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Ten Endtime Signs for Heathens

Part I

By Wilfred Hahn

What are the signs of the last days and the Lord's coming? These are among the most contested questions in Christianity, even among evangelicals who believe in a pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ and a pretribulational Rapture. Even among this latter group of believers — which is a small minority in Christianity these days — one hears of schisms and breaking of fellowship over these signs of the Lord's coming or the related question of whether prophecy is being fulfilled in our day.



Do certain signs only relate to the Jews or do they also apply to the "times of the Gentiles" and the dispensation of the Church? Is there a distinction between actual prophetic fulfillment of certain events and the conditions or processes that must take place before these can actually occur?

These questions are surely the subject of important study and discussions. But the practical focus for the Christian is relatively straightforward. We are to

be watching ... looking to His coming ... recognizing the season ... being "prepared in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Yet, the sad reality is that only a very small portion of those who call themselves Christians today believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will soon return or that the very last of the last day events, namely the Tribulation Period, is fast approaching. The paradox of this situation is this: Christians, the very people that possess the Bible and its prophecies, represent most of the scoffers who



protest, saying: “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:4). This attitude itself is a prophetic sign of the last-days season. Christ asked, “[...] when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

This situation is really more incredible than it seems. Why? Because one doesn’t have to be a Bible-reading Christian to recognize that the world is heading for troubles and that many of today’s trends are simply not sustainable. If Christians stand accused of ignoring the Bible and obvious world trends and events today, would then non-Christians have any excuse for ignorance? No.

The Secular Observer of the World

Any analyst or person, in the course of researching world developments, must be struck with the many monumental, non-sustainable changes that are underfoot on the globe today. Of course, the Bible-believing analyst will quickly recognize that all of these factors are in alignment with Bible prophecy, even if not mentioned specifically. To them, it is a compelling conclusion that the last-day events of the Tribulation are fast approaching.

Yet, even the secular, non-Bible-believing analyst must conclude that dire times are ahead, if the present course of the world is not soon changed. Many world trends on the scene today are not sustainable. In other words, they either point to an end or major world-wide dislocations that certainly could be apocalyptic in scale. To prove that the evidence is available for all to see, let’s take the perspective of a non-Christian and do a bit of “common sense” analysis.



Let’s put on our analyst’s hat and attempt some forecasts, just as any policy or economics specialist would. Doing so, we of course will realize that forecasting is a treacherous endeavor at the best of times. By interpreting “the appearance of the sky” (Matthew 16:2) in no way are we attempting to prophesy. That’s the domain of the Bible prophets. In any case, “Prophecy is not given to enable us to prophesy,” quoting Sir Robert Anderson. We are simply wishing to show that the “last-day season” should be sensed by the entire world.

With that, in no particular order, let’s review ten such possible indicators.

1. Skewing of Wealth between Rich and Poor

The chasm between the world’s rich and its poor continues to widen. The only major debate that concerns this topic has to do with its cause. Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) profiled an in-depth study titled “Globalization and Inequality,” observing that “inequality has risen in all but the low-income country aggregates over the past two decades.” Of greater moment is a ground-breaking report entitled “The Worldwide Distribution of Household Wealth,” which was released in December 2006 as this was the first ever wealth survey of the entire world. Its conclusions were much more sobering than had been previously indicated

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Secular analysts would surely wonder where these trends are heading. At the present rate of this development, any one of two outcomes, or both, could occur — either a world controlled by small cabal of rich overlords or anarchy and societal breakdown. It would not be overstating the case to say that today’s wealth imbalances in the world exceed that during the late stages of the past Roman Empire. It is not a positive outlook.

2. Islam, Europe and the Catholic Church

In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI faced quite a backlash from Muslims in response to a quote that he used in a speech: “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman.” It raises the question of whether a major clash lies ahead between Islam

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and Europe. Also that year, Libyan leader Mu’ammar Al-Qadhafi, said “We have 50 million Muslims in Europe. There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe — without swords, without guns, without conquests. The fifty million Muslims of Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades.”

