

2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



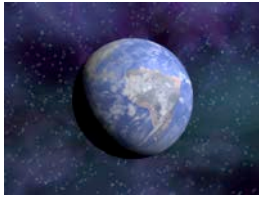
1

Facing the Future Unafraid



2

In 1938 a special Halloween radio drama by Orson Welles aired from New York. Much of it was presented as “news bulletins” that suggested to listeners that an actual invasion by alien Martians was in progress. It was made so realistic by the radio actors that many believed that the story was true! Panic and fear gripped many across the country. Some attempted suicide, some fled to remote areas of the country. The Navy cancelled shore leave for the fleet in the New York harbor. But it was all just fiction! Martians hadn’t invaded, and it wasn’t the end of life on earth as we know it.



3

The question of how the world will end has fascinated and frightened many throughout the centuries.



4

Today there is concern that global warming will eventually destroy life on Planet Earth.



5

Some fear that we will destroy ourselves in a nuclear war.



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Others say we’ll run out of food and other resources as world population continues to explode.

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7

Still others say we may be wiped out as a huge comet or asteroid collides with earth.
Most of us, of course, have plenty of other things to worry about.



8

We struggle with just trying to make a living or with sickness and grief and death.
For many of us, maybe most of us, life isn't easy.



9

Sometimes we may even find ourselves wishing the world **WOULD END!**
Surely life wasn't made to be so full of pain and hunger and weariness and stress. We want a better world!



10

Well, my friend, there is **GOOD NEWS!** This world **IS** going to end. And there **IS** a better world coming!

But just **HOW** will this old world end?



11

There's no shortage of prophets making their predictions. The problem is that most of the prophecies just aren't coming true!
How can we trust their predictions?
But do you know that there **IS** someone whose prophecies have all come true – every last one of them?



12

Tonight we're going to look at how the God of the Bible predicts this world will end.
And I think you'll agree with me that the predictions given nearly 2,000 years ago are in fact astonishingly accurate.



13

One day Jesus and His disciples were in Jerusalem. The disciples were commenting on the magnificent temple, which had just been enlarged and embellished by the Roman government.

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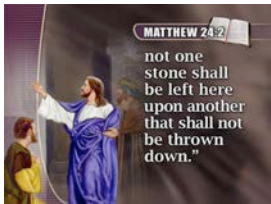
Gazing at this incredible edifice, Jesus made a startling statement to His disciples. He said,



15

(Text: Matthew 24:2)

“...Do you not see all these things? Assuredly I say to you,



16

not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down.” Matthew 24:2.

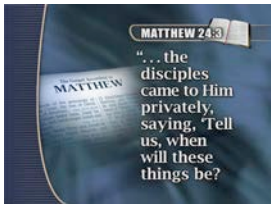
This was the greatest building in the Jewish nation, and Jesus predicted it would be completely destroyed!

The disciples were shocked!



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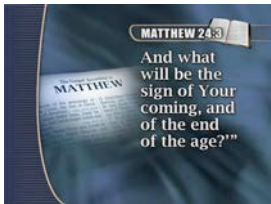
And as they went up to the Mount of Olives, they asked Jesus the question that all of us would have asked:



18

(Text: Matthew 24:3)

“...And the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be?



19

And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:3.



20

You see, the disciples were SURE that Jerusalem with its Temple, was destined to last forever --one day ruling the nations, until the end of the world. They were confident that the destruction Jesus foretold had to take place when the whole world was destroyed.

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But as we study this passage more closely, we find that Jesus spoke about two different events.



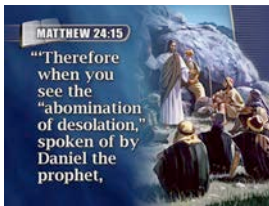
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One of them was the second coming – His return to this earth in glory and His establishment of an everlasting kingdom here on Planet Earth.



