

Times and Seasons

I Thess 5

There are Signs that point to the end of the Age and Soon Return of Jesus Christ.

1) The Holocaust and the Re-Emergence of Israel

One of the preeminent signs of the end times is the Jewish survival of the Holocaust and the re-emergence of the nation of Israel as a Jewish state.

Over 2,600 years ago, the prophet Ezekiel foretold these events:

"Then he said to me, 'Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, 'We have become old, dry bones - all hope is gone.' Now give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the Lord.'" [Ezekiel 37:11-13 \(NLT\)](#)

As God says, the bones in [Ezekiel 37](#) represent the people of Israel - otherwise known as the Jews.

Following the first century Roman conquest of the Holy Land, the Jews were banished from the land of Israel. The Romans renamed the area Palestine, and exiled its people to the farthest corners of the Roman Empire.

Yet, in [Ezekiel 37](#), God promised to bring the Jews out of exile. He promised to bring them back into the land of Israel.

Not only did He promise to restore their nation, but God promised to do so by opening their "graves" at a time when the Jews feel that "all hope is gone."

The aftermath of Hitler's Holocaust of the Jewish people created these very conditions, nearly destroying an entire race of people and draining the hope of countless survivors.

But out of the Holocaust, God brought the Jewish people back into the land of Israel, just as He had promised.

On May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel reappeared in fulfillment of not just [Ezekiel 37:11-13](#), but countless Old Testament prophecies.

Of all the signs of the end times, the re-establishment of Israel as an independent nation is the clearest and most unmistakable sign that we are in the last of the last days.

2) Jerusalem Is a Burden to the World

Another visible sign of the end times is the world diplomatic struggle over Jerusalem.

The prophet Zechariah foresaw this event centuries ago:

"I will make Jerusalem and Judah like an intoxicating drink to all the nearby nations that send their armies to besiege Jerusalem. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone, a burden for the world. None of the nations who try to lift it will escape unscathed." [Zechariah 12:2-3 \(NLT\)](#)

The Six Day War is a clear evidence that God is at work to preserve and the Nation Israel

The tenuous nation of Israel stands on alert and the brink of despair. All is quiet. Only a recognized entity for 19 years, the country faces not one, but four well supplied enemies. Outnumbered and under equipped,

government estimates of casualties range from 10,000 to total annihilation. The day is June 5th, 1967.

Opposing the small nation is a sizable coalition of forces, supported and supplied primarily by the USSR and Britain. This combined army stands strong at roughly 465,000 troops, 2,880 tanks and 900 aircraft compared to Israel's 264,000 soldiers (of which 200,000 are reservists), 800 tanks, and 300 aircraft. (Israeli History, Six Day War). Days before the war, President Nasser of Egypt declares "The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are poised on the borders of Israel...to face the challenge, while standing behind us are the armies of Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Sudan and the whole Arab nation. This act will astound the world.

Israel's one hope, its allies the United States and Britain, stay out of the conflict in both military might and support due to conflicting interests in the middle east and the stigma of the Vietnam war. To make this clear to the world, the US state department declares "Our position is neutral in thought, word and deed" (AP, June 5, 1967).

Planning for the worst case scenario, Israel begins to convert its national parks into mass burial grounds and school children dig sand to protect their homes. The UN removes its troops from the Sinai and Israel stands alone.

This leads us back to the setting of 1967 and the Six Day War. As we know, Israel is not destroyed by overwhelming odds. Instead, in a matter of six days, facing four competent enemies, the small nation miraculously quadruples its land and retakes many holy sites including Jerusalem and the temple mount. Israel reports 760 casualties, while the Arab deaths hover somewhere around 18,000 men (Bard, 1967 War).

Egypt continued its retreat in chaos. Egyptian soldiers were ordered to destroy their bases and retreat even before seeing a single Israeli soldier. The troops fled to the Suez Canal. "I cannot describe to you what we felt during the retreat from Sharm al-Sheikh," said Abd al-

Hafiz, an officer of an Egyptian garrison. “We nearly cried, for we could not believe what was happening. We never saw one Israeli soldier.”

“Everyone lost their heads,” said Dr. Abd al-Fattah al Tarki, a reserve officer of an Egyptian armored brigade. “The army on the roads was in a state of complete collapse. It was a massacre, a disaster. Israel never would have achieved a quarter of its victory if not for the confusion and chaos.”

One hundred and thirty-one hours and fifty minutes. That’s all it took for the tiny nation of Israel to devastate the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria between June 5 and June 10, 1967. In just six days, Israel changed the course of Middle East history and politics.

At the end of one of the shortest wars in history, more than 10,000 Egyptians, 700 Jordanians and 400 Syrians had died; in addition, more than 20,000 from the three nations were wounded. Israel, on the other hand, claimed fewer than 800 dead, 2,563 wounded. That amounts to Israel killing 25 enemy troops for every one Israeli lost. The prisoner-of-war rate proved even more lopsided in Israel’s favor. Israel captured more than 5,000 Egyptians (of whom 21 were generals), 365 Syrians and 550 Jordanians. Israel’s POW number totaled just 15.

