on a global level. This was not true fifty years ago and 100 years ago and 500 years ago. This is only true recently. It is becoming more and more obvious every decade that goes by. They are happening now and the developments that will lead to some of those sign events, those big events that are yet to come. The developments are clearly escalating right now.

Again, the reasons we look at it are because Jesus told us to look at it and it is in the Bible. It alerts us. It creates urgency. It creates a sense of importance about what is happening, because it is very easy for believers to get involved in just the routines of life and get caught up in the rat race of life, just trying to get ahead and make everything work. They lose sight that there is a biblical narrative unfolding in the nations right now. They lose sight of it because they get so easily captured in the drama and the challenges of their own life, and that is very, very normal for all of us to do.

So that is why Jesus said, in essence, "I am actually giving these to you because I know your tendency is to get lost in the drama and the challenge and the difficulty of your life. You are going to miss out on the global divine narrative that God wants His people to be having with Him." So therefore it is important that we know the signs.

Ten different times Jesus and the apostles said, related to the end times, to watch and pray. When they said, "Watch," they actually mean to open your eyes and watch. Watch what is happening as it correlates to what the Bible says. Watch. It is not some kind of mystical thing. It is actually just to see what is happening in the news, be familiar with what Jesus and the prophets said, and draw the conclusions. Let faith and urgency arise that pull you back into the seriousness and the urgency and the glory of the divine story unfolding in this hour history.

Many believers do not watch. The reason they do not watch is because they do not know what to watch. They say, "Watch what? I do not know what the signs are. Even if I did, I do not know what the data is." That is, what is the global situation related to that sign? So in these twelve sessions we are going to cover some of that to get you on your journey so that you can be continue to be a student to watch and learn.

Now one thing I have found is that, when believers watch, they always talk about what they watch. That is true of everything. If you watch the football game, you are going to talk about it unless you are being forced to watch it against your will, saying that this is the most boring thing I have ever seen in my life. If you go to the concert, or if you are involved in the music thing, you will talk about that. Whatever you watch that interests you, you will talk about, and the Lord knows that.

So watching actually has a very community dimension to it because He knows it will bond people in a common urgency and a common expectation by watching. So it is not just an individual thing, watching. You talk and talk; you bond and you pray and you talk. The Lord gives wisdom in that context. That is why He says so often, "Watch and pray."

I thought, "That is a little bit, you know, not very practical, Lord."

The Lord would say, “Well, you just get a few believers to watch and figure out, and you will start talking. You will start praying. Your faith will grow, your urgency will grow, and your connectedness will grow. You will get some answers concerning what to do in your local area when a crisis comes. You will actually have the connection with people, the connection with Me, and a spirit of faith. You will not be failing in fear. You will actually be a source of supply to people in that area if you do what I ask you to do.”

So I have retracted my complaint from the Lord on this subject. Meaning I thought years ago, “Lord, watch and pray? Come on! What about, you know, store water or get walkie-talkies or something. I mean for heaven’s sake something more practical than watch and prayer.” So I think the Lord did well by telling us to do that.

IV. SIGN EVENTS AND TRENDS RELATED TO ISRAEL

We are going to look at just a snapshot of sign events and trends related to Israel. Again there are many more. I just want to give you a feel for this, just a feel for it. This is just some of the events and trends related to Israel, and we cannot say this too many times, that you need to know the data, the three or four key points. There are a lot of key points actually, but you need to know the main ones so you can say it easily without having to look at a set of notes or something. You even want this in your dialogue with other people because it is a stunning reality that has happened, stunning that biblical prophecy is unfolding literally in our day right here.

- A. The most striking events in biblical prophecy are the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland to reestablish the **state of Israel** and to gain control of **Jerusalem** (Ezek. 38:8; Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3, 6; 14:2; Lk. 21:24). Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948, and then gained control of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War (June 1967). No prophetic sign is more dramatic or convincing. The Jews were scattered to the nations in AD 70. Now, 2,000 years later, they are back home.

⁸**“In the latter years you [Antichrist] will come into the land of those [Israel]...gathered from many people [nations] on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate.” (Ezek. 38:8)**

⁶**“In that day...Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.” (Zech. 12:6)**

One of the most striking events in Bible prophecy is the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland to reestablish the state of Israel. Not just that—you have to go to the next one—and gain control of the city of Jerusalem. Now you know the city of Jerusalem is the most hotly debated city in the earth.

We know that Israel became a nation in 1948 against all odds, and we will look at some of the difficulties of this when we look at this in one of the sessions where we get a little bit more specific. You know, no nation has ever been out of their homeland for more than forty years and returned to their homeland to rebuild that nation and continue their language. There has never been a nation ever that has been out of their homeland for that long and actually return with a national identity and had their original or their ancient language continue. Well, Israel did not maintain continuity for forty years; they did it for almost 2,000 years. I mean it is a historical miracle, so that unprecedented. There is nothing in human history close to the miracle of the rebirth of this ancient homeland of Israel with their people in 1948.

Well, the Bible made it really clear over and over that it would happen. Many very devout Bible teachers for 1,900 years said that surely it has got to be symbolic. I mean there was not a chance this could happen, but it did. Then about twenty years later they gained control of the city of Jerusalem or a good portion of it in the Six-Day war. The Bible makes clear—and we will look at it later why—over and over that the Jews would control the city of Jerusalem. Even when they got Israel in 1948, they did not have Jerusalem. The Arabs said, “You are never going to get Jerusalem. That you are never going to get.” Well, twenty years later they recovered most of

Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem is the most contested city in the earth right now, even as Bible prophecy has predicted.

- B. The **rebuilt temple** in Jerusalem, with sacrifices according to the OT law, is to be a sign (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; 13:12-18; cf. Dan. 9:26-27; 11:31; 12:11). The temple was destroyed in AD 70. Orthodox Jews are leading a new, strong movement to rebuild the temple.

They are going to rebuild their temple. Now this is an event that will actually happen. When it happens, it will be dramatic. Meaning, for 2,000 years Bible teachers said, even as many today say, “They will never rebuild that temple.” Because, you know, the Dome of the Rock, one of the major religious sites of Islam, is right there on the spot. So how are they going to get this very sacred Muslim religious site and how are they going to move the mosque out of the way and build their temple, because they have to build the Temple on the original site? They said, “It cannot happen.”

You know after they built that Mosque there in Jerusalem, it seemed to end the chances of ever rebuilding the temple because it has to be built on that site as it was the site that God indicated. So the Jews say that it has to be on that site. Islam says, “No, no, no! Mohammed took that site. Sorry you guys are not going to get that site.” The Bible says that they will build that temple on that site. Many Bible teachers today say that is probably saying that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it has got to be something like the Church.

Beloved, when that event happens it will be a very faith-building event, because it has been impossible for some 2,000 years for this to happen, but it will happen. Right now there is a growing movement in Israel to rebuild the temple and reinstitute the old Mosaic sacrifices. Now the Lord does not look at those sacrifices and honor them. He does not say that if you offer an animal sacrifice, that is good. No, it is contrary to Jesus, but what is happening is the nation is moving towards their religious heritage and restoring it. In that context the Lord is going to show them who the fulfillment of those sacrifices are. So some people get all mixed up and they think that because the Jews are going to reinstitute those animal sacrifices in that temple in Jerusalem somehow the Lord is going to honor the killing of those animals like the lamb. No, there is one Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the earth and that is the only blood that will save them. It is in the context of this, though, that for many Jews their eyes will open. They will say, “Oh! Oh my goodness!”

So the Lord is using this, though it is an incomplete thing in itself. Again there is a movement that is growing stronger and stronger recently, over the last couple decades, but really picking up ground in the last ten years to rebuild that temple. Again, we have a lot more to say about that.

- C. **Salvation of Israel:** Messianic Jewish congregations are seeing more Jewish people in Israel come to Jesus than at any time since the first century. There are 120+ Messianic congregations in Israel, totaling more than 12,000 believers. This is an increase of over 500% in the last 10 years.

³⁹**“You shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”**
(Mt. 23:39)

The salvation of Israel is one of the grand promises: that Israel would be saved. Now what it means for Israel to be saved, it means born-again believers in Yeshua, Jesus. You know His Hebrew name, Yeshua. Some people pray in the name of Yeshua. They say, “Oh man, I mean in the name of Jesus.” Well, we are Americans, you know. Jesus was not an American. He loves America, but He is not an American.

Currently the nation most hostile against Jesus is Israel. That will be the first nation where every single person will be saved; literally all of Israel will be saved before the Lord returns. Look at right here in Matthew 23. He

said this to the leadership of Israel in Jerusalem. He said, Matthew 23:39, that “you are not going to see Me” again in Jerusalem. Of course they did not know He was going to die and come back later in the clouds. They did not know what He is talking about. He said to the leaders of Jerusalem, “...until you say about Me, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’” In other words, “until you say that Jesus of Nazareth is from God and He is the Messiah, you are not going to see Me again.”

Now I think the leaders of Israel at that time probably thought, “Good, because we are never going to say that, so we will never see You.” Probably the devil somewhere in there as well thought that it was going to work.

I do not know what the devil thought, but Jesus said, “I have got a plan,” and He knew it would take some time to unfold. There was going to be a Messianic movement, Messianic meaning Jewish believers who believe in the Messiah Jesus; that is what we mean by the word Messianic. Beloved, just a couple decades ago there were like three or four Messianic congregations in the land. Maybe twenty, thirty years ago, I mean the number was so small. Over history there have been almost no Messianic congregations in the land of Israel, Messianic meaning Jewish believers, since AD 70. There have been some Catholic churches, some Coptic churches, and some Orthodox churches. I am talking about born-again natural [ethnic] Jews.

In the last couple decades there has been a revival. I mean out of 2,000 years suddenly in Israel there is an explosion going on, compared to history. Look at this: now there are some 120 Messianic congregations, 12,000 believers. This is what I have got from the leaders in the land. This is 500-time increase over ten years ago. It is growing so fast. When a congregation grows from fifty to eighty, I mean that is a huge event. Now it is common for congregations to be 100. I mean those are mega-churches in Israel because there is so much animosity. This is remarkable!

Jesus said, in essence, “There will be Messianic believers in Israel calling for Me to return.” There are 12,000 of them in the land, not all in Jerusalem, but 12,000 in the land. This is a brand-new reality in the last couple of decades, but particularly in the last ten years it has exploded.

- D. Jerusalem as **center of world politics and controversy**: The prophets foretold that Jerusalem would be the focus of the whole earth (Zech. 12:3; 14:1-3; cf. Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Lk. 21:20-24).

²I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken...Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant...shall not be cut off from the city. (Zech. 14:2)

Jerusalem would be the center of world politics and the center of world controversy. One hundred years ago, nobody even cared about Jerusalem. Now it is the hottest controversy. For 1,900 years nobody cared much; well that is not exactly true because there were some of the Crusades fought about that. My point being that on the world level there was not much interest. In the tenth century, eleventh to twelfth to thirteenth century, the Christians and the Muslims and the Crusades centered around Jerusalem. But it was not global conflicts where the whole globe was captivated in it. It was not even on the news much in the 1600, 1700, 1800, and half the 1900s. Suddenly now it is the number one city of conflict and interest on the planet.

There is more about it today than New York or London or Tokyo or Washington D. C. or you know whatever nation you want to pick. There is more about Jerusalem, more energy, conversation, controversy, and interest about that one city. That is what the prophet said was going to happen. As a matter of fact, in Zechariah 14, the Old Testament prophet said, “I am going to gather all the nations against Jerusalem.” One hundred years ago you might have read that and asked, “Why would they go gather against Jerusalem?” I mean there were 10,000 people there; it was a very poor, desolate town.

You know there is an account from Mark Twain who went to Jerusalem. He wrote about Jerusalem. He said it is a desolate place. I do not know the exact words. I will have it in the study. Just by memory, I think he said something like it is a desolate, dusty, unattractive place. Who would ever want to live here, is what he said about 100 years ago, a little bit longer than that.

