

# Global Signs of Jesus' Return

## Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

When the Bible was being written the “world” to its authors was no larger than the Mediterranean basin and outlying provinces, mostly under Roman control. Before the entire world could be organized into anything like the unified whole pictured in the Book of Revelation, it first had to be explored, then subdued. When these signs were given, they were unthinkable possibilities; now they are everyday realities. Well, almost all... Some are still being moved into place by an Invisible Hand.

## Unprecedented Global Signs

The Book of Revelation gives us a picture of the whole world organized against God along with signs of global deterioration. Again, these are Biblical signs that simply were not happening until the middle of the 20th century. In our day, they are an avalanche carrying us into the Last Days.

### 1) Environmental Signs

We now have the capacity to destroy the environment. All by ourselves we can kill life in the rivers and aquifers (springs of water); kill one third of the life in the ocean (with oil spills or worse); cause ourselves to be scorched by the sun (with the loss of the ozone layer); and spread plagues world-wide in a matter of hours (jet travel).

This means that humanity has “gained” the ability to bring catastrophic calamities upon ourselves and the entire earth. This has never happened before. Our destructive powers were limited to local disasters due to our limited technological ability. Notice how these newly acquired abilities dovetail with prophetic passages from the Book of Revelation.



The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. **A third of the waters became wormwood**, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter. Revelation 8:10-11 ESV

The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. Revelation 16:3-4 ESV

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to **scorch people with fire**. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who



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had power over **these plagues**. They did not repent and give him glory. Revelation 16:8-9 ESV

## An Unwitting Instrument of Judgment

It must be said that God doesn't need our "help" when it comes to judging us. The Almighty is perfectly able to do things on His own, as the above passages seem to indicate. The angels sound the trumpets or pour the bowls and calamities happen. So, it hardly matters that we have "matching" destructive abilities. The Last Days judgments could happen without any human agency involved—just as it was with Sodom and Gomorrah.

Nevertheless, in the Old Testament the Lord frequently used one nation to be the instrument of inflicting His judgment upon another. This was indeed the more common manner, as any reading through the major and minor prophets immediately confirms. It is, therefore, an extraordinary sign that we are now in the position of becoming an instrument for rendering judgment upon ourselves. It doesn't have to happen that way, but is it not (at least) both bizarre and deeply troubling that it could?

## 2) Political and Economic Signs

We now have a one world financial system. Babylon as it is pictured in the Book of Revelation looks like world capitalism corrupted by unrestrained greed. How did we get here? The history of western expansion since the Middle Ages shows that wherever commercial trade went, governmental authority followed, since safe-guarding trade required treaties. Trade treaties in turn led to military interventions to enforce them, because laws are powerless without "the sword." The conquest of India by the British and the Opium War they waged against China are outstanding examples of trade connections leading to power structures. This greed-corrupted side of commerce will come under judgment, perhaps sooner than we think.

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! ... and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.**" Revelation 18:1-3 ESV

World War II brought the nations of the world together in total war on an unprecedented scale. Its aftermath left the belligerent nations united in mutual interdependence through banking, industry and commerce. It also left many yearning to see a world without war. Out of this the United Nations emerged along with the World Bank, the World Court and (naturally enough) the UN's "police" force. We now have a one world government. Although it is still in its infancy, it is inevitably growing towards centralization of power, just as the world-wide economy is hastening towards irreversible interdependence.

## The Dark Side of Globalization

The one world economic system is several steps ahead of the one world governmental system. Real authority for the world governing bodies is more *de jure*, than *de facto*. We can be sure, however, that there are powerful people who are helping "globalization" along. Some see it as the proper evolution of society necessary for the survival of humanity. Others, see it as an opportunity for their own despotic control over the world's wealth and inhabitants. We already

know that this dark side will seize control with the rise of the antichrist. Signs abound that this “beast system” is already in full preparation mode. (See Update section for links.)

And they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, **Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with it?** And a mouth speaking great things was given to it, and blasphemies. **And authority was given to it** to continue forty-two months. Revelation 13:4-5 MKJV

Efforts continue at developing a one world religious system, also prophesied in Revelation. There are compelling signs that this could take place through the Vatican and its present vicar, Pope Francis. Like many events of this century, the formation of the beast religious system may happen swiftly, even more swiftly than the “one world order” for government. Taken together, these are unprecedented global signs clearly envisioned in the Book of Revelation of what the world would be like in the Last Days.

### 3) Technological Signs

The mark of the beast is easily the most talked about sign of the Last Days. It has been so for years. When I was young—back in the sixties—none of us in Christian youth fellowship could imagine why anyone would want to take such an obviously evil sign. And what would it be? Was it a tattoo? How crude! Then, bar codes came out. Now we have it! The unfolding reality is more subtle and ingenious—from the standpoint of serving the Evil One’s purpose.

We now have the technological ability to put a mark (a smart chip) under the skin of the hand or the forehead so that no buying or selling can be done without the mark. That’s a pretty compelling reason for taking the chip. But what will gain it favor in the beginning? The answer is identity theft. None of us saw that coming either. Identity theft was unheard of until the electronic age. Now, all of us can see in the chip a rationale for ensuring safe and secure transactions. Few of us—the Christian few—will see beyond the chip to realize that it is the forbidden mark.



Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, **to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark**, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666. Revelation 13:16-18 ESV

### A Living, Breathing Image

Technology also ushered in another strange twist. In the sixties the idea of a speaking image of the beast could barely be imagined. We had posters of dictators and grainy images of Hitler on film, but it took Hollywood to lead the way. Well in advance of real technology, science fiction and special effects began bringing speaking, holographic images right before our eyes. Now, it is easy to “see” how the second beast could bring the antichrist’s image visibly to “life” all over the planet. Add to human ingenuity and creativity, the supernatural “enhancements” of spiritual darkness and you have something only John the Revelator could have seen coming!



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And by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed **to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak** and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Revelation 13:14-15 ESV

## 4) Persecution of Christians

In the West until recently, we tended to think of Christian martyrdom as a thing of the past—a tragic oddity that mercifully ended when the Roman Empire converted to Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Sure, there were wars of religion that bloodied Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. But that was Christians killing Christians. Our idea of martyrdom was covered with the dust of history.

The sudden rise of Isis changed that gross misperception. Now we know that Christians are indeed being killed in our own day. Perversely, Christians are not only being martyred, they are actually being beheaded. We are even seeing evidence of this atavistic practice with our own eyes. This is a double confirmation of ancient prophecy! Who would ever have thought that beheadings would make a gruesome return to public view? Yet, all this was foreseen by John on Patmos.

Also I saw the souls of **those who had been beheaded** for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4 ESV

### Martyrdom on the Rise

What may still not be as widely known is that martyrdom had already been dramatically on the increase long before the rise of militant Islam. The number of Christians that have been killed in the last 100 years exceeds the total from the previous 1900 years. Millions of Christians were killed by Hitler. Millions more were murdered by the communist regimes of Stalin, Mao Zedong and other “enlightened” atheists. It’s not just politicians; it is also religious fanatics who persecute Christians. Believers in Jesus to this day suffer death at the hands of radical Hindus and Buddhists, not to mention Satanists. All of this was prophesied 2000 years ago.

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, **who were to be killed as they themselves had been**. Revelation 6:11 ESV

Sadly, it is not over. We should all be prepared to face this and—by God’s grace and strength—face all fear of it down. According to the book of Revelation, many Christians will die during the Great Tribulation as martyrs. It will be the ultimate act of courage and devotion offered to the Lord in the most trying of times. These will “escape” the other horrors of the Tribulation and receive one of the highest honors of heaven, a martyr’s crown.

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, **“These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.** They have washed their



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robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Revelation 7:13-15 ESV

## An Unthinkable Reversal

Fifty years ago, a world-wide persecution of Christians seemed unthinkable, fantastic. Christianity throughout the West was a major part of the glue that held civilization together. Christians and Christian leaders enjoyed a favorable position on the world's stage. Christian morality was still held in honor. All that is rapidly changing. We did not know then that what would replace the hegemony of Christian values was not something non-Christian, which may have been benign, but a far darker thing of active menace.

The once Christian lands, in moving away from Christ, are now becoming anti-Christ. Already the Name that is above all names can hardly be mentioned in the public square anywhere in the West. Worse, those who pursue "alternative" life-styles view His scriptures as their sworn enemy. Those who believe the scriptures are vilified. This is one of the greatest "woes": when evil is called good, good becomes evil (Isaiah 5:20). Wherever these "anti-Christians" come into political power, Christians are hounded and harassed. Soon they could be martyred. The entire world is filling out the picture of persecution painted in the Book of Revelation.

## 5) The Information Age

One predicted sign of the Last Days is something that we all enjoy: the internet. Another sign just as enthusiastically pursued is world travel, whether for business or pleasure. Remarkably, Daniel foresaw both. As brilliant as Daniel was, there was no way he could have seen this coming by his own understanding. No, our present age of information and jet travel is an absolute confirmation that Daniel received genuine prophetic visions. God alone can see our future more clearly than we do our present. At the end, the angel told Daniel to seal up the prophecies he was shown until a time when knowledge would increase as well as travel. Since both are happening now, we can also expect that the Lord will soon be "unlocking" things that are still hidden in scripture about the Last Days.

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. **Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.**" Daniel 12:4 ESV

## Putting It All Together

What can we say to these things? These global signs alone make an irrefutable case for the timeline of Last Days prophecies in the Bible. Without question these signs have all been falling into place over the last 50 years. Equally without question, none of them were even visible on the horizon 100 years ago—except for those with scripture enhanced vision. Whether the signs are environmental, economic, political or technological; whether they have to do with an increased persecution of Christians, or with the increase of information and travel—they all point dramatically to these being the days just prior to Jesus' Return. Let's be sure to get ready!



## Two More Unprecedented Signs

[Jewish Signs](#) It is a mark of God's faithfulness that He never forgets, but always fulfills, His promises and His purposes. Long before Jesus came to earth, God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant relationship with Himself. This was certainly intended for their benefit, but also for ours: Ultimately the long-awaited Savior would come to them, then through them to us. Guess what? He is getting things ready to do it again!

[Gospel Signs](#) Jesus gave us this sign, but Peter explained it. He wrote that the Father is in no hurry to bring things to a quick close because He doesn't want anyone to be perish, but all to come to repentance. For that to happen the gospel has to be preached to the entire world. That day is coming at us like a freight train...

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