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BIBLE PROPHECY

BY

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HOME STUDY NOTES

September

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Outline of Bible Prophecy

(PART III)

5A. PROPHECY CONCERNING THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S RETURN. Our Lord does not tell us *exactly* when He will return in the clouds to receive His Church. But He does indicate certain clear signs that the child of God is expected to identify (Matt. 16:3; 24:33; Lk. 21:28). That many of these signs are even now pointing to the nearness of His return all Bible students must agree. It may be helpful to classify these signs into several categories as follows: (1) religious signs; (2) political signs; (3) philosophical signs; (4) social signs; (5) physical signs.

1B. *Religious Signs.* The Word of God speaks clearly and positively concerning the developments in the religious world just prior to His return.

1C. *The sign of multiplied cults and isms.* (Matt. 24:5, 23-24; I Tim. 4:1, II Tim. 4:3-4). That false religions are springing up with startling rapidity and are drawing multitudes after them is a fact no one would want to deny!

2C. *The sign of modernism in the church.* (Acts 20:29; II Tim. 4:1-5; II Thess. 2:3). These last days will witness increasing unbelief among both ministers and members of the Protestant churches. Modernism is an outright rejection of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith—the inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the Blood atonement, the necessity of regeneration for salvation, and the second coming of Christ. Many ministers today deny some or

all of these things. As this age draws to a close very few preachers of the truth will be found, and comparatively few to listen to them.

3C. *The sign of church union.* (Rev. 13). In order for the condition of Rev. 13 to prevail there must come the development of a universal church. This development is now under way in the recent formation of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam, 1948). Ultimately a united Protestantism will merge with rising Romanism to form the great end-time religious system.

4C. *The sign of Romanism.* (Rev. 13, 17-18). Emanating from Rome this last spiritual dictatorship, together with the Antichrist, will rule the world for a short season prior to the Return of Christ.

5C. *Revival of interest in Advent teaching.* (Dan. 12:10; Matt. 25:1-13, esp. v. 6). The Christian church is rapidly being split into two parts on the issue of the Lord's return. Bible-believers are holding tenaciously to the clear teaching of the Word of God. Unregenerate church members and church leaders are becoming more and more vociferous in their ridicule of the doctrine. Our Lord tells us that part of the visible church will be sound asleep when the "midnight cry" is sounded forth. Thank God the others will arouse from their slumber and will go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

2B. *Political Signs.* In our study of prophecy concerning the nations we listed most of these signs. Here, however, we reiterate the teaching for the sake of con-

tinuity. The formation of the nations in the end-time and their peculiar contribution to end-time events is clearly depicted in the Bible.

1C. *The Sign of Russia.* (Ezek. 38-39). The student is asked to review the section in our outline dealing with this Scripture (Lesson No. 9).

2C. *The sign of Britain and the U. S.* (Ezek 38:13). This passage indicates that Britain and the "young lions" (i.e., nations springing out of Great Britain, such as the U. S., will oppose Russia's suicidal invasion of the Holy Land. It is interesting to note that of all the nations in the world Britain and the U. S. have been largely instrumental in the establishment of Israel in Palestine as her national home.

3C. *The Sign of Israel and Palestine.* (See our study on this subject in lesson No. 8). The return of Israel to Palestine in this century is a *conclusive proof* that we are living in the last days!

4C. *The Sign of the UNO.* According to Daniel 2:40-45 there is going to be a universal kingdom in operation just prior to Christ's return. This kingdom will be a confederacy of *ten* kingdoms. These ten kingdoms will *give* their power to the beast (Antichrist) in the formation of a world government (Rev. 17:12-13). Undoubtedly the leading nations of the world will be members of this powerful confederacy—nations such as the U. S. and Great Britain and the nations of western Europe.

3B. *Philosophical Signs.* (Col. 2:8; II Tim. 4:4). Under this head are included those rationalistic teachings which are in direct opposition to the teaching of the

Bible. Such teachings are to increase and abound in the last days.

1C. *The Sign of Evolution.* In these last days one of the most influential and destructive of all "fables" is the theory of evolution. This doctrine is a direct contradiction of Gen. 1:1, 27-28; 2:7, etc.

2C. *The Sign of the Social Gospel.* Most modernists believe that the chief value of Jesus Christ to the world is His social teaching. These men twist the teachings of Christ to mean that through social education the world will become better and better until the kingdom of God has arrived. This view is simply the outworking in the social realm of the theory of naturalistic evolution. But the Bible makes it clear that such wishful thinking is false and that the *exact opposite* is true (Matt. 24; II Tim. 3:1-5; the book of Revelation from 6:1 following).

