

# UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF REVELATION THROUGH BIBLE PROPHECY

## 3 Prophecy's Countdown

Long ago, Jesus sat on a hillside with His disciples and predicted the time in which he would return. Jesus' disciples privately asked, "What shall be the *sign* of Thy coming and of the end of the world?" **Matthew 24:3**. The Master foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and then clearly outlined the signs that would precede His Coming. The events that led up to the destruction of Jerusalem would also be present at the end time—but on a much larger scale before Jesus' Return.

It's amazing that when we compare Jesus' prediction in Matthew 24 with the predictions in the Book of Revelation, they provide an incredibly accurate picture of *our* day! It is *our* lifetime of which Jesus spoke! For 2,000 years, the words Jesus spoke on that hilltop in Jerusalem were preserved in the Book of Matthew so we could know the events of *our* time that signal the *end* time. Specific, clear signs would precede the most momentous event of the ages—Christ's Second Coming.

What are the signs of which He spoke? He told of signs in the world of **religion, politics, nature, and society**. Today, these signs are played out in the stories splashed across our newspapers and TV screens. Let's examine each of these signs individually.

**SIGNS in the world of RELIGION:** Jesus foretold in **Matthew 24:5** that "Many shall come in My name, saying, *I am Christ*; and shall deceive many." Thousands, in their search for certainty, turn to cults, to false Christs and false prophets who recruit many to follow them. The Book of Revelation confirms that part of Satan's plan is *deception*: "He performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men. And he *deceives* those who dwell on the earth by those signs he was granted to do in the sight of the beast." **Revelation 13:13-14**. The devil will unleash his deceptive power to take captive men's and women's minds.

**SIGNS in the world of POLITICS:** In **Matthew 24:6-7**, Jesus says, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." One source estimates 180 million people have been killed in the last century—a total far greater than for any other century in history. Peace treaties, based on frail human promises, are signed one day and broken the next. There are hundreds of wars that have occurred in this century and there are currently more than 40 active conflicts.

With unchecked nuclear weapons, we now have the capacity for self-destruction. This is certainly one of the greatest signs of Jesus' Return, for never before in history has mankind had the capability to destroy all the earth.

**SIGNS in the World of NATURE:** In **Matthew 24:7**, Jesus said, "There shall be famines, and pestilences [strange diseases], and earthquakes in diverse places." Do we see *famines* today? Experts know that for many, chronic hunger is an ever-present part of life and that 10,000 people a day, or more than 3.5 million people per year, die of starvation. Do we see *pestilences* today—strange diseases running rampant? Some diseases are becoming resistant to antibiotics. And new diseases appear for which science has no cure—AIDS, Mad Cow disease, the Ebola virus. Do we see *earthquakes* today? Seismograph stations record 12,000 to 14,000

earthquakes per year—about 35 per day. Many earthquakes of disastrous magnitude have occurred in just the last few months. Surely, something is going on! There is also climate change and man-made disasters.

**SIGNS in the world of SOCIETY:** No signs are more obvious than those in the social world. Jesus plainly predicted in **Matthew 24:37**: “As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.” In Noah’s day, God’s standards were no longer accepted. And how is society’s moral fabric today? People are living in threesomes, marriage is crumbling and pornography is on the rise.

Looking to our daily newspaper for hope, we find only despair. Looking to the Bible in despair, we find hope. Fulfilled prophecies are all around us—Jesus is coming soon!

<b>Matthew 24:3</b>	Jesus’ disciples asked for a sign of His Coming and the end of the world.
<b>Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24</b>	There will be many false religious teachers: false christs and false prophets who will deceive and mislead many.
<b>Rev. 13:13-14</b>	Satan and his agents will perform signs and wonders to deceive people.
<b>Revelation 16:14</b>	Spirits of devils will perform signs and miracles to mislead many.
<b>2 Tim. 4:3-4</b>	The time will come when people won’t endure sound doctrine but will seek out teachers who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear.
<b>Matthew 24:6-7</b>	There will be wars and rumors of wars; nation will rise against nation.
<b>Luke 21:25</b>	There will be distress of nations, with perplexity.
<b>Luke 21:26</b>	Men’s hearts will be failing them, from fear of those things happening.
<b>Matthew 24:7</b>	There’ll be natural disasters—famines, pestilences, earthquakes—all over.
<b>Matthew 24:12</b>	There will be rising crime and violence, iniquity.
<b>2 Tim. 3:1-4</b>	There will be perilous times with moral decadence of every kind.
<b>Matthew 24:37-39</b>	There will be times of wickedness and violence, as in the days of Noah.
<b>Genesis 6:1-2, 5, 12-13</b>	In Noah’s day, wickedness, evil, corruption, and violence were rampant everywhere.
<b>James 5:1-5, 8</b>	There will be economic difficulties, with labor and management troubles.
<b>Luke 21:34</b>	But many will be too weighed down with the cares of this life.
<b>Matthew 24:48-51</b>	The evil servant says, “My Lord delays His Coming.”
<b>2 Peter 3:8-10</b>	God chooses to save all—but He honors our freedom of choice.
<b>Revelation 14:6</b>	The everlasting gospel will be preached in every nation and tongue.
<b>Matthew 24:14</b>	This gospel will be preached in all the world; then the end will come.
<b>Matthew 24:42-44</b>	God’s counsel is—“Be ready!”