So the prophet said that not only are the Jews going to get control of it, the whole earth is going to be battling for it. Notice it says, “The city will be taken.” Then it says a very disturbing statement, that half the city will go into captivity—that is prison. I mean this is troubling, but this is a very significant reality. There are about 600,000 people in Jerusalem at this point of time. That would mean 300,000 people going into captivity. That is a massive statement by the Old Testament prophets.

The prophet said, “but the remnant there”—meaning there would be some that would remain there and God would protect them—“they will not be cut off from the city.” The Lord Jesus is actually going to come back and deliver the city Himself. He Himself by His appearing is going to completely deliver the city of Jerusalem. Of course it is called the city of the Great King; it is His own city.

- E. Two conflicting trends: anti-Semitism in the nations; love for Israel in the Body of Christ. Many Jews and Gentiles will go into prison camps under the Antichrist’s reign of terror. Jesus will deliver Israel and require the Church to stand with Israel in their time of trouble, like Corrie ten Boom’s family did during World War II. This is one way the Church will provoke Israel to jealousy.

²⁴“They [Israel] will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Lk. 21:24)

⁶“I will...give You [Jesus] as a covenant to the people [Israel]...⁷to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house...²²But this [Israel] is a people robbed and plundered; all of them are snared in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses.” (Isa. 42:6-7, 22)

¹¹But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. (Rom. 11:11)

There are two conflicting trends that the Bible makes very, very clear. There is a growing anti-semitism that the Bible is very clear about. Then there is another thing happening; the Bible has very clear indicators that the people of God—the people who have relationship with the Messiah, with Jesus the Body of Christ—would love Israel and would stand for Israel. In the last forty years there has been a tremendous increase, not nearly enough, but a tremendous increase of the Body of Christ who understands what the Bible says, at least a bit, and what God thinks about Jerusalem and standing for Israel. So this is a fantastic thing and this is something we are very committed to standing with Israel and for God’s purpose in Israel.

Now the Bible makes clear that many Jews but also many more Gentiles—you know we talked about Jews being taken into captivity under, and this is under the reign of the Antichrist when this happens—many more Gentiles will be taken into captivity, and though many Jews will die in the conflict, many more Gentiles will die in the conflict. I mean this will be the most violent, severe hour of human history under the reign of the Antichrist. Sometimes we focus on the fact that the Jews will be under his wrath and his terror. It is true because he has a particular vendetta against them, a great zeal against them, but he will also have a great hatred against Gentiles that do not worship him. He will bring desolation to multitudes of Gentiles in the nation. Many will be in camps as well, prison camps, and in prison under his reign of terror.

Now this man the Antichrist—most of you are aware of this—is a man far more powerful, far more clever, far more attractive than Adolf Hitler. He is coming after Jews and Gentiles together. He wants to remove everyone who does not worship and pledge allegiance to him in a very, very specific way. It is interesting that the Lord tells the Body of Christ though many Gentiles will be killed and imprisoned and in captivity by the reign of terror of the Antichrist in those final years of natural history, yet He wants the Body of Christ to have a particular loyalty to stand with Israel in her trouble. Many of the nations will abandon Israel completely, but the Body of Christ—we are talking about hundreds of millions is what we are asking the Lord—will stand with Israel in her greatest hour of need.

Now in the Old Testament, it is the Jewish prophets who talk about the Jews going into captivity and being killed and in prison camps. In the New Testament it talks about the Gentiles. So it is like from heaven's point of view that the Lord says, I will tell the Gentiles their plight in the New Testament and I will tell the Jews their plight by Old Testament Jewish prophets. The whole thing is politically incorrect. The Lord is going to overrule the rage of His archenemy, the Antichrist. He is going to use this evil, He is going to allow it to emerge, and He is going to use it to bring multitudes of Jews and Gentiles to His Son and to His salvation, by the grace of God.

Now there are quite a number of Old Testament verses that talk about the Jews under the reign of terror of the Antichrist actually being killed and put in prison camps. The message is that the Body of Christ would take the posture of the Corrie Ten Boom story and stand faithfully for the Jews in flight and risk their own lives in love and loyalty to God's purpose to the Jewish people.