23

The other one, however, was one that would be seen by many of the people alive at that time. It was the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple. Now Jesus proceeded to tell the disciples what was going to happen to the temple.



24

(Text: Matthew 24:15-16)

He said, in Matthew 24:15, 16, "Therefore when you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,



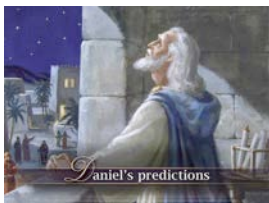
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standing in the Holy Place' (whoever reads, let Him understand).



26

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."



27

Daniel had predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed. And now Jesus reminds His disciples that the prophet Daniel's warnings would soon be fulfilled.

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28

(Text: Matthew 24:17-18)

He said in Matthew 24:17,18: "Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.



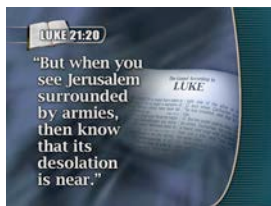
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And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."



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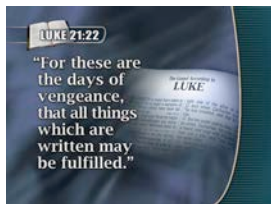
In other words, He told them to flee for their lives, because when they saw the armies encircling the city of Jerusalem, the destruction was imminent.



31

(Text: Luke 21:20)

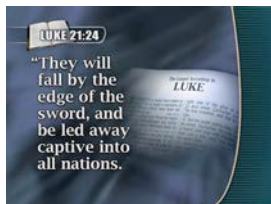
In Luke's account, Jesus said: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know its desolation is near."



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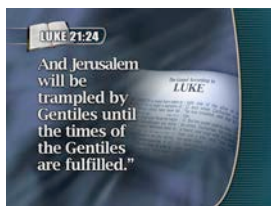
(Text: Luke 21:22, 24)

"For these are the days of vengeance that all things that are written may be fulfilled."



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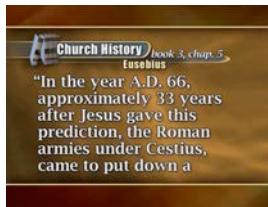
"They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations.



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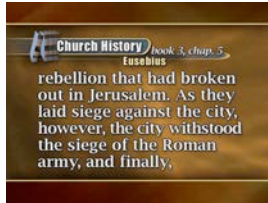
And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Luke 21:22, 24

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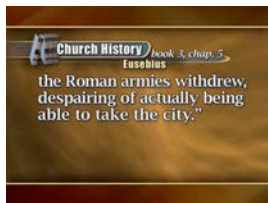
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"In the year A.D. 66, approximately 33 years after Jesus gave this prediction, the Roman armies, under Cestius, the Roman Governor of Syria, came to put down a



36

rebellion that had broken out in Jerusalem. As they laid siege against the city, however, the city withstood the ravages of the Roman army,



37

and finally, the Roman armies withdrew, despairing of actually being able to take the city."

(See Eusebius, Church History, book 3, chap. 5)



38

Those who followed the instruction given by Jesus fled the city, and escaped the slaughter of its inhabitants when the Roman army destroyed it four years later.



39

Approximately 1,100,000 were killed in the terrible siege of A.D. 70. If only they had heeded Jesus' instructions to flee the city four years earlier!

Here is a striking lesson on the importance of studying and believing the prophecies!

Those who believed Christ and watched for the signs He foretold were saved, while the unbelieving perished.

So it will be at the end of the world – the watchful believers will be delivered, while the careless and unbelieving will perish.



40

What about the magnificent temple? Titus, the Roman general in charge of taking the City of Jerusalem, had given orders to save the temple, but one of his soldiers threw a lighted torch through a door,

2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



41

and the temple became a flaming inferno!

In order to salvage the gold that melted from the dome and ran into the masonry, the huge blocks of granite and marble had to be pried apart.

Not one stone was left upon another!

Jesus' predictions to His disciples 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled exactly!

