

Signs of the Times  
By: RobertNC@aol.com

"These are extraordinary times." That's a phrase we hear repeated frequently these days by everyone from President Bush to other political bleeders to commentators. Even the most seasoned newsmen who have "seen it all" are in awe of the world developments of the last year. All of them realize that something unique in the history of the world is happening today. And what's most stunning about it all is the breathtaking rapidity of these recent developments.

We see it in the crumbling of the Eastern Bloc of Europe and the Communist Empire. We see it in the Soviet Union's disintegrating economy. We see it in the recent unprecedented vote by the Soviet communist party to relinquish its absolute hold on power for the first time since it seized power 70 years ago. We see it in the failing ecosystem of Planet Earth. Even though we see it all so clearly, it's still difficult to comprehend. What does it all mean? Where is it all leading?

The only way to understand the big picture is to look at the various categories of signs that the Bible predicted would come together just before the return of Christ. The key to understanding current events is in some familiar old scriptural passages. Jesus Himself gave us the best insight shortly before his execution on the cross.

In Matthew Chapter 24:3, the disciples came to Jesus and asked: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" The question was in the context of Jesus' prediction to them that Jerusalem and the Temple was about to be utterly destroyed. Note that the disciples actually asked three questions: when will these things be? What will be the sign of Your coming? And, what will be the sign of the end of the age? The disciples did not realize how complex their questions were. They assumed that the destruction of Jerusalem, the return of the Messiah and the end of the age were all connected events.

#### JERUSALEM'S STATUS A KEY SIGN

But look how carefully and precisely Jesus answered the questions. In Luke Chapter 21:12-24, Jesus focuses on the first question about the destruction of the state of Israel and the ensuing Diaspora. Jesus gives a precise chronology of the most important events that would separate the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem from the signs that would much latter herald His second advent and the end of the age: "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled", Here we see clearly that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is not connected directly with His Second Coming.

This even has already occurred in 70AD, when the Roman 10th Legion under Titus destroyed the city and Temple. That was the second destruction of the city. (The Babylonians destroyed it first in 587BC).

Jerusalem would remain under Gentile domination 70AD until the times of the gentiles were fulfilled, Jesus said. Now how would we know when the TIMES OF THE GENTILES are beginning to end? We would know when Gentile domination of Jerusalem would begin to be taken away? The Gentile domination began to end June 5, 1967, when the new State of Israel took sovereign control over it. But they do not as yet have control of the most important part, the temple area.

This will still be disputed in the Tribulation period that immediately precedes the Lord's return. Let's remember that in 1948, the Jews recaptured a small part of their land, but it wasn't until 1967 in the Six Day War that Jerusalem was retaken and sovereign control was established by the Jews over old Jerusalem for the first time in 2500 years. As I have restudied the Book of Daniel recently, I have begun to see that the recapture of Jerusalem was prophetically as important as the taking and reestablishing of the nation of Israel. The focus of Daniel's prophecy about the last seven years before Christ's return is on Jerusalem.

Daniel (Chapter 9:24) speaks of the time "decreed for your people and your holy city." Jerusalem is the key to all of the Second Coming prophecy. That's why it was such an important development when the city was taken in 1967. It is also relevant that we see so much turmoil taking place in Israel and the Middle east right now. Control over the old city of Jerusalem is the uppermost concern of the Moslem world. This is their third holiest site, only slightly less important than Mecca and Medina.

#### BIRTH PANGS OF THE SECOND COMING

Only after Jesus answered that first question about the holy city did He address the broader questions about His return and the end of the age. His last great prophetic message as it is recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 is the key to understanding the mind boggling events that are so rapidly coming upon our generation. Here's how the major signs Jesus foretold developed in the 1980's--many of which we will be exploring in-depth in this report:

#### RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

Ten years ago, we could see the beginning of this trend, but not to the extent we see it today. In the 1980's, there were tremendous increases in satanism, ritual abuse, occult activities, New Age beliefs and apostasy--which I define as the rejection of known truth about God.