Some prophecy scholars in fact think that Islam will be part of a world-wide religious ecumenicism at some point in the future. This, however, seems unlikely. True Islam does not compromise and never has, other than for short-term advantage. In fact, Arabs (Islam, after all is an Arab religion) cannot even agree among themselves, a characteristic that the Bible itself documents. The Bible says of Ishmael, the father of the Arabs “He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers” (Genesis 16:12). If Islam does not become part of the Babylon the Great, Mother of Prostitutes, we have another dilemma that will be sure to heighten in the next 10 to 20 years.

Al-Qadhafi’s comment points to a dynamic that our secular observer would not miss. Arab and Islamic populations are growing much faster than that of Europe and the rest of the world. Compared to overall world population growth of 1.2%, the average growth of Middle Eastern countries is 1.7% while the European Union’s growth rate is only 0.1%. Today, it is estimated that there are approximately 1.5 billion Muslims in the world versus 1.2 billion Roman Catholics and perhaps a total of two billion people that broadly identify themselves as Christians. If present trends are any indica-



tion, to the secular analyst it is inevitable that Europe or a broader number of Christian countries will either clash with Islam or become subservient to it. However, the Prostitute shown in Revelation 17 is not subservient, but rather sits as a queen (Revelation 18:7) and rules over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:18). Therefore, by deduction, we could conclude that the Prostitute must be already here or emerge in the very near future. In view of world population growth rate trends that we have just reviewed, in perhaps one or two decades, she may no longer have the undisputed position of where she sits as an uncontested queen upon world affairs. By deduction, this suggests that Tribulation events must begin to unfold before that time.

3. Materialism and Financial Pyramiding

Seen over history, western society (now also including much of the rest of the world) has been living in the “5 Pillars of P” window for only a very brief time. These 5 Pillars stand for Petroleum, Penicillin, Population, Productivity and Pyramiding, the five major factors behind today’s endtime modernity. This 5 Pillar window amounts to a time/space of only a century or so, a fraction of mankind’s sojourn on earth. Mankind has become exceedingly proud of its recent achievements. They have contributed to a fertile breeding ground giving rise to humanism, mankind’s confidence and self-determination without God. Yet it is overlooked that all 5 Pillars are subject to reversal. For example, mankind may yet lose the battle with microbes (resistance to antibiotics) and the Age of Oil will pass (perhaps sooner than expected).



However, none of these factors are more vulnerable than the last two of the 5P list — Productivity and Pyramiding. These relate to the economic and financial explosion over this period, involving globalization, technology, the increasingly invasive role of money, and the unstable system of monetarism. It has created a lustrous, intoxicating apparition of wealth ... albeit mostly false wealth. While the advance of technology itself likely will not be lost, the huge financial colossus that has emerged in recent years is extremely vulnerable to collapse. Even secular analysts can see this. One does not need the Bible to understand this, though the Scriptures surely are in line with this view. Given the greed, corruption and rapaciousness that are part of this trend, it is only a matter of time. In fact, this collapse may already have started. It can happen quickly and suddenly.

Just how long can the world’s shaky “financialization boom” last? While it is

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impossible to be precise about such matters, the current pace of developments cannot continue indefinitely. Simple mathematics and classical monetary theory prove this view. The rate of changes in financial developments and debt are just too astounding. For example, consider that in the space of the last ten years alone, total world financial value has risen by a factor of ten times. Is this sustainable? And, if not, what will be the ultimate outcome?

Actually, of all the Ten Endtime Signs for Heathens, this one is the most imminent. While it is possible that the world monetary authorities and governments can buy some time by way of temporary manipulations, it remains very possible that the worldwide financial problems that began to unravel as of July 2007 are in fact, the start of the deteriorating conditions that will culminate in the final disasters in the Tribulation Period. The sad truth, however, is that while many non-Christian analysts can see the writing on the wall, a large part of North American Christianity remains deluded, clinging on to their prosperity theology and the idea that God will not judge the materialism and greed that are the very underpinnings of our society.