The magnitude of Israel’s victory is even clearer in view of the disparity in material destruction. Israel destroyed 85 percent of Egypt’s military hardware and plundered vast stores of ammunition and tanks. It captured hundreds of both Jordan’s and Syria’s tanks and thousands of their military vehicles and guns.

Israel’s attacks on its enemies’ air forces were even more thorough. Egypt lost all of its bombers and 85 percent of its combat aircraft, most on the first day of war. All of Jordan’s airfields and fighters

were destroyed in the first day of battle, and Syria's air force was also severely crippled. In all, Israel destroyed more than 400 aircraft while losing only 36 of its 180 planes.

Finally, consider how much territory Israel conquered. By the war's end, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and all of Jerusalem. Israel conquered 42,000 square miles, making the nation 3 _ times its original size in one week.

one high ranking west point official who was asked why they do not study the tactics behind arguably one of the most impressive routes in history? He responded that "the US Military Academy studies wars fought throughout the world, they do not study the Six Day War because what concerns West Point is strategy and tactics, not miracles" (Six Day War, p2).

the troops and generals knew God had directed the battle and weren't afraid to admit it.

"Apparently someone in heaven was watching over us," said Commander Rafael Eytan, who led the paratroopers of the 35th Brigade. "Every unintended action they took and every unintended action we took always turned to our advantage."

A German Viewpoint

A German journalist summarized: "Nothing like this has happened in history. A force including a 1000 tanks, hundreds of artillery cannons, many rockets and [fighter jets](#), and a hundred thousand soldiers armed from head to toe was destroyed in two days in an area [covering](#) hundreds of kilometers filled with reinforced outposts and installations. And this victory was carried out by a force that lost many soldiers and much equipment,

positions, and vehicles. No military logic or natural cause can explain this monumental occurrence." *[ibid, p. 446.]*

INFOLINKS_OFF

Since 1967 when the Israelis retook Jerusalem in the Six Day War, the division of Jerusalem and ownership of the Temple Mount in particular, have been a source of countless U.N. resolutions, diplomatic crises, and calls for war.

The struggle over the "Peace Process" in the Middle East is the stated number one priority of world diplomats, and Jerusalem resides at the center of discussions about "land for peace."

With the threat of World War III casting a shadow over every decision to rebuild Jewish settlements or expand Israeli society, the City of Jerusalem is no doubt "a burden for the world."

Is this "the way it's always been?"

No.

Until this generation, Jerusalem was not "a burden for the world." In fact, prior to 1948, world diplomatic leaders rarely mentioned it.

3) The Dramatic Increase in Travel and Knowledge

One of the signs of the end times that anyone can easily recognize is the recent explosive increase in travel and knowledge.

In a vision, God revealed to Daniel that in "the time of the end," travel and knowledge will increase:

"But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end. Many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase."

[Daniel 12:4 \(NLT\)](#)

According to the book of Daniel, two things will increase in "the time of the end" - travel and knowledge.

Is this the case now?

Yes.

At the time the Book of Daniel was written, horses were the world's the fastest mode of transportation.

In fact, horses remained the world's fastest mode of transportation for over 5,000 years until the Industrial Revolution spawned such innovations as the steam boat, the locomotive, and the horseless carriage.

Prior to the 20th Century, most people rarely traveled more than 30 miles from where they were born. Today, people routinely travel from one continent to another within the same day.

Today's world is definitely not "the way it's always been."

Frequency and speed of travel have markedly increased!

What about knowledge?

In Daniel's time, few people received a formal education. In fact, basic literacy was a foreign concept to all but an elite minority of the world until the past 100 to 150 years.

Yet, in the past century alone, human knowledge of science, biology, technology, and countless fields of endeavor has exploded. And the advent of

the Internet has created a worldwide archive of human knowledge that far exceeds even the wildest dreams of the great ancient civilizations.

Is humanity's knowledge base today "the same as previous generations?"

Absolutely not. Human knowledge has also markedly increased.

Given that all this can be ascertained from mere observation, how can anyone say with a straight face that "things today are the same as they've always been?"

4) Exponential Growth Marks the Times

If a marked increase in travel and knowledge constitute one of the most clearly observable signs of the end times, then the two are merely components of a much larger sign of the end times - exponential growth.

Jesus pointed to exponential growth as a sign of His Coming:

"Later, Jesus sat on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and asked, 'When will all this take place? And will there be any sign ahead of time to signal your return and the end of the world?' Jesus told them, 'Don't let anyone mislead you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah.' They will lead many astray. And wars will break out near and far, but don't panic. Yes, these things must come, but the end won't follow immediately. The nations and kingdoms will proclaim war against each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. But all this will be only the beginning of the horrors to come.'"

[Matthew 24:3-8 \(NLT\)](#)

This translation fails to communicate an important revelation from Jesus - that the end times will be analogous to the birthing process.

According to Strong's Concordance, the word "horrors" as translated above comes from the word "*odin*" which is best translated as "the pain of childbirth" or "birth pangs."