3C. *The Sign of Advent Scoffers.* (II Peter 2:3-7). On the part of Bible believers the doctrine of the Second Coming will become increasingly precious. But on the part of unsaved church-members and church-leaders the doctrine will become increasingly repugnant!

4B. *Social Signs.* The multitudes of the world are being organized on a world-scale by subtle and godless forces in preparation for the coming judgment of God (Rev. 16:13-14).

1C. *The Sign of Abounding Iniquity* (Matt. 24:12). As this age speedily draws to a close there is a noticeable increase in all manner of evil—divorce, crime, drunkenness, immorality, godless-

ness, hypocrisy, etc. And this is precisely as the Word of God declares (II Tim. 3:1-5).

2C. *The Sign of Increasing Knowledge and Travel* (Dan. 12:4). This passage has to do with the marvelous development of modern science and means of travel and communication. There have been more important inventions and discoveries in recent years than in all of human history put together.

3C. *The Sign of Communism, Socialism and Democracy*. You will recall in the image of Daniel 2 that the last form of world government is to be a combination of iron and clay. The prophecy deals with politics, that is, with government. "Iron" symbolizes absolute dictatorship (see v. 40) thus "clay" represents something weaker than this in the political sphere. Milder forms of government in use today are communism, socialism and democracy. It is more than a coincidence that in the nations to compose the final world government, namely, western Europe, Great Britain, the U. S., etc., these very "clay" elements are all now to be found.

5B. *Physical Signs*. The Bible abounds in statements concerning the great movements and changes in the natural world in connection with the coming of Christ! (Matt. 24:7).

1C. *The Sign of Famine*. (Matt. 24:7). There have been more devastating and wide-spread famines in the past 150 years than in all the 18 centuries previous (Encyclopedia Britannica). In the days immediately before us we may ex-

pect to witness conditions leading up to the tragedy of famine.

2C. *The Sign of Earthquakes*. (Matt. 24:7). The earthquake will be a common experience during the coming Tribulation. We can expect that in the days ahead we shall be hearing and probably experiencing terrible earthquakes. The number of earth tremors is becoming increasingly greater, according to latest reports of seismologists around the world. (See Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13,19; 16:18).

3C. *The Signs in the Heavens*. (Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25-26). Perhaps the "flying saucers" are indicative of the coming witness in the heavens of the coming of Christ. At any rate the future holds such events as showers of falling stars (Rev. 6:13) the sun blacked out (Rev. 6:12), and the moon becoming as blood (Rev. 6:12).

Conclusion. We should not make a study like this and remain the same. We ought to thank God fervently that He has been pleased to indicate to us the signs for which we are to watch as heralds of Christ's coming. We ought to heed these signs and accept them as infallible proofs of the Second Coming. We ought to draw men's attention to them and tell them of the danger they are in without Christ. Above all we want to make sure that Christ is ours and we are His so that when He comes we shall be ready to meet Him.

NUGGETS OF GOLD

*F*INDING Phillips Brooks, the noted New England divine, irritably pacing his study, a friend asked, "What is the trouble?"

"The trouble is," answered Dr. Brooks, "that I'm in a hurry — but God isn't."

If I had strength to go through the churches again, instead of preaching to convert sinners, I would preach to bring up the churches to the Gospel standard of holy living.

—Charles G. Finney

TREASURES

Martha Snell Nicholson

One by one He took them from me,
All the things I valued most,
Until I was empty-handed;
Every glittering toy was lost.

And I walked earth's highways, grieving,
In my rags and poverty.
Till I heard His voice inviting,
"Lift your empty hands to Me!"

So I held my hands toward heaven,
And He filled them with a store
Of His own transcendent riches,
Till they could contain no more.

And at last I comprehended
With my stupid mind and dull,
That God **COULD** not pour His riches
Into hands already full!

THE TITHER'S SIX SURPRISES

FIRST: At the deepening of his spiritual life in paying the tithe.

SECOND: At ease in meeting his obligation with nine-tenths.

THIRD: At the amount of money that he has for the Lord's work.

FOURTH: At the ease in going from one-tenth to larger giving.

FIFTH: At the preparation that tithing gives to be a faithful and wise steward over the nine-tenths that remain.

SIXTH: At himself, in that he had not adopted the plan sooner.

For more help or information, contact:

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