#### WAR AND RUMORS OF WARS

The 20th century will undoubtedly be known as the greatest warring century of all time. But the most significant development in the late 1980s was the way the stage has been set for the ushering in of a global pseudo-peace. This phase of peace will actually put the world at greater jeopardy than any of the great wars. This peace will be a part of Satan's great deception. In Daniel 8:24-26, we learn of the rise of the Antichrist and how he will use peace to destroy many. The fourth clause in Daniel 8:25 literally says in the original Hebrew, "And by means of

peace he (the Antichrist) will destroy many." How can you destroy people by peace? Because this peace is the means by which he will gain control over the world. We may be about to see a breakout of peace on a scale the world has not seen. And just as the Bible forewarned: "WHILE THEY ARE SAYING, PEACE AND SAFETY! THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION WILL COME UPON THEM SUDDENLY..." (1Thessalonians 5:3)\*WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION: Despite the rapid crumbling of communism in Europe, the 1950s through the 1980s will be remembered as the age of revolution.

Under the sponsorship of the Soviet Union the communist gospel of economic security beguiled nation after nation. Once communism took over, it maintained control by the ruthless use of power. As Mao Tsetung said, "Political power comes only from the barrel of a gun. The gun must never slip from the communist party's hand". Over one hundred Million people have been killed in order to establish and keep communism in power. Jesus predicted this would precede His coming, "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." (Luke 21:9 NIV) Jesus predicted that part of the birth pangs would be four great unrelated global catastrophes that will occur in concert, "There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences [plagues] in various places, and fearful events and signs from heaven [i.e., space and the earth's atmosphere]." (Luke 21:12 NIV)\*FAMINES:

While hunger has always plagued the Earth's population, during the last generation, famine became institutionalized in many parts of the world. Changing weather patterns, inefficient state planning and the use of food as a political weapon ensured that millions would starve. Ironically, this occurred at the same time unprecedented breakthroughs were made which enhanced agricultural production. We are officially now in the age of famines. \*PLAGUES: I remember when I used to talk about plagues returning before Christ comes back, I would really get the raspberries from the medical profession.

"We're in the age of miracle drugs." they would say. There's nothing we can't cure. Then suddenly we're hit with the ultimate plague--AIDS. In 1989, more people died of AIDS than the US lost in the Vietnamese war. AIDS is the worst of all plagues because it destroys our immunity to every disease. \*EARTHQUAKES: Looking at major quakes since the turn of the century, we see that they have increased exponentially in the last 40 years. We went from an average of 3 per decade to 46 in the 1970s and 74 in the 1980s. Now who can explain why through all those decades in this century there were so few major quakes and then suddenly they have just increased dramatically.

In the short forty year period between 1950 and 1990, there have been a total of 152 major earthquakes. This is more than there had been in the previous 500 years. The Lord said it would happen, and it is happening.

#### SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

The 1980s witnessed big increases in strange phenomena in the skies. Not the least of these was the incident that has caused concern and consternation in the Soviet Union. Soviet cosmonauts in the space station

videotaped seven gigantic angels the size of 747s, according to official reports. The angels were reportedly smiling "like they knew something we didn't know", said the cosmonauts.

If they happen to be the angels who blow the seven trumpets of Revelation, they do know something the Soviets ought to know. But there have also been changes taking place in our solar system and increases in UFO sightings. Society began to develop an acceptance toward contact with extraterrestrial beings, thus setting the stage for a demonic deception in the last days.

#### ISRAEL AS CENTER OF WORLD CONCERN

In the late 1980s the Palestinian intifada has refocused world attention on the Jewish state. Israel is in much greater danger today than it was following its decisive military victories in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, also fulfilling biblical prophecy is the fact that Jewish refugees are returning to Israel at unprecedented levels as communist states open up the flood gates. Anti Semitism is on the rise worldwide, adding to the reasons that Jerusalem has become a burden to the whole world. Eventually, the whole world will go to war over Israel.

#### REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

The first real concrete steps toward the rebuilding of the Temple--a development of paramount prophetic significance began to take place during the past decade.

#### INCREASE IN LAWLESSNESS

Following a declaration of war on authority in the last two decades have witnessed unprecedented rises in crime.

#### PREACHING OF GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD

In the light of the population explosion, satellite technology widely used in the last 20 years will greatly aid in fulfilling this prophetic promise.

#### ARAB UNITY AND MUSLIM CONFEDERATION

Because the Bible says that Egypt will lead attack against Israel, it is necessary for Cairo to come back into the fold of Arab nations. Syria is already armed to the teeth and roughly 1,250 miles with accuracy. Biological, chemical and possibly even nuclear warheads are not out of the question. Libya has missiles that can nearly reach Israel and bombers with the potential for air-to-air refueling. Iran must eventually side with the Soviets, and Teheran is already moving in that direction.

#### THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Ezekiel 38 warns that Russia will launch an ill-fated attack on Israel. The changes that are taking place within the Soviet Union and among its Eastern European allies may look promising on the surface. But they are

also destabilizing, and the deteriorating economic condition within the communist power only increase the likelihood of a desperate military action of the kind described in the Bible.

#### THE REVIVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The European Economic Community moved in the late 1980s toward its goal of economic unification by 1992. The constant cry of the one-world-government promoters is that we now live in one great global economic village. As the world witnesses the great accomplishments of the EEC, it will set the stage for a global economic inter-dependence that will lead to a one world government.

#### PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

As the world turns against the excesses of the televangelists and reacts to the Christian Reconstructionists' avowed plans for taking political power, it appears that Christians are nearing the time of persecution predicted in the Bible. Already the civil libertarian extremists are attempting to place 'barbed wire and machine-gun turrets' at the top of that imaginary wall separating church and state. A radical secularist agenda is driving traditional Christian values from the public sector. I believe there may be a great persecution of believers in the Western World before Christ comes for the church. Already the New Age movement has labeled the Bible believing Christian as the No. 1 hindrance to mankind's greatest evolutionary advancement through a global "quantum leap in consciousness".

They believe this will bring mankind to recognize that he is a god, and that he can create his own reality through positive thinking. In spite of all these grim events that are on our horizon, I continue to be an optimist. In the rest of the report, I will show you why. deteriorating economic condition within the communist power only increase the likelihood of a desperate military action of the kind described in the Bible.

#### THE ROLE OF CHINA

As the massacre in Tiananmen Square illustrated, China remains a belligerent and dangerous power. The Bible predicts that the "KINGS OF THE EAST" will be one of the last great powers on earth. They will muster a 200 million man army for the final battle in the Middle east. China will certainly be the major power in this oriental confederacy. The US foolishly continues to pour military applicable high technology into China.

#### CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS

The environment has become the major issue of the day worldwide. The greenhouse effect, the ozone holes and other global ecological concerns fit precisely into the prophetic pattern. Interestingly, the radical left have seized upon the ecological issues as their rallying point instead of their old trusted friend, the nuclear threat.

## NEW AGE PROPHECY OF ELIMINATING CHRISTIANS

In his book, *GLOBAL BRAIN*, New Age theoretician Peter Russell explains his belief that each human being represents a brain cell in the mind of God. Some of the cells, he says are cancerous and cause division and malfunctions in the universe. The cancerous cells are the people who cling to the tired old theology of the past. Can you guess who they would be? Look in the mirror, Christian. Several New Age Leaders, including Russell and John Randolph Price, author of *Practical Spirituality*, say their "spirit guides" revealed to them in the the 1980s that these cancerous elements--you, me and other believers in the Word of God--will not be allowed to interfere with mankind's next quantum leap or evolutionary step. What do they say will happen to them (especially Christians)? "These people will be exported into the non-physical realm or "removed" from the Earth".

Sound familiar? This is the explanation for the Rapture I've been predicting for years would come. Don't be surprised. Satan has long been preparing the world to accept and rationalize such a momentous and supernatural development as the Rapture. The world is rapidly moving toward this fearful judgment predicted in God's word, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie..." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11). Perhaps most interesting about the New Age movement has been the willingness to accept it by important world leaders.

Mikhail Gorbachev is probably the New Age movement's most respected world leader. In 1988, Gorbachev was reportedly brought nearly to tears by a presentation of a crystal globe by a delegation of New Age women. His recent comments before meeting with Pope John Paul II regarding his acceptance of religion are certain to foster even more goodwill. And, the pope himself promoted many New Age beliefs in meeting at the Vatican with religious leaders from all over the world, witch doctors and shamans giving credibility and moral weight to the neo-pagans. At the same time many professing Christians are falling away from sound biblical doctrine

## CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION BEGINS

In the early 1980s, much of the church saw great hope for the nation and the world. Morality and traditional value seemed to be making a comeback. Conservative Christians had played a major part in electing a President who was leading the charge against abortion and for the family. Out of this exhilaration came an upsurge in support for a theological movement determined to bring the kingdom of God to Earth. The Reconstructionists or "Kingdom Now" movement rejected the "Second Coming mentality" and preached that it was the responsibility of the church to turn America into a Christian nation. By the end of the 1980s, it should have been apparent to even the most dedicated reconstructionists that their plan was going awry. Instead of turning to Christian principles and values,

the nation seemed almost ready to war with religion and the hypocrisy it had seen in the church.

\* Televangelists were the source of jokes and ridicule following the scandals surrounding Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart and others.

\* The media turned on Christians, routinely portraying clergy as corrupt and organized religion as hypocritical and superstitious.

\* The movies blasphemed the very name and person of Jesus Christ.

\* The art world came to the defense of a God-hater who submerged a crucifix in a vat of urine and won a government grant for his "artistic" endeavor.

\* The wall between church and state got a little bit higher as the ACLU AND OTHER RADICAL SECULARIST ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS PLANNED PARENTHOOD, the NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN PUSHED THROUGH A LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL AGENDA.

\* A newspaper reporter was fired for her pro-life views and activities \* A major movie studio refused to sell photos to a Christian movie reviewer precisely because he was an Christian.

\*Internationally, Beirut's Christian community was on the verge of annihilation and the world seemed not to care.

\* Evangelical ministries throughout the U.S. were attacked as "destructive cults" by former members and a group called Cult Awareness Network.

\* A fifth grader at an elementary school in Omaha, Neb., was forced to take his teacher and school to court when he was prohibited from bringing his Bible to school.

\* A federal judge in Denver ruled that a teacher does not have the right to have in his classroom library two books on Christianity nor to read the Bible silently during classroom hours.

\* The Freedom From Religion Foundation launched a crusade to get hotel owners to rid their rooms of Gideon Bibles.

\* Property owners in several states have been charged with discrimination for refusing to rent to unmarried couples out of religious convictions.

\* A Church in Ohio was fined for refusing to apply for a state license to operate a school.

\* When a 6-year-old brought a "Jesus Loves Me" book to school in Alabama for show and tell, he was told to take it home because it was "against the Law" These examples are just a few cases from the late 1980s.

Christians and Bible-based Christianity are under attack. This is a foreshadowing of an even worse persecution to come. With challenges from an increasingly secular government, hostile media and the growing threat

of the New Age movement, with its distinct plan for persecution of Christians, the church is facing unparalleled threats. The United States, which for so long has provided a base for evangelism to the whole world, can no longer be counted on to provide a shining example of religious freedom and tolerance.

Christians are repeatedly warned by Bible prophecy concerning persecution in the days just before Christ's coming. "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep, For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words." (1Thessalonians 4:15-18)

In Him,

RobertNC@aol.com