This means that, much like birth pangs, signs of the end times will appear with greater frequency and intensity as Christ's return draws near. This is why Jesus mentioned this sign first when answering his disciples' questions "When will all this take place? And will there be any sign ahead of time to signal your return and the end of the world?"

According to Jesus, three things in particular will increase in frequency and intensity as the world draws closer to His return:

- 1 Wars
- 2 Famines
- 3 Earthquakes

Have we seen these three things increase in frequency and intensity in the recent past?

Yes.

Let's take a brief look at wars, famines, and earthquakes over the past 500 years.

Wars - A Sign of the End Times

According to a Wikipedia list of wars, the past 500 years have witnessed an increase in the frequency of wars:

- 15th Century - 29 wars
- 16th Century - 59 wars
- 17th Century - 75 wars
- 18th Century - 69 wars
- 19th Century - 294 wars
- 20th Century - 278 wars

The first decade of the 21st Century has already witnessed 55 wars, putting humanity on course for 550 wars over the next one hundred year period.

Have these wars increased in intensity?

Yes.

For most of human history, wars were fought through individual hand-to-hand combat. But the past few hundred years have witnessed the ascension of more accurate guns, machine guns, and aerial bombing. Today, a single weapon of mass destruction can kill hundreds of thousands of people.

Famines - A Sign of the End Times

the past 500 years have also witnessed an increase in the frequency of famines:

- 15th Century - 6 famines
- 16th Century - 10 famines
- 17th Century - 24 famines
- 18th Century - 28 famines
- 19th Century - 30 famines
- 20th Century - 44 famines

The first decade of the 21st Century alone has already witnessed 12 famines, putting humanity on course for 120 famines over the next one hundred year period.

Have these famines increased in intensity and severity?

Yes.

As the population of the world has grown, famines have caused more and more death and destruction in their wake.

In fact, while the Roman Empire's entire population at the time of Jesus is estimated to have been approximately 55 million people, the first half of the 20th Century alone witnessed these famines:

- The 1921 famine in Russia (5 million+ dead)
- The 1928-1929 famine in China (3 million+ dead)
- The 1932-1933 famine in Ukraine (2.6 and 10 million+ dead)
- The 1932-1933 famine in Kazakhstan (1.2 and 1.5 million+ dead)
- The 1936 famine in China (5 million+ dead)

- The 1942-1943 famine in China (1 million+ dead)
- The 1946-1947 famine in the Soviet Union (1 million+ dead)

That's an estimated 18.8 to 26.5 million who perished from famine just from these seven famines alone!

And from 1959 to 1961, the Great Chinese Famine is estimated to have killed more than 36 million people.

Famines have dramatically increased in both frequency and intensity since Jesus first answered His disciples' questions.

Earthquakes - Another Sign of the End Times

According to a Wikipedia list of earthquakes, the past 500 years have witnessed the following number of earthquakes described as a magnitude 7.0 or greater:

- 15th Century - 2 earthquakes
- 16th Century - 3 earthquakes
- 17th Century - 7 earthquakes
- 18th Century - 13 earthquakes
- 19th Century - 29 earthquakes
- 20th Century - 123 earthquakes

The first decade of the 21st Century has already witnessed 144 earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.0 or greater, putting humanity on course for 1,440 such earthquakes over the next one hundred year period!

The dramatic increase in devastating wars, famines, and earthquakes from the time of Jesus until today is one of clearest signs of the end times.

5) The Rise of Global Government

Another sign of the end times is the current trend toward globalization.

According to the Book of Revelation, globalization involves more than just multinational corporations and global commerce. One day, a single man will rule all the people and nations on the earth:

"And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation." [Revelation 13:7 \(NLT\)](#)

With each passing day more and more nations are ceding their sovereignty to larger institutions such as the European Union, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Court.

Given the current global financial crisis and the potential catastrophe of a global war, more and more diplomatic leaders and world politicians are calling for global government.

And as human technology continues to advance and mature, we're quickly reaching a point where global totalitarian rule will be possible.

6) The Good News Preached Throughout the World

Jesus revealed the following sign of the end times to His disciples in response to their questions about the end of the age and the sign of His coming:

"And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come."

[Matthew 24:14 \(NLT\)](#)

According to Christ, His Coming is preceded by the preaching of the Gospel "throughout the whole world."

This idea is reiterated in the Book of Revelation.

"And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world - to every nation, tribe, language, and people. 'Fear God,' he shouted. 'Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the

heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water." [Revelation 14:6-7 \(NLT\)](#)

In the time of Jesus, the Gospel was confined to a relatively small number of people in and around Israel. And much of the earth's land mass was completely unknown to the disciples of Jesus, so the odds of the disciples preaching the Gospel of Christ "throughout the whole world" in their own time was quite remote.

Yet, 2,000 years later, the Gospel is preached in every nation, the Bible is translated in hundreds of languages, and the Gospel of Christ is delivered through thousands of ministries via radio, cable TV, satellite, and the Internet.

Is this "the way it's always been?"

Nope.

The truth is our generation is closer to preaching the Gospel "throughout the whole world" than any preceding generation.