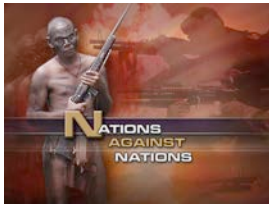


42

What about the second part of Jesus' prophecy, regarding the end of the world?

Jesus gave a series of clear signs so that we can know when that time is very near.

Don't you think we'd better pay attention to His words?



43

Let's take a look at some of these signs of our times!

The first: Political strife and conflict.

In Matthew 24:7, Christ said,



44

(Text: Matthew 24:7)

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.



45

And there will be famines, pestilence, and earthquakes in various places.” Matthew 24:7.

The twentieth century was the bloodiest century in mankind's history.



46

World War I saw 20 million people sacrificed on the altar of war.

World War II witnessed the destruction of 50 million people.

Though everyone thought that the violence and hatred would end, we still have wars.

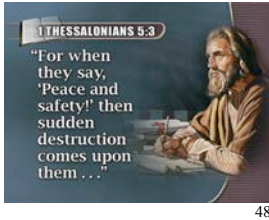
Science hasn't solved our squabbles. Education hasn't solved them either. This is one of the signs of the times.

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Everyone talks about peace, but it eludes us!

The Bible teaches that man's best efforts at peace will always fall short.



(Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:3)

"For when they say 'peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them."

1 Thessalonians 5:3.



The global war against terror has again rewritten the rules. All the disarmament treaties between nations will mean nothing if powerful weapons end up in the hands of terrorists. But increased bloodshed is not the only sign of the last days.



Jesus went on to tell of great natural disasters compounding and increasing in the time of the end.

Second sign: Famines!

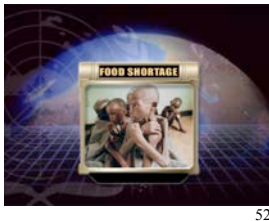
Jesus said,



(Text: Matthew 24:7)

"... There will be famines . . ."

(Matthew 24:7)



And there ARE famines in many parts of the earth.



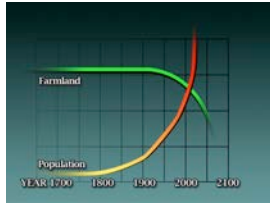
It is estimated that 57 million people will starve in this one year. That is 156,000 who will die each day from starvation.

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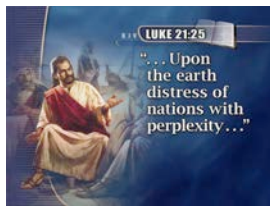
Of the billions of people on planet earth, 60 percent are malnourished, and 20 percent will end up starving. Jesus said that there would be famines as one of the signs of the end.



55

Informed sources tell us that when population outpaces food production, then worldwide famine, starvation, epidemics and food wars are inevitable.

How will we feed added billions, when two-thirds of the world's population is hungry now?



56

(Text: Luke 21:25)

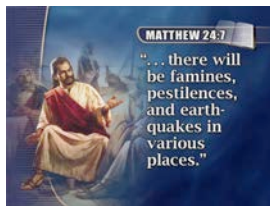
Jesus described the growing anxiety that is caused by these disasters as "...upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity..."

Luke 21:25.



57

The next sign Jesus predicted was an increase in "Pestilences."



58

(Text: Matthew 24:7)

"There will be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in various places."

The word pestilence today means, according to the dictionary, the same as a plague or strange disease.



59

There are many plagues in spite of what modern medicine is doing.



60

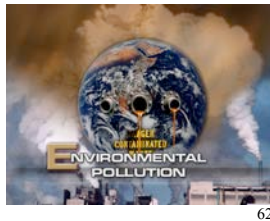
AIDS, malaria, pneumonia, tuberculosis, Ebola, syphilis, gonorrhea and cholera.

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The World Health Organization now estimates that AIDS deaths will more than double in the next two decades.