4. Diseases, Pandemics, Biodiversity

One of the 5 Pillars of P was represented by penicillin. The discovery of penicillin, and the development of antibiotics which it spawned, had a remarkable impact upon modern civilization. For this and other reasons, death rates dropped sharply and lifespans increased significantly over the last century. For example, in 1900, the



average life expectancy at birth of a male in America was only 48 years. Today? A male can expect to live to an age of over 75 years. That has been a welcome trend. But can it continue?

There are some disturbing developments that suggest that the advances of medicine with respect to germs and microbes may only be temporary. One of these is the emergence of the superbug — bacteria that have mutated to become resistant to multiple types of antibiotics. Infectious disease physicians are becoming increasingly alarmed that the development of new antibiotics will lose pace with this threat. They have good reason for their concerns. For one, pharmaceutical companies are falling behind in the development of new antibiotics. Secondly, antibiotic resistance spreads fast. To provide an example, consider this observation from a study by the Food and Drug Administration:

“Between 1979 and 1987, [...] only 0.02 percent of pneumococcus strains infecting a large number of patients surveyed by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were penicillin-resistant. [...]. Today, 6.6 percent of pneumococcus strains are resistant, according to a report in the June 15, 1994.”

There are other developments — in biology, biodiversity, nanotechnology ... etc. — that are cause for concern and point to possible severe challenges ahead. Here can also be included that the rising vulnerability that arises from genetic engineering and pandemics. A “common sense” analyst observing all of these trends can only conclude that the rising risks in this re-



spect point to certain disastrous outcomes someday.

5. Israel & Jews in the World

Even if our secular analyst did not know that the world's time line circumnavigates around the Jews and that they were destined all to return to their original homeland, they would surely draw a few notable observations about the Jews. Without a doubt, they must be a special people.

For one, it would have been noticed that for the first time in over 2,500 years, the majority of the world's Jews now live in Israel. That is a recent bellwether. Up until 2006 or so, most Jews still lived in the US. (See *Midnight Call* issues of November and December 2007 for a broader discussion of this condition.) An understanding of probabilities and world history would further highlight the significance of Jewish developments in the world today. What people has ever been restored to their homeland after 2,500 years? In fact, what people has ever survived that long with their identity intact once they have lost their country? What probabilities are defied by the fact that Hebrew, a language that fell out of common usage, would again become a spoken language?

We can conclude that the non-religious analyst would be amazed at such developments, thinking them beyond reasonable probability. Yet, amazingly, there are people who do have knowledge of the Bible and its prophecies that still believe that the modern day events surrounding the world and the Jews are nothing more than circumstantial! (MC)



His eternal power and divine nature — have clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

- 2 Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince, Kregel Classics*, Grand Rapids, Reprinted 1957, pg. 271.
- 3 *World Economic Outlook*, September 2007. Chapter 4: Globalization and Inequality.
- 4 World Institute for Development Economics Research, UN University (UNU-Wider).
- 5 The passage originally appeared in the "Dialogue Held With A Certain Persian, the Worthy Mouterizes, in Anakara of Galatia"[3], written in 1391 as an expression of the views of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus, one of the last Christian rulers before the Fall of Constantinople to the Muslim Ottoman Empire, on such issues as forced conversion, holy war, and the relationship between faith and reason.
- 6 Speech by Libyan leader Mu'ammr Al-Qadhafi, which aired on Al-Jazeera TV on April 10, 2006.
- 7 World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, 2006 statistics.
- 8 <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005140.html>.
- 9 Ricki Lewis, Ph.D., *The Rise of Antibiotic-Resistant Infections*, US Food and Drug Administration. Accessed http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/795_antibio.html, December 1, 2007.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 In Part II, we will conclude with the final Five Endtime Signs for Heathens, proving that mankind, whether Bible-believing or not, has no excuse to be ignorant of the signs of the times."For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities —