

END TIMES

(A study given by Pastor Wayne Pratt in Houston from 11/30/06 – 12/3/06)

I. WHAT TIME IS IT?

- A. A growing number of people (even unbelievers) believe we are living in the last days and the signs of the end predicted by Jesus and His apostles are being fulfilled.
- B. The disciples asked Jesus: “*When will this happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?*” and He carefully answered each of their questions (Mat. 24:1-3). [Please note that Jesus’ answers in Matthew 24 are NOT necessarily in chronological order.]
- C. Those who are wise take the time to discern the times and order their lives accordingly. (Mat. 16:1-3); we should be like the men of Issachar “*who understood the times*” (1 Chron. 12:32)
- D. The believers of the Early Church knew perfectly about end times: “*Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*” (1 Thess. 5:1-2)
 1. We should “*see the Day approaching*” (Heb. 10:25)
 2. We should be understanding the times (Rom. 13:11)
- E. Christ IS coming again
 1. John 14:2-3 - “*In my Father’s house are many rooms. . . **I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.***”
 2. Acts 1:11 - “***This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.***”
 3. Heb. 9:28 - “*So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and **He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.***”
 4. Rev. 22:7, 12, 20 - Christ’s final word is repeated three times: “*Behold, I am coming soon!*”
- F. Many of the **signs of His coming** that Jesus predicted nearly 2,000 years ago are rapidly coming to pass (**Mat. 24:3-11; Luke 21:10-11, 25-26**)
 1. Jesus compared these events to the birth pains of an expectant mother (Mat. 24:8) – the pains increase in both **frequency** and **intensity** as the time of birth draws near
 2. “***wars and rumors of wars***” (Mat. 24:6)
 - a. There are currently 130 wars raging in the world!
 - b. Jesus said it would be like the days of Noah – the earth was filled with violence (Gen. 6:11-12)
 3. “***nation*** [Gk. *ethnos* = “race, ethnic group”] ***will rise against nation***” (Mat. 24:7)
 - a. The majority of the wars in the world today are ethnic in nature [Middle East, former Soviet republics, Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Africa, India & Pakistan, Sri Lanka, etc.]
 - b. The term “ethnic cleansing” became popular during the Serbian conflict.
 - c. The current conflict in Iraq between the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds is essentially ethnic in nature.
 4. “***kingdom*** [Gk. *basileia* = “realm or territory subject to the rule of a king”] ***against kingdom***” (Mat. 24:7)
 5. “***pestilences***” [Gk. *loimos* = “plagues, epidemics”] (Mat. 24:7 - not mentioned in NIV, although it is in the Greek; but seen in Luke 21:11)

- a. AIDS
 - (1) *UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic*: “In 2003, almost five million people became newly infected with HIV, the greatest number in any one year since the beginning of the epidemic. At the global level, the number of people living with HIV continues to grow - from 35 million in 2001 to 38 million in 2003. In the same year, almost three million were killed by AIDS; over 20 million have died since the first cases of AIDS were identified in 1981.”
 - (2) In Zimbabwe and Botswana, over 25% of the population carries the AIDS virus; many other African nations close to 20%
- b. Bird flu
 - (1) World Health Organization (WHO): “Experts at WHO and elsewhere believe that the world is now closer to another influenza pandemic than at any time since 1968, when the last of the previous century's three pandemics occurred.”
 - (2) Experts warn that if the H5N1 virus mutates to enable human to human transmission (currently only transmitted from birds to humans), 2 million could die in the U.S. and countless millions worldwide. People are panicking – buying respirators, masks, protection kits, etc.
- c. West Nile Virus
 - (1) Centers for Disease Control (CDC): “WNV mysteriously spread from Africa to North America in 1999, with encephalitis reported in humans and horses. The subsequent spread in the United States is an important milestone in the evolving history of this virus.”
 - (2) CDC: “In 2003, there were 9862 human cases of WNV disease reported, including 264 deaths... In 2002, there were 4156 human cases of WNV disease, including 284 deaths. In 2001, there were 66 human cases of severe disease and 9 deaths. In 2000, 21 cases were reported, including 2 deaths in the New York City area.”
- d. Drug-resistant bacterial diseases
 - (1) CDC now has a **monthly journal** called *Emerging Infectious Diseases!*
 - (2) From 1980 to 1992, the death rate from infectious disease increased 58%
 - (3) WHO officials warn that one billion may become infected with tuberculosis and 70 million may die in the next 20 years
 - (4) National Institutes of Health (NIH) April 2004 Report, *The Problem of Antibiotic Resistance*: “CDC statistics indicated that nearly two million patients in the United States get an infection in the hospital each year. Of those patients, about 90,000 die each year as a result of their infection – up from 13,300 patient deaths in 1992. More than 70% of the bacteria that cause hospital-acquired infections are resistant to at least one of the drugs most commonly used to treat them. Persons infected with drug-resistant organisms are more likely to have longer hospital stays and require treatment with second or third choice drugs that may be less effective, more toxic, and more expensive.”
 - (5) CDC: “Today, virtually all important bacterial infections in the United States and throughout the world are becoming resistant. For this reason, antibiotic resistance is among CDC's top concerns. Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Antibiotic resistance can cause significant danger and suffering for children and adults who have common infections, once easily treatable with antibiotics.”
- e. NOTE: These predictions are not being made by “doomsday prophets” – these are coming from secular health organizations!

