

“SIGNS OF THE TIMES” (TRENDS) THAT POINT TO “THE END TIMES”.

Matthew 16:1-3

¹*The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*

²*He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.*

³*And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern **the signs of the times?***

I. The first trend is the *Aliyah* (regathering) of the Jewish people.

A. The Hebrew word **Aliyah**, literally means **going up to Jerusalem**. In Old Testament times it was used to describe the responsibility of the Jewish male who was required to go up to Jerusalem three times each year. Now, it is being applied to the Jews that are immigrating to the state of Israel.

B. The Bible gives only three times that the children of Israel are dispersed from their homeland to some other part of the world and only three promises to bring them back to their promised land.

1. The first time was to Egypt in 1875 BC (**Genesis 46**)

Genesis 46:3-4, 27

³*And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:*

⁴*I will go down with thee into Egypt; **and I will also surely bring thee up again:** and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. ...*

²⁷*And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, **were threescore and ten.***

a. In 1446 BC, God instructed Moses to take the Israelites to the Promised Land.

Exodus 3:10

¹⁰*Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.*

2. The second time was to Babylon in 605BC, 597BC, 586 BC (**Jeremiah 29:10;**

II Chronicles 36)

Jeremiah 29:10

¹⁰*For thus saith the LORD, **That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.***

a. In 537 BC, King Cyrus made a proclamation allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. God raised up Zerubbabel to lead almost fifty thousand people on their return. **(Ezra 1-6)**

Ezra 2:64-65

⁶⁴*The whole congregation together was **forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,***

⁶⁵*Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were **seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven:** and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.*

3. The third time was to the four corners of the earth in AD70 when Titus and the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

Luke 21:24

²⁴*And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, **and shall be led away captive into all nations:** and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Deuteronomy 28:37, 63-65

³⁷ *And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, **among all nations** whither the LORD shall lead thee. ...*

⁶³ *And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

⁶⁴ ***And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other;** and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.*

⁶⁵ *And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:*

a. God has promised to bring them back again. **(Deuteronomy 30; Ezekiel 34:11-31)**

b. The Bible predicts over and over again that the Jews must be back in their homeland for events of the end times to unfold.

Jeremiah 30:1-3, 7

¹The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

²Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.

³For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and **I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.**

⁷Alas! for **that day** is great, so that none is like it: it is even **the time of Jacob's trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it.

The regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland is the most prophesied event in end times passages in the Bible.

Almost all the key events of the end times hinge on the existence of the nation of Israel. In **Daniel 9:27**, you have the seven-year peace treaty. There also are future armed invasions of Israel—**Daniel 11, Ezekiel 38, and Zechariah 14.**

c. Scripture indicates that this regathering of the nation of Israel will occur in stages. It is portrayed as a process.

(1.) **Ezekiel 37:1-14** symbolizes the national return, restoration, and regeneration of the whole house of Israel.

Ezekiel 37:11

¹¹Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are **the whole house of Israel**: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

(2.) Israel is first restored physically, pictured by the bones, sinew, and flesh coming together. The complete skeleton comes together bone by bone, piece by piece, but it is still a lifeless corpse.

Ezekiel 37:7-8

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

⁸And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: **but there was no breath in them.**

(3.) Then, Ezekiel witnessed Israel's spiritual regeneration when the breath of the Spirit breathes spiritual life into the dead nation. (This spiritual regeneration won't occur until the Messiah returns.)

Ezekiel 37:9

⁹Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

- The Aliyah (returning to Jerusalem) began in 1871 when a few Jews trickled back to the Holy Land. By 1881, approximately 25,000 had returned; by 1939, 450,000; by 1948 when Israel became a nation, 650,000; and by 2009, for the first time since AD 135, there were more Jews in Israel than in any other place on earth, approximately 5.4 million. Today there are approximately 6.8 million Jews living in Israel.

II. The second trend is a departure from the faith: surging apostasy.

A. Apostasy refers to a falling away from the truth, both doctrinally and morally. It pictures a determined, willful “defection from the faith” or an “abandonment of the faith.”

1 Timothy 4:1-2

*¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ 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;

*⁴ And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.***

2 Timothy 3:1-5

¹ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

*⁵ **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:** from such turn away.*

B. This departure from the faith foreshadows the final falling away that will breakout as the end times begin to unfold.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-3

² *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

³ *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away** first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

C. Facts showing the move toward apostasy today.

- Today over 150 million Americans are “unchurched”, better categorized as “de-churched”
- 59 percent of young Americans between the ages of 15 and 29 are leaving church life.
- Of Non-Christian Americans 50 percent say the Bible is a “story”; 38 percent say it is “mythology”; 36 percent say it is “symbolic”; 30 percent say it is a “fairytale”; and 27 percent say it is “a dangerous book of religious dogma”.
- Today there are websites designed to help pastors, church leaders, and church members adjust to their new lives after defecting from the faith.
- Today there are “hybrid religions”, such as the “**Christian Wicca**” movement, another is the “**Chrislam**” movement. Movements that promote “**inclusivism**”, and “**tolerance**”.

III. The third trend is the Middle East peace process.

A. The Middle East peace process is a key sign of the end times. The current yearning for peace in the Middle East is setting the stage for the final covenant of peace between the Antichrist and Israel predicted in the Bible.

Daniel 9:27a

²⁷ *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:*

IV. The fourth trend is the reuniting of the Roman Empire.

A. As the end times begin to unfold, global alliances will emerge as nations scramble for political power. A ten-nation coalition, as predicted by the prophet Daniel, will emerge and this alliance will constitute the revived Roman Empire with its final leader, the Antichrist, and it will have the economic and political power necessary to control the Mediterranean.

B. Many interpreters of biblical prophecy believe that the European Union will fulfill this predicted alliance of nations. The European Union’s connection to this alliance of nations is uncertain, but it appears to be a seed of what the Bible predicts.

V. The fifth trend is Globalism.

A. Scriptures predict the world government of the Antichrist and that he will have absolute control of the economy, and no one will buy or sell without his permission.

Revelation 13:17

¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Mark Hitchcock quote: "The necessary ingredients for a world government are present for the first time in the history of civilization. The time may not be far away when such a government—foretold in scripture long before one was possible—will have its accurate and complete fulfillment."

CONCLUSION:

The Bible clearly gives us "**signs of the end times**", but the things taking place today are "**signs of the times**" or "**trends**" that are setting the stage for the final act. We don't know how long it will be till the stage is set and the curtain raises on the end times. But, one thing we can know for sure is that the Lord's return is closer today than it was yesterday.