The societal and economic costs of “lifestyle diseases,” which are the result of our choices in diet and health habits, are rapidly increasing. But perhaps most troubling are the diseases for which we know neither the cause nor the cure.



Some of these diseases are undoubtedly the result of the way we've polluted our planet.

The Bible had predicted that the world would grow old. In Isaiah 51:6, God said,



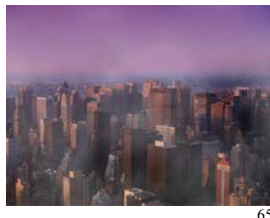
(Text: Isaiah 51:6)

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look on the earth beneath.



For the heavens will vanish away like smoke and the earth will grow old like a garment.”

What better description could be given to the sky and the earth as they deteriorate around us!



The sky over many of our large cities is filled with poisonous chemicals that we breathe in through our lungs.



Signs posted in many cities warn about the danger of the polluted air.

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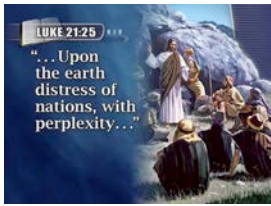
67

In many places the water is no longer safe to drink, because of all the dangerous substances in it.
Where will we be able to get energy and pure water and air?
Where will we get food?



68

With the world's rapid increase in population, man faces serious problems in surviving on Earth!
No wonder Jesus said that there would be...



69

(Text: Luke 21:25)
“...Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity...”
Luke 21:25



70

Jesus also said that there would be increasing earthquakes as well.



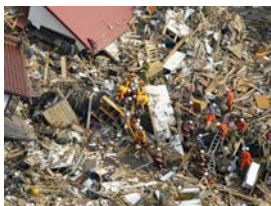
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(Text: Matthew 24:7)
“And there will be . . . earthquakes in various places.” Matthew 24:7.
We have seen a massive acceleration in the number of earthquakes occurring.



72

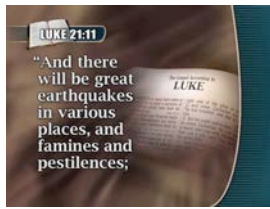
Each year we have 6,000 major earthquakes in the world.



73

In the last 90 years alone, we have had 1,500,000 fatalities.
Recently we have seen earthquakes taking tens and even hundreds of thousand of lives in one great rumble.
Many of you will remember recent earthquakes various countries have experienced.

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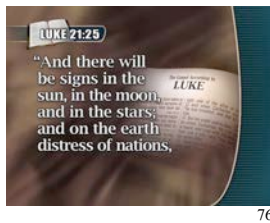


(Text: Luke 21:11, 25)

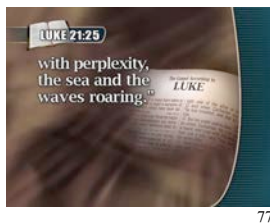
Luke recorded the prediction similarly. "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences;



and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven . . .



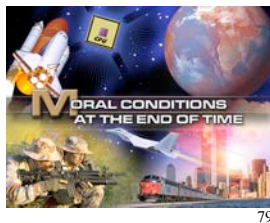
and there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations,



with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring."
Luke 21:11, 25.



Notice that it says the wind and the waves will be roaring. All over the world, we have seen some extraordinary weather. Typhoons, with attending tidal waves; tsunamis; tornadoes; hurricanes; volcanoes – all of these things are taking a fearful toll in property and lives.



The Bible gives us another sign: Deterioration of morality at the end of time. Jesus compared conditions on earth in the last days to Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities that were so sinful that God finally destroyed them with fire from heaven.



(Text: Luke 17:28, 30)

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot;

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81

... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Luke 17:28-30.

What were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah?

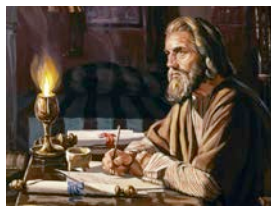


82

(Text: Jude 1:7)

Jude wrote, "...Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion."