- f. Arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh
 - (1) WHO estimates that as many as 80 million – more than half the population – have been drinking well water containing deadly levels of arsenic for 30 years
 - (2) National Geographic says it may “be the largest mass poisoning in history.”
- 6. **“there will be famines”** (Mat. 24:7)
 - a. Famine threatens Africa from Ethiopia west to Mauritania and south to the whole southern region – 200,000 people could die within the next four months in Zimbabwe alone.
 - b. The Norwegian government is constructing a large concrete room, hewn out of a mountain 1,000 kilometers from the North Pole, called the “Doomsday Vault” designed to hold around 2 million seeds, representing all known varieties of the world’s crops. It is being built to safeguard the world’s food supply against nuclear war, climate change, terrorism, rising sea levels, earthquakes and the ensuing collapse of electricity supplies.
- 7. **“and earthquakes in various places”** (Mat. 24:7)
 - a. The earthquake in Sumatra, Indonesia that occurred on December 26, 2004 measured 9.15 on the Richter scale. This is equivalent to 800 megatons of TNT! This is one of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded. It caused a massive tsunami [see below] that killed more than 283,100 people, making it one of the deadliest disasters in modern history; scientists reported that the earthquake itself lasted close to ten minutes when most major earthquakes last no more than a few seconds; it caused the entire planet to vibrate at least a few centimeters. It also triggered earthquakes elsewhere, as far away as Alaska.
 - b. Northern Pakistan earthquake (10/8/05) - 7.6 on the Richter; it was deadliest quake in modern times, killing an estimated 100,000 people and leaving another million homeless
- 8. **“and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people”** (Mat. 24:11)
 - a. There is unprecedented religious deception throughout the world today (1 John 2:22, 4:1-3)
 - b. Below is a recent announcement from “Creciendo en Gracia” ministry in Puerto Rico and is just one of many examples of this deception:

INVITACION EXCLUSIVA: Le invitamos a que sea partícipe del evento más importante sobre la faz de la tierra. ¡DIOS LLEGA A PUERTO RICO! EL MOMENTO HA LLEGADO. EL DIA DEL JUICIO. 17 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2006 Jesucristo Hombre en su segunda venida, Dr. José Luis De Jesús Miranda, ya llegó a aclarar lo oculto en medio de tanta ignorancia. Te urjo a que como líder llamado por Dios, investigues diligentemente al hombre que es proclamado Dios en más de 25 naciones. . . El Juez de todos estará en el Tribunal de Cristo el domingo 17 de diciembre de 2006 a las 3:00 p.m. La entrada es libre de costo.
- 9. **“nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea”** (Luke 21:25)
 - a. The Asian tsunami (12/26/04) caused up to 100-foot waves that brought destruction to 11 nations, causing death 5,000 miles away in Port Elizabeth, South Africa! Newscasters called it a disaster of “biblical proportions”
 - b. 2005 Record Atlantic Hurricane Season
 - (1) 27 named tropical storms, the last one occurring on 12/31/05 and lasting until 1/6/06, one month after the hurricane season is officially over!
 - (2) 5 became Category 4 hurricanes (tied previous record) and 3 reached Category 5 strength (set a new record). Among these Category 5 storms was Hurricane Wilma, the most intense hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic.
 - (3) Caused record damages over \$100 billion and at least 1,777 deaths. Mexico was struck three

times by major hurricanes, and Florida and Louisiana were each struck twice. The most catastrophic effects of the season were felt in New Orleans, Louisiana where Hurricane Katrina's storm surge breached levees protecting the city and caused over \$75 billion in damages as well as more than 1,300 fatalities. Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Wilma caused extreme damage in Louisiana, Texas, Mexico and Florida.

10. ***“men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world”*** (Luke 21:26)
 - a. Global terrorism has risen significantly since the year 2000
 - b. Terrorist cells in 40 nations are growing and threatening those nations from within their borders
 - c. On September 11, 2001, the U.S. mainland was attacked for the first time in its history (World Trade Center in N.Y., the Pentagon in D.C.); close to 3,000 people were killed.
11. ***“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened”*** (Mat. 24:32-34).
 - a. The fig tree is symbolic of Israel (Jer. 24; Hos. 9:10)
 - b. After nearly 2,000 years, the scattered Jews returned to the Promised Land and became a nation in 1948 – the fig tree has sprouted!
12. ***“[in] the time of the end . . . knowledge shall be increased”*** (Dan. 12:4 - KJV)
 - a. Daniel predicted a phenomenal increase in knowledge in the last days – information overload!
 - b. We have witnessed incredible advances in computers, memory, robotics, satellites, etc. in the last 30 years.