Again in the New Testament, the emphasis on death in the prison is on the Gentiles. So you put the two testaments together and you get the whole storyline. The bigger point, the reason I want to bring this up, is that I want to see believers around the world girding themselves, whether it happens in your lifetime, maybe it is in the lifetime of your children or maybe their children. I do not know that I will see this, but I want people to see what the Bible says so that they gird themselves to say, "I will be loyal to Jesus and I will take whatever risk possible or necessary like the Corrie Ten Boom family did in the 1940s. I will be a friend to the Jewish nation." That is why believers care about this truth so that we do not do what the church did in Europe in the 1940s. They looked the other way and let their neighbors be swept away by the rage of this demonic man Adolf Hitler.

Well, a man far more demonic is coming. God says to Israel, "Israel, you are not alone. Israel, you are not alone. I will raise up a people, and they will stand with you even unto death. That is how loyal and true they will be to My purposes." Again this is disturbing to Gentile believers, but it is important that we understand the narrative, because anti-semitism is growing quickly. It may take a few more decades to pick up, and it might not. It may take a little longer, or it may take a little shorter. The trend is increasing dramatically even in the Church.

I say to the Body of Christ that trouble is coming for Jews and Gentiles down the road. We got to be clear what the Bible says and stand for what God stands for and that is for the Jewish people in flight. Whether they are believers or unbelievers, they will be pursued as many Gentiles will also be pursued. The Bible goes out of its way, so to speak, though that is not the right way to say it, to say that God wants us to love the nation of Israel. So we need to be informed about this drama as it unfolds. It is unfolding, I mean the intensity is increasing in a marked way right now.

V. SIGN TRENDS RELATED TO THE NATIONS

Now let's look at some sign trends related to the nations, not Israel; now we are talking about the Gentile nations. Well, in the Bible, "all the nations" are the Gentile nations. there is Israel and all the nations which are Gentiles of course. We are going to look at this, just kind of glance at it.

Oh, by the way, we are going to have a ministry time for a few minutes at the end, and then after the ministry time for whomever wants to stay around we will have a Q&A time for about maybe twenty, twenty-five minutes on the subject. I want to have ministry time first and then you are free to leave after that. If you want to stay around, stay around and we will take about twenty, twenty-five minutes, most of these Friday nights, and let you ask questions on this and ask, "I am not getting how you get this from that. What does that verse mean?" Because I really want you to get it, I want you to get equipped so you can search this out on your own as the days unfold.

- A. **Global government:** A Middle East/European superstate (revived Roman Empire) will emerge, with a 10-nation confederation under the Antichrist (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12-13, 16). The most challenging issues facing the nations are international in nature, including the **global war on terror** and the **global financial crisis**. The tension in the financial crisis is that we have global financial markets without global rule of law. The crisis will create an atmosphere in which "global governance" will be a more attractive option for finding solutions.

Now these are trends. These are not events. These are trends: global government, the emergence of a super state, a Middle East/European super state. The Bible makes it clear there is going to be a ten-nation confederation, and there are going to be alliances around the Middle East and Europe, and it is going to affect the world. There will be a world government of sorts. I do not believe every nation will participate in it, but many nations will. The earth is moving in that direction; that is so obvious now. I remember forty years ago when I heard Bible teachers say this when I was twenty years old, I thought, "Wow, that is going to be intense!" I could not quite see it then, but forty years later it is pretty clear.

Many of the most challenging issues in the nations are international issues or the nature of them is international. There is the global war on terror, for which we need all the nations working together. There is global financial crisis for which we need all the nations working together, because you cannot fix the economy in Asia or Europe or Africa without it affecting the others. They are all connected together obviously. So there is a tension that has to be solved as financial crisis continues in the earth because there are financial global markets but there is not a global rule of law. So some nations get to play by, you know, a different set of rules economically than other nations, but everybody is affected. So, many of the top leaders are getting together and saying that we need one government, one economy, one rule of law and that is the only way we are all going to be safe from terrorists and from economic collapse.