Jude 7.



83

Paul, speaking of the moral conditions that characterized these cities, said,



84

(Text: Romans 1:26, 27)

"...Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.



85

In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.

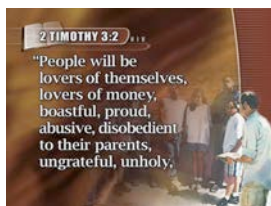


86

Men committed indecent acts with other men..."

Romans 1:26, 27.

And that's the way the Bible predicts society will be at the end of time!



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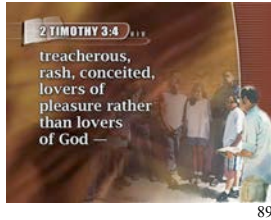
(Text: 2 Timothy 3:2-5)

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

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without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,



treacherous, rash, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—



having a form of godliness but denying its power.”

2 Timothy 3:2-5

Yes, the Bible predicts that the society of the last days will be pleasure loving, greedy, and without ethical convictions. Scams and fraud will abound.



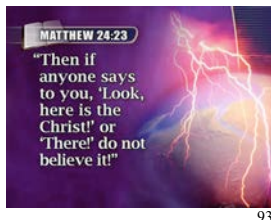
(Text: 2 Timothy 3:13)

“...Evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

Doesn't this sound a lot like the days we're living in?



In yet another sign of the last days, Christ warned about false christs and false prophets who would appear to deceive the world.



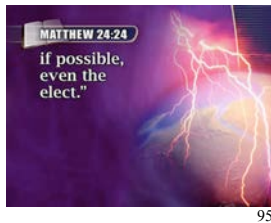
(Text: Matthew 24:23-24)

“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is Christ,’ or ‘There,’ do not believe it!



For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive

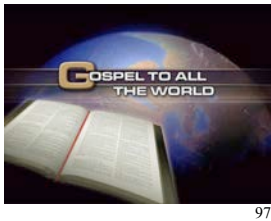
2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



if possible, even the elect.” Matthew 24:23-24



Today the religious world is full of teachers leading away from the Word of God. Religion has become a lucrative business, and the lines between spirituality and entertainment are confused. Many follow the most popular preacher, or the one who promises the most. We need to be sure that we are following the Word of God!



The last and greatest of all the signs that Jesus gave was the Gospel being taken to all the world
Of all the signs this is the only one that hasn't been fulfilled.



(Text: Matthew 24:14)
Matthew 24:14: Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world, as a witness to all nations, and THEN THE END WILL COME.”



In the book of Revelation, we find that God describes this great proclamation.



(Text: Revelation 14:6)
“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven,



having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth.

2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



102

To every nation, tribe, tongue and people.” Revelation 14:6. Do you realize that you are seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy tonight in this very meeting? This is a part of the preaching of the everlasting gospel to every creature.



103

The gospel is being proclaimed by TV, radio, evangelistic meetings, the Internet, private Bible studies, and correspondence courses around the globe.

Yes, my friend, we are indeed living in the time Jesus foretold!



104

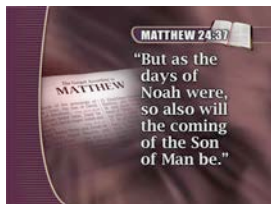
We're living in the last days, with the last great events taking place around us.

Jesus compared our day to the days of Noah.



105

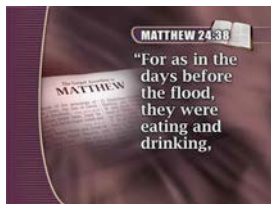
The people who lived in Noah's day were busy making a living and doing their daily things with not much time for spiritual things.



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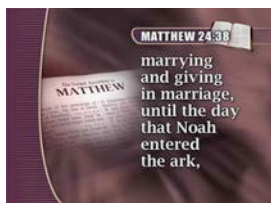
(Text: Matthew 24:37-39)

Jesus said in Matthew 24:37-39: "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.



