



Acts 1:4-11

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

NKJV

- Jesus rose from the dead
- Jesus appeared to His disciples and instructed them for a period of 40 days
- Jesus instructed them about things related to the Kingdom of God
- Jesus commanded them not to leave Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus led them out to Bethany on the Mount of Olives
- The disciples questioned him about when he would restore the kingdom of Israel

When the disciples of Jesus were first introduced to Jesus and believed He was the messiah, they believed He would restore the Kingdom of Israel.

Their expectation that the messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel was based on prophecy.

[Ps 2:6-9](#)

[6 "Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion."](#)

[7 "I will declare the decree:  
The Lord has said to Me,  
'You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.](#)

[8 Ask of Me, and I will give You  
The nations for Your inheritance,  
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.](#)

[9 You shall break them with a rod of iron;](#)

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."  
NKJV

Ps 110:1-2

110 The Lord said to my Lord,  
"Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."  
2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.  
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!  
NKJV

Isa 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and  
over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward,  
even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.  
NKJV

Daniel 7:13-14

13 "I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, One like the Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days,  
And they brought Him near before Him.  
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
And His kingdom the one  
which shall not be destroyed.  
NKJV

During their time with Jesus, Jesus never told them that their understanding of the prophecy was wrong. He even affirmed their understanding. When they had asked him when the age will end, He gave them signs of the end of the age. (Matthew 24). He knew He was the one to fulfill the prophecy and restore the kingdom of Israel. It was not a matter of if He would restore the Kingdom of Israel. It was just a question of when.

- They asked Him this question, hoping that His answer would be yes.
- He said it was not for them to understand the times or seasons the father had fixed.
- Instead, He reiterated their mission and the promise of the Holy Spirit
- He ascended
- He sends 2 angels to instruct them

The ascension was not a time of exultation for the disciples. It was a time of disappointment. Like a man left standing at the altar as his bride flees out the back door, they can do nothing but stand there in astonishment, afraid to move, hoping that what they are seeing was not just what really happened.

They were so frozen by disappointment and shock that two men in white apparel were sent to remind them of the prophecy in Daniel that had to be fulfilled before the kingdom of Israel would be restored. The messiah would ascend into heaven and He would return in the same way that they had just seen Him leave. They apparently needed this reminder and this assurance to move forward without Him and do what He told them to do. The short walk back to Jerusalem for the Mount of Olives had to have seemed very long to them and it had to have been very quiet.

They did do what He told them to do. They hoped for His soon return but they avoided a vain curiosity and preoccupation about when it would occur. Instead they used their knowledge and their faith in His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming for comfort during very difficult trials. They also used this knowledge as a motivation to urge others to be prepared.

1 Thess. 5:1-11

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

NKJV

And this is my goal for our study. I want us to have faith and comfort in this prophecy during the difficult times that I believe the church in our nation will experience in the near future. I also want us to use the growing interest in this subject to lead others to faith in Jesus Christ.

Why is there a growing interest in this prophecy?

This growing interest is not new to church history. When certain events occur in Israel and specifically in Jerusalem, because of specific details in the prophecies, interest grows.

The early church experienced a greater interest in these prophecies in 69AD when there was a great persecution of both Jews and Christians and the temple in Jerusalem was eventually destroyed by the Romans.

In more recent times there was a public wave of interest in these prophecies that began to grow with the Muslims losing control of Palestine in 1917 during WWI. The British government gained control and made Palestine a national home for Jewish people. The end of the British mandate for Palestine ended on May 14, 1948. On that date the Jews of Israel declared themselves to be an independent state for the first time since 586BC. In prophecy, for the messiah to restore Israel there first has to be a nation of Israel. This wave of interest increased again when the state of Israel regained control of East Jerusalem in 1967 after the six day war. These events in Israel led many to write books about the second coming of Jesus including Hal Lindsay who wrote The Late Great Planet Earth in 1970. This book created a wave of interest that was important in the Jesus movement in the late 1960's and 70's. I believe it was the first Christian book that I read after I was saved.

Recently there have been a variety of well-known voices from different theological camps who have publicly expressed their sentiments that we are close to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ and the end of the age.

Billy Graham has been sounding the alarm that the Second Coming is “near” and signs of the end of the age are “converging now for the first time since Jesus made those predictions.”

Billy Graham said, “There’s a great deal to say in the Bible about the signs we’re to watch for and when these signs all converge at one place we can be sure that we’re close to the end of the age, and those signs, in my judgment, are converging now for the first time since Jesus made those predictions.”

Graham said he now has a burden for “sounding the alarm for humanity to repent and turn from their sin ... just as Noah did in ancient days.”

“God keeps his promises, and this is why we can be sure that the return of Christ is near,” Graham said. “Scripture tells us that there will be signs pointing toward the return of the Lord. I believe all these signs are evident today.”

