

### SIGNS and TIMES

There are two elements that have been provided to help us be prepared for the return of our Lord.

There are "signs" of his coming, and there are "time" periods that hint at when he will come.

When Jesus was asked by his disciples what **these signs** would be, he said (see Matt 24 & Luke 21):

1. Wars and rumors of wars
2. Famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes
3. False Christs, False prophets
4. Iniquity shall abound
5. Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world
6. Great tribulation
7. Signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; upon the earth distress of nations
8. Men's hearts failing them for fear
9. The fig tree budding

Many of these signs can be considered to be general, and could have reference to various periods of history, including today.

Some of the signs are very specific however, and they can only relate to the days in which we are currently living.

The preaching of the gospel in all languages and nations has only been a reality in this generation.

The "budding of the fig tree" was a sign that referred to the re-birth of

the nation of Israel. This nation is a modern miracle. It is one of the greatest signs that we have to indicate that the time has come.



#### Lift up your heads

We have been told that these signs are important and that "when ye see these things come to pass, **know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.** Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but **my words shall not pass away.**" ( Luke 21: 31-33)

#### The Signs Fit

When we look around at the world that we live in, we can see that iniquity abounds and that men's hearts are fearful. We can **discern the signs** that Jesus has given us and know that his return is very near.

The promise is sure. Jesus will return to this earth again: "And **when these things begin to come to pass**, then look up, and **lift up your heads**; for your

# Things Concerning

## The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

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"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

#### The Promise of His Coming

The idea of the "second coming of Christ" is often used proverbially, as an example of something that will never really happen.

The churches have gradually removed any attempt to interpret this fundamental Bible teaching as a literal event.

Almost 2000 years have passed since his disciples stood on the Mount of Olives and watched as Jesus was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

They were plainly told: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner** as ye have seen him go into heaven." ( Acts 1:11)

Was this just a shallow promise? Were these words intended to have a hidden meaning?

The answer to these questions is NO! Jesus did not intend to deceive his disciples. Just as surely as they saw him ascend into heaven, he will literally return from heaven.

#### God's Word is True

The promise of God is sure. "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."( Acts 3:20-21)

The return of Christ to this earth is



Acts 1:11

such a fundamental New Testament teaching that there are more than 200 references on the subject.

#### Purpose and Time

When will Jesus return to this earth? God has a plan and a **purpose**. He also has a **pre-determined time** to send His son back.

Jesus referred to this earlier in the same discussion with his disciples, (as recorded in Acts 1) : "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**"

**Jesus will return to this earth** to judge the living and the dead. He will restore the Kingdom to Israel.

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## Hope and Comfort from the Scriptures

### Times of Refreshing

We wait patiently for the Lord Jesus Christ to return from the right hand of the throne of God. Our hope is in the consolation that will be ours in that day.

We are instructed in the Bible to "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when **the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;** And **he shall send Jesus Christ,** which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21)

### A Rest for God's People

**Jesus said:** "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and **ye shall find rest** unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."  
(Matt 11: 28-30)

There is a certain peace of mind and comfort for those who bear the yoke of Christ, but these temporal blessings cannot be compared to the blessings that are coming in the Kingdom.

### The Sabbath

When God created the earth and all things therein, He **rested** on the seventh day. He blessed this day and made it holy. The Israelites were commanded to honor the Sabbath day and to keep it holy.

The Sabbath of the Old Testament was only a type of **the rest** that is coming for the people of God. ( see Hebrews 4:9)

The Sabbath was also provided as **a sign of the times.** We are



reminded in Hebrews 4 that the Sabbath was on the seventh day. God created the earth in six days and then he rested.

In 2 Peter 3 we are also told that "**one day is with the Lord as a thousand years,** and a thousand years as one day."

### 7000 Year Plan

When we consider the entire council of God, along with the evidence in the Sabbath type, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a 7000 year timetable in the plan of God.

This plan requires that man would labour for 6000 years while the curse remained on the ground. This would be followed by a **1000 year period of rest.**

Consistent with this conclusion is the statement concerning the saints in Revelation 20: 4, that "they lived and reigned with Christ **a thousand years.**" ( this is repeated in verse 6)

### The Rest is near

The creation of the world has been dated (using Bible genealogy) to have occurred at around 4000 BC.

We are now on the verge of 2000 AD. Mans fears about "YK2" may be only a hint of the dramatic changes that are coming during the next century.

The changes that are coming will be a blessing for the people of God. They will rest from their struggles when this earth is filled with the glory of God. In that day, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (2 Thess 1: 7-8)

### In Flaming Fire

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he mentioned the return of Christ many times. In the words quoted above (which are found in 2 Thess 1 ) we learn that this event will be a comfort and a joy to some, but to others, it will be a severe judgment.

Obviously, those who accept Christ now, and who are found to be **his** when he comes, rejoice in the end to their troubles.

Unfortunately, those who do not believe the gospel message, and who choose to remain disobedient to the calling of God, must expect to begin their time of trouble.

### Judgment

It is difficult to talk about the flaming fire that is associated with the judgment period. Peter tells us however, that just as surely as the world in Noah's day was destroyed by water, the world today is **reserved unto fire** against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ( 2 Peter 3)

### Fables

Paul also wrote to Timothy saying : "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, **who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all

longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**" ( 2 Tim 4: 1-4)

### Perilous Times

He also prophetically describes our world today in very appropriate terms: "But know this, that **in the last days perilous times will come:** For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."  
(2 Tim 3: 1-4 NKJV)

### The Choice is ours

We all must answer for ourselves. Where do we want to be found when Jesus returns to judge this world in righteousness?

We can remain among those who are described above; (those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel). Or, we can seek the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near.

Our best choice is to "prove all things; (and) hold fast that which is good. (And to) abstain from all appearance of evil.

Paul's hope was that:"the very