As we know, crisis creates the atmosphere, the dialogue, and the context for global government. Global government is far more attractive when there is raging terrorism that is threatening many nations and financial crisis so they can say, "Hey, let's suspend some civil liberties and some national liberties. Let's get safe together and get the money going." That is kind of the mode where the globe is moving in that direction in a very observable way.

- B. **Globalization:** Financial institutions, commerce, communication, and geopolitics are shifting from being nation based to a globally unified expression (Rev. 17-18). There will be one-world political cooperation, technology, economics, etc. Government, commerce, and religions will pool resources.
- C. **Knowledge and travel:** Daniel prophesied a great increase of knowledge (communication) and travel (transportation) as many "run to and fro." It is estimated that global tourism will generate \$5 trillion annually by 2020. Currently, the total knowledge possessed by humans doubles annually.

⁴“Seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro [unprecedented travel], and knowledge shall increase [information age].” (Dan. 12:4)

Daniel prophesied a great increase of knowledge and travel. These are two of the most remarkable things that have increased in the last 100 years but have been really increasing the last ten years. I mean 100 years for sure compared to 6,000 years of human history. The last ten years, though, these things have been exploding, particularly knowledge.

The angel told Daniel that this day was going to come in the end times. He said it in a very simple, cryptic way but mighty angels do not give precise phrases about that generation where the earth transitions through the age to come. And, mighty angels do not give that information if it is not significant. The angel did not just kind of ramble on here. This is really significant material he is saying.

He said that two things are going to happen with many people. When the mighty angel said, many, you can imagine it is billions of people being affected. Here are the two things that will be noteworthy in that time. First, people will travel; they will run to and fro. They will go from one place to the other place. You know 2,500 years ago when Daniel wrote this, it was like, okay so they are going to go from one place to the other, and why is that a big deal? The angel could have said, “Daniel just write it down. Write. That is going to be a really big deal.” There is going to be an explosion of people, of transportation and travel, with people moving around the globe, and many dynamics come out of that.

He said that the other thing that is going to explode is knowledge. Well, there is so much data on this that I think that some of it is overwhelming. There is a lot more than we are looking at here. Some of it I think you will find interesting. You will find it invigorating and inspiring to see how much is happening so recently. Right now they are saying that all the total knowledge of the human race—if you took all the knowledge of every book in all of human history—because of the internet and because of technology, is doubling every single year. Look at this: it doubles annually. Every twelve months all of the information of all of human history is doubled. Twelve months later it is doubled, and twelve months later it is doubled again. Beloved, this is something that Daniel could have never imagined. We are living in the hour where that is happening in a very unique way. That was not true a hundred years ago; it is only true recently.

- D. ***Internet technology*** has allowed knowledge to greatly increase. The ability of the Antichrist’s government to enforce the mark of the Beast system worldwide (Rev. 13:16-18) implies the existence of modern technology, a cashless society, and a one-world economic system.

¹⁶He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast. (Rev. 13:16-17)

VI. POSITIVE SIGN TRENDS

There are positive signs. Let’s just take two or three minutes on this, because we are going look at every one of these and many, many more signs than these later in the course. Again this is just to give you the feel of the tracks we are going to be running on. I am probably mentioning about fifteen or twenty signs in this whole teaching, while there are probably about 100 to cover, fifty to 100. I do not know the real number, but it is a big, long list.

- A. **Gospel preached to all nations:** Jesus connected the timing of His return to the preaching of the gospel to all nations (12,000 people groups). Leading mission leaders project that the gospel will be preached to every people group by 2020. The greatest harvest of souls in history is occurring now. The Bible has been translated into 2,000+ languages (used by 98% of the world’s population).

¹⁴**“This gospel...will be preached...to all the nations [ethnos] and then the end will come.”
(Mt. 24:14)**

Positive trend, the gospel preached to all nations. Now when Jesus said that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all nations, remember nations is “ethnos,” every people group or every ethnic group in the earth. There are 12,000 people groups in the earth, distinct people groups right around 12,000. Jesus said, in all 12,000 ethnos, every one of those groups the gospel of the kingdom will be preached. Well, leaders of the missions movement are saying, from really clear, accurate data that they have from researching it for decades with lots of information, there will be a witness of the gospel in all 12,000 groups for the first time in human history in the year 2020, in four years from now. That does not mean the gospel has saturated the nations—that is not the end. But never in 2,000 years has this been remotely true, yet within the next five years that there will at least be a witness of the gospel in every people group of the earth.

Beloved, this is happening the same time that knowledge is exploding, the same time that Israel became a nation, the same time that all these things. Again you get about all fifty or 100—whatever the number, I will get the real number, I should have it by now but I just see the big long list that I work from—you get all those operating together and your understand that we were not functioning on a global level or increasing on a global level together fifty or 100 years ago, only recently for the first time in history. Then you start thinking that my goodness this is something we ought to be talking about. Well, that is why we are having a course on it. This is something we ought to be watching and talking and praying about, realigning our heart and getting urgency and letting this pull us into the divine narrative, God’s narrative, of the nations so we are not just captured by the drama and the difficulty of our own life. There is a bigger storyline you are a part of.

- B. **Bridal identity:** John connected Jesus’ return to the Church understanding her bridal identity. This is occurring in a global way for the first time in history (Rev. 22:17; cf. Mt. 25:1-13).

¹⁷**The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” (Rev. 22:17)**

These are the signposts that are bringing us there. Here is another, the bridal identity. When Jesus returns, the whole church in the Body of Christ worldwide will be in a bridal identity. It is not the Spirit and the family of God saying, “Come.” It is not the Spirit and the kingdom of God, not the Spirit and the Body of Christ, not the Spirit and the priesthood. The Spirit and the redeemed in their bridal identity saying, “Come, Bridegroom King. Come, Bridegroom King.” Never in history has the Holy Spirit emphasized Jesus as a Bridegroom King. It is happening in the last couple decades, and it is exploding, it is growing quickly around the world for the first time in history.

Now we are the family of God, we are the kingdom, we are the Body—all of those things are true. There was one identity that has not been emphasized over history. That is the identity of the Bride before the Bridegroom King. Now we can see it is emerging. Some of you are twenty years old. You might say, “Well hey, in my church I grew up with that idea.” I tell you that ten, twenty years ago you hardly heard a whisper of it. Fifty years ago you certainly did not hear it. You cannot find it in almost any of the books in history—the doctrine, the theology, the reality of the Bride of Christ. Many groups are now seeing that He is a King with power but also a Bridegroom with desire who desires partnership and relationship.

- C. **Global prayer and worship movement:** The Spirit is raising up a prayer and worship movement (Rev. 22:17; 8:4; cf. Lk. 18:7-8; Isa. 62:6-7; 24:14-16; 25:9; 26:8-9; 27:2-5, 13; 30:18-19; 42:10-13; 51:11; 52:8; Joel 2:12-17, 32; Mic. 5:3-4; Zeph. 2:1-3; Ps. 102:17-20; 122:6; Zech. 12:10). Isaiah prophesied 24/7 prayer ministries continuing until Jesus returns (Isa. 62:6-7). Only one generation will see the fulfillment of God's promise to "set" watchmen (intercessors) in place to cry out 24/7 until Jerusalem becomes a praise in the earth (which will occur when Jesus returns).

⁶I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace [be silent, NASB] day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He...makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth [at the second coming]. (Isa. 62:6-7)

Well, the global prayer movement, I mean I could really go off on this. It is exploding! In the last ten years it has been growing so rapidly. Never before has this happened. I mean there is so much to talk about this.

- D. **Outpouring of the Spirit:** The Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on all believers (Acts 2:17-21). The increase of the number of believers with "charismatic" theology and experience has grown from *one million* (1920) to *60 million* (1970) to over *600 million* today—this is a sign of the times.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, I have it here. There were one million Pentecostal/Charismatic believers in 1920. In 1920 there were a million people in the earth that claimed to have Pentecostal/Charismatic dimensions to their theology, a million. That was exciting because that was after the Azusa Street revival in 1906 had really started that movement. A million in 1920 and that was like, "Wow where is this going?" Today, less than a hundred years later, there are over 600 million. From one million then, there are over 600,000 million right now, worldwide, born-again believers that have Pentecostal/Charismatic dimensions to their theology and their experience, from one million to 600 million in less than 100 years. In the last ten to twenty years it has grown dynamically. I will give you more details on that as we look at it.

VII. NEGATIVE SIGN TRENDS

- A. **Harlot Babylon worldwide religion** (Rev. 17:2-6): The harlot Babylon religion of tolerance will be characterized by moral relativity without absolutes and religious pluralism with syncretism.
- B. **Lawlessness abounds:** Sin will reach its fullest expression (Mt. 24:12; Rev. 14:18; cf. Dan. 8:23).

Here we have the negative signs. There is a lot about lawlessness. There are two dimensions of lawlessness that we are going to highlight, though there are more than these two. I want you just to get these today. There is the violence as in the days of Noah.

1. **Violence (days of Noah):** There are 50 million abortions worldwide each year (over 100,000 per day). The abortion pill will cause this number to increase greatly. There are 35 million slaves (human trafficking), and the number is growing by 5 million per year (Rev. 18:13).
2. **Immorality (days of Lot):** Immorality will increase greatly in the end times (Rev. 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:2-4, 9-10; 19:2). Over \$100 billion is spent each year on pornography worldwide, with nearly 5 million pornographic websites that consist of over 500 million pages. Holograms and virtual reality will enable people to experience even more sexual perversion. Paul prophesied that marriage would be forbidden, or outlawed, in some places (1 Tim. 4:3).

¹The Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits...³forbidding to marry. (1 Tim. 4:1-3)

Then there is the immorality as in the days of Lot. Jesus said it would be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. There are several ways it is like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. There is an explosion of violence and immorality in the last years compared to history. The increase is dramatic in terms of what is happening in those two areas. Again all of these are connected with all of the other ones.

Beloved, this is really a remarkable time to be alive. It is not a time where we want to be a church, a people, a spiritual family that is not watching and praying. This is an hour to watch. See what the Bible says; see what is happening. Whatever you watch, you talk about. What you talk about, you bond over. When you talk and bond about it, you add prayer to it. You get divine information and living understanding. The Lord says that we will move forward together into His purpose and His heart by doing this. So that is why we are wanting to stir you up in this and to equip you to stir up others in this in the years ahead as you go from here to the city that the Lord has planned for you.

Amen, let's stand before the Lord. I want us just to have a chance to respond to the Lord and say, "Jesus." I am going to have the ministry team come up. We have a new ministry team we are developing. I am so excited about this. If you want to be on it, you can get a hold of Katy or Juliette or some others. Just come and ask them. Our leadership team is all a part of this whether or not they necessarily have a name tag. Anybody on the IHOPKC leadership team, worship teams, and all that—you are certainly welcomed and urged to come and be a part. Oh, I am so excited for this. This excites me!

I am going to ask the Lord just to touch us for a few minutes. Again we are going to have ministry for maybe fifteen, twenty minutes, and then we are going to shift over to a Q&A. Whoever wants to stay, stay. If you do not, feel free to slip out.

Holy Spirit, we just open our heart to You right now. Lord, we ask You to awaken our hearts with a sense of urgency. God, we ask You for a sense of living understanding, of clarity. Lord, remove the fog from my eyes. There is so much is happening in these last ten years and I am not even touched with it. Lord, I ask You, remove the fog and mark my heart.

I want to invite people to come forward. You are saying, "I want a new clarity on this and I would like prayer tonight about this whole subject." Maybe you are saying, "I am stuck in an area in my spiritual life and I would like prayer. I just want somebody to agree with me." Maybe you are sick in your body and you would like prayer. So you are saying, "I want a spiritual renewal just to lay hold of this. I want the Lord to touch my heart and my body, whatever." Just go ahead and come on up.

Lord, I ask that You would release Your power. Release Your power, Lord. Lord, I ask for a mark; mark hearts. Lord, I take authority over the fog, the despair, the depression. I break the power of it now in the name of Jesus. Spirit, bring clarity, living understanding.