Franklin Graham, the current president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, said there is an urgency and sense “that the Lord Jesus could be returning soon.”

“The Bible gives us warning signs,” he said. “Jesus told his disciples the things people should be looking for, and I believe all the prophecies that have to take place for Jesus to return have been fulfilled.”

“I believe we’re coming down to the midnight hour on God’s clock.” Franklin Graham

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the United Nations General Assembly “biblical prophecies are being realized.”

After the horrific terror attack at a kosher market in Paris, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu urged French Jews to come home to Israel. His remarks drew criticism from some, however last week, in the wake of Ramadan violence in several countries including France, Zeev Elkin, the Israeli Minister of Immigration and Absorption, called on French Jews to make Aliyah, echoing his leader’s words.

“Come home! Anti-Semitism is growing, terrorism is on the rise and the sickly ISIS activists carry out murders in the light of day. We are prepared to accept the Jews of France with open arms,” he said. Last year, 7,000 French Jews made aliyah to Israel, making it the number one country of origin for new immigrants. The Jewish Agency and the Ministry for Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption are expecting more than 3,000 French Jews to immigrate to Israel this summer alone, many of them families with children who want to arrive and integrate before the beginning of the school year.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, a leading authority in mainstream Ultra-Orthodox Judaism, has been giving clear and unequivocal messages recently that the coming of the Messiah is imminent. He is urging Jews to make Aliyah as soon as possible. Aliyah, the Hebrew verb for “going up”, refers to immigrating to Israel, which is seen as higher spiritual action that can help herald in the coming of the Messiah.

After a lifetime of immersing himself in classical Jewish texts, Rabbi Kanievsky's study partner informed various media sites that the Rabbi is talking about the messiah "all the time." Since last summer's war in Gaza, the Rabbi has been spreading this message of imminent return. In one instance, Rabbi Kanievsky instructed a Jew from Argentina who asked for a blessing that he should "gather your family and come to Israel. Otherwise, there won't be enough room for you on the airplanes."

When asked about the timing of the Messiah's arrival, Rabbi Kanievsky answered, "At the end of the Sabbatical year." Several people have asked the Rabbi to verify this and he has given the same answer each time. This year is the Sabbatical year and it will be ending on the 29th day of Elul, which, by the Gregorian calendar falls on Saturday, September 12, 2015.

Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., claimed the world has entered the last days.

"When you see up is down and right is wrong, when this is happening, we were told this: that these days would be as the days of Noah," Bachmann said.

These remarks by Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, Benjamin Netanyahu, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, and Michele Bachmann and several books by Jonathan Cahn have created come a steadily rising wave of public interest in the end times. This is demonstrated by polls and New York Times and Amazon.com bestselling books such as "The Harbinger: The Ancient Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future," and "The Mystery of the Shemitah," by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn.

These public sentiments and this new wave of interest are the result of events in Israel, in the United States, and in the world. These events are being seen as the further fulfillment of biblical signs that precede the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus or to the Jews, biblical signs that precede the coming of their messiah.

So what are these biblical signs and are they being fulfilled?

The signs that have been occurring for some time are called the beginning of the sorrows. These are found in Matthew 24:3-8.

[Matt 24:3-8](#)

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

The signs that are gaining the attention of many and that are sparking a new wave of public interest are found in Matthew 24:9-14

[Matt 24:9-14](#)

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 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.

NKJV

The church will be hated by all nations. (Verse 9)

This has never occurred in world history. The church of Jesus Christ has been hated by some nations but never by all nations.

For the last 239 years, the United States of America has been a safe haven for not only Christians but people of all faiths. But now, the church in our nation has entered into a season of tribulation that is unlike anything that the church has ever known since the birth of the United States. Our nation is literally being pulled apart by a great moral decline and the clamor for equal rights for those who practice immorality. The lines are drawn and the courts are creating laws that will force the true church to practice civil disobedience. States will also face this decision. This will cause an even greater hatred for the church. This kind of tribulation is not unique to the church in world history but it is unique to the church in American history.

Hilary Clinton has declared...

“Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed...”

The 4 Supreme Court justices who descended from the majority on the June 26<sup>th</sup> vote on same sex marriage have all said that this change will cause religious organizations to suffer.

In order to call evil good, you have to call good evil.

Isa. 5:20

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;

Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;

Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

NKJV

That is what is happening right now to the church of Jesus Christ.

When the pilgrims came to America they came to escape persecution and to practice religious liberty. Now, there is no place to run.

The time of the second coming of Jesus is much like the time of our death.

There are signs of death. As the time of death gets closer hospice workers are trained to prepare loved ones about what to expect. They don't know the day or the hour. They just know the signs.

In the same way, no one knows the day or the hour of Christ's return. But Jesus has given the church signs to prepare the church that our redemption is near.

One of those signs is a growing hatred for the church of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

Are you prepared for this hatred?