



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

The Times of the Signs Part IV

Revelation 6

Teacher: Steve Holt

Series: Apocalypse, The Book of Revelation

The Times of the Signs Part IV

Introduction:

Washington Post in 2013: A new finding from a research firm that focuses on faith issues says that two-fifths of Americans believe we're at the end times, living out Revelation biblical principles.

An estimated 41 percent of respondents in the Barna Group poll who were at least age 18 agreed that "the world is currently living in the 'end times' as described by prophecies in the Bible."

Sign #1 The Homecoming of Israel back to Palestine in 1948

Sign #2 The Unification of Jerusalem on June 7th, 1967

- o Jesus had prophesied in Luke 21, "And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24)
- o We looked at the phenomenal events of how the Israeli's won a war in just 6 days, the shortest war in history.

Sign #3 The New Internationalism or Globalization

- We looked at Rev. 13 and the coming rise of the Antichrist who will have power over the world government, religion, and the global economy.
- I believe the new "internationalism" is setting the stage for a world community in which a world leader, the Antichrist, will be able to wield worldwide control.

Sign #4 The Great Apostacy within the Church

- Many churches today are now denying many of the central doctrines of the church:
 - The resurrection of Christ, stating that it was not a real event but a legend
 - They say there was no empty tomb, no angels, no bodily appearances of Christ
 - Denying the inerrancy of the Bible
 - Denying the virgin birth of Christ
 - Endorsing and even celebrating homosexual behavior

Today I want to talk about the 5th and final key sign of Christ's coming ...

Sign #5 The Second Coming of Babylon

- The book of Revelation continually speaks of the rise of Babylon in the last days.
- Six times the city of Babylon is mentioned in Revelation and each time it is mentioned:
 - It is called a “great city;” “great Babylon;” “Babylon the Great;” “Mother of Harlots;” “the mighty city;” “the abominations of the earth”
 - What many may not realize is that ancient “Babylon” was located in what is present-day Iraq.

A Tale of Two Cities

- It is interesting that “Jerusalem” is the most mentioned city in the pages of the Bible—mentioned just over 800 times.

- First mentioned in Gen. 14 and last mentioned in Rev. 21.
- What most people don't realize is that "Babylon" is the second most mentioned city in the Bible—about 290 times.
- The ancient city is located on the Euphrates River in modern Iraq near the Persian Gulf.
- Babylon first appears in Gen. 10-11 and last appears in Rev 17-18.
- Throughout the Bible, Babylon, in contrast to Jerusalem, is pictured as "The City of Man."
- It is seen as rebellious and prideful.
- It was the first city built after the flood.
- It was the location of the Tower of Babel.
- In Gen. 14, both Jerusalem (ancient Salem) and Babylon (ancient Shinar) are mentioned.
- The Bible always depicts Jerusalem as "God's City" and Babylon as "Man's City."
- In Genesis 14, the two cities are in conflict. They are on opposite sides of the heavenly fence. Babylon attacks Jerusalem and carries away Abraham's nephew, Lot.
- Babylon represents both a city and religious system...In Revelation, God destroys both.
- In Rev 17-18, Babylon is finally destroyed forever by God. In Rev 21, Jerusalem is rebuilt by God, coming down from heaven.

Rev. 17:5

*And on her forehead a name was written:
MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.*

Rev 18:1-2, 9-10, 21

*After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. **2** And he cried mightily[a] with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!*

***9** “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, **10** standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’*

***21** Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.*

Babylon in History

- From 605 to 539 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar and his successors were the great leaders of this empire.
- The Babylonians were the great “menacing lion of Israel” in the 6th century. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah three times.
 - o In the first invasion, Daniel was taken captive.
 - o In the second, Ezekiel was taken.
 - o And in the third, the Temple of Solomon was destroyed.

- Babylon is always depicted as a city full of sensuality and evil, opposing the people of God.
- Rev. 17-18, show a great and magnificent city that has been rebuilt, that will be destroyed by God.
- We will study this more in-depth when we come to these chapters in Revelation.

Babylon Today

- Could the ancient city of Babylon be rebuilt soon? I think so.
- I believe that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt in the last days.
- It will once again become a city of commercialism, greed, mystery, and idolatry.
- Events are falling into place for this very thing to happen.
- Ex. On Glenn Beck in 2014, Joel Rosenberg explained how the UN with American dollars is planning the rebuilding of Babylon. Joel references the rebuilding of Babylon in his book, *Epicenter*.

Three Main Factors that Indicate Babylon could be Rebuilt ... fulfilling End Times Prophecy:

1. Iraq has become the Focal Point of the Middle East.

- Now don't miss this: For 2000 years, Israel and Iraq didn't even exist and now look what's happened in the past 50 years! This is astounding.
- Now both are dominating the headlines daily.
- Since the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, incredibly, out of nowhere, the nation of Iraq has come to play a key role in the world, which is a perfect prelude to the rebuilding of Babylon.

- Joel Rosenberg: “In Bible prophecy, Iraq will emerge as the most peaceful and prosperous nation on the planet. But how do they get from the chaos it has today to being the wealthiest nation on earth? Something’s going to change and Babylon will be the capitol for the Anti-christ.”

2. Babylon will be the Perfect Capital for a One World Leader.

- The name, “Babylon,” evokes notions of intrigue, mystery, pleasure and power.
- In Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, Babylon is defined as “a city devoted to materialism and the pursuit of sexual pleasure.”
- The Rolling Stones had an album come out “Bridges to Babylon.”
- What better place for a One World Leader to make his capital than Babylon?
- The picture in Rev. 17 ... the Antichrist, the Beast, is riding on the back of the seductive city, in the form of a harlot.
- Just as Alexander the Great attempted to make this ancient city his eastern capital, so will the Antichrist.
- We will study more about this in the coming months when we come to Revelation 17.
- In 2014, the NY Times reported that Iraq has plans for the rebuilding of Babylon.

3. Iraq sits on the Second Largest known Crude Oil Reserve in the World.

- Iraq’s oil reserves is estimated at 115 billion barrels.
- Compare that with Saudi Arabia with 261 billion barrels.

- However, some believe that Iraq may have as much as 300 billion barrels, or 30% , of the known reserves in the world.
- With a new constitution and a growing economy, billions of dollars, yen, and euros will begin to pour into Iraq .
- This will result in the rebuilding of Iraq into an economic center in the Middle East.
- I believe this would become the eastern capital city for the Antichrist.

So Much More Could be Said

- Recap: I do see these five events as vitally important to End Times Prophecy.
- First, and the most crucial, was the return of the nation of Israel to Palestine, fulfilling the prophecies of Jer 30, Ez. 34, Ez 37-38, Isa 11 and many others in the book of Revelation.
- Second, was the unification of Jerusalem, ending the “times of the trampling of Gentiles” mentioned by Jesus in Luke 21.
- Third, the new Internationalism or globalism is a set up for world dominion by a charismatic world leader.
- Fourth, the Great Apostasy within the Church will allow evil to gradually take over the world.
- Lastly, the rise of the new Babylon and the development of a new eastern capital that will be a set up for the Antichrist.

Why does this Matter?

Matthew 24:36-44

1. End Times Prophecy matters in order that we might be Prepared and Not Surprised by Events.

- God wants His church ready and prepared for the Day of the Lord
- We should not be frightened by what is happening in our world, but excited,
- Vs. 42: “watch therefore” is the command of Jesus.
- We should not be surprised about rumors of wars, false religions, and the rise of Islam (for example).
- Watch and prepare for His coming.

2. It causes us to Set our Priorities Straight.

- One of the great church fathers in the mid-second century, Justin Martyr, an early Christian apologist, believed that the reality of knowing about Christ’s return and the severe judgments that would follow should spur Christians to sober and faithful discipleship.
- Justin was convinced that Christians should be “marked out from the rest of the pleasure-loving human society...by their conviction that the wicked will be punished in eternal fire, and the Christ-like just united with Christ, free from suffering. This is the reason Christians are truthful in affirming their faith, as well as the ground of their good citizenship and their ultimate fearlessness before the threat of persecution.”

3. It helps us put into Perspective our Materials Goods.

- Knowing that our possessions are a gift from God and knowing that this world will soon come to an end should bring pause to our continual lust for more stuff.
- Rather than storing up, let us be willing to give out and impact this world with the gospel by generously using our resources to further the gospel.

4. We should have an Urgency to Sharing our Faith with Others.

- Matthew 24:14
And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- Not tomorrow, not next week, but now! Now is the time to share our faith with our colleagues at work, our neighbors, our friends, our family.
- Now is the day of salvation! Ask the Lord to use you to share your faith with those around you.
- As a church, let's make a fresh commitment to get the Gospel out to Colorado Springs.

Join us next week as we move back into Revelation 6 and look at the Great Tribulation period ... study ahead.