107

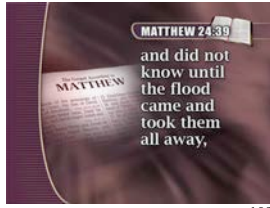
For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking,



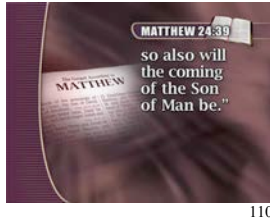
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marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark,

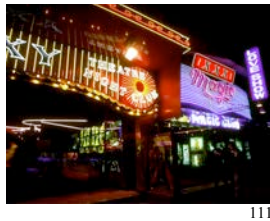
2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



and did not know until the flood came and took them all away,



so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”



Jesus predicted that in the last days people would be having a great time, but would have no time for God! They would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

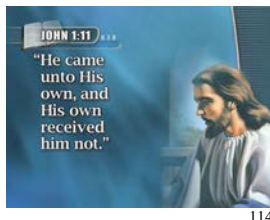


As we look at the signs in the world today, we can certainly see how close we must be to the coming of Jesus.

Things now are much as they were the first time Jesus came to this earth.



There were signs that the Messiah's coming was near, and God even sent angels and wise men to let the people know of His birth.



(Text: John 1:11)

But sad to say, “He came to His own, and they received Him not.” They were not ready for Him.



Friends, let's not be like God's people back then! Let's be ready for His second coming!

He has given us all these signs which say He is coming soon. Jesus said,

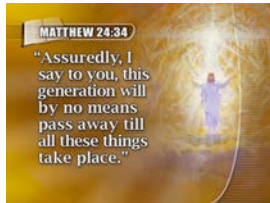
2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



116

(Text: Matthew 24:33-34)

"When you see all these things, know that it is near at the doors!"



117

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."

Matthew 24:33, 34.



118

Will we receive Him this time-or will He be disappointed again? The hour is late, and the stakes are high. There is not a moment to lose.



119

The steamship Central America had sailed out of New York Harbor and was heading south in the Atlantic toward the Panama Canal when she sprang a leak. Another vessel saw her distress signal and steamed up to help. The captain of the rescue ship sent over a message, "What's amiss?"

The answer came back: "We're in bad repair and going down. Lie by till morning!"

The would-be rescuer could see the steamship listing in the water and replied, "Let me take your passengers on board now."

But night had fallen, and the captain of the Central America didn't want to risk transferring passengers in the dark.

He repeated, "Lie by till morning."

The other captain sent another message, insisting action should be taken now.

But he was refused. He had to wait some distance off in the gathering night.

His staff on the bridge could make out the lights of the Central America bobbing in the waves.

About an hour and a half later, they watched aghast as those lights disappeared.

The ship had gone down, and all on board perished.

2 – Signs You Can't Ignore! (Signs of Jesus' Return)



120

To wait may result in being eternally lost.

There are times you have to make a decision NOW!

The captain of the Central America thought there was no problem waiting until morning.

He was tragically mistaken.

The Bible says, "Today is the day of salvation." Don't wait.

Don't hesitate. Don't delay.

Why not make your decision for Christ right now?

Won't you lift your heart to God right now and ask Him to help you prepare for Christ's soon coming?

Tonight I want to say to Jesus: "Thank you for providing a Savior from my certain death. I just want to let you save me, Jesus."

Is that your desire? Would you like to join me [*raise your hand as you speak*] in that prayer tonight? Let's pray.

[Suggested Prayer]

"Dear Lord, Thank you for giving us these signs in Your word to tell us when the end is near. Thank you for the promise that You are coming again and will save all those who trust and obey you. Tonight we come to you because we don't want to put it off until the morning. Tonight we want to give you permission to save us from our sins. Help us, along with our loved ones, to be ready to meet You. We love You, and we thank You in Jesus' name, Amen."
