

1 AMAZING DISCOVERY 6 SIGNS OF THE TIMES

(Note: Matthew 24:4 means the Book of Matthew in the Christian Bible, chapter 24, and verse 4).

I. INTRODUCTION

We know how to watch for signs of the seasons. For example when the dark clouds are forming in the sky we know it is going to rain soon. Meteorological Services send out weather forecasts from time to time to alert people to take precautions so as to minimise loss of lives and damage.

On Dec. 29th 2001, I read on page 30 of the Straits Times, under the heading, **Weather warning given too late.** "The United States naval meteorological web-site had provided information on a tropical depression in its typhoon-warning page. However, the Met Services merely forecast a thunderstorm. Warnings for the public to stay home came only when the depression was over. Isn't that a bit late? ... Don't just give us the standard 'thunderstorm' for such a serious weather event as yesterday's."

However, this prompts me to write the following about the early warning signs Jesus gave to people of all generations. These **prophecies** (*forewarnings*) were of greatest importance as they were given to save us from the impending peril (*hell*), which will come upon all those who reject Christ as the Saviour and Lord of their lives.

(All the following verses are taken from Matthew Chapter 24, of the Holy Bible, unless otherwise stated).

In **verse 3**, the disciples asked Jesus, **".. Will there be any sign ahead of time to signal your return and the end of the world?"** Replying, Jesus said, **"Don't let anyone mislead you,"** He added that the following events are going to happen like **"birth pangs"**, i.e. these events will happen with increasing frequency and in greater magnitude, until *He finally comes back again.*

(Jesus is also referred to as Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord, Redeemer, etc., in the Holy Bible.)

[Note: Every prophecy (*fore-telling future events*) which originates from infinite God must always come true because God knows all things past, present and future. Fortune telling originates from finite man whose knowledge is limited. Thus its fulfilment

(Romans 3:4, "... God's word will always prove true and right no matter who questions them.")

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depends on chance circumstances and thus cannot be trusted.]

II. JESUS FORETOLD THAT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS WOULD HAPPEN BEFORE HIS RETURN: (Matthew chapter 24)

1. FALSE MESSIAHS, and FALSE PROPHETS WILL ARISE

"For many will come claiming to be the Messiah, and will lead many astray"(v.5). **"And many false prophets will appear and will lead many people astray"**(v.11). This is another sign pointing towards the Second Coming of Jesus.

2. WARS and RUMOURS of WARS

"And wars will break out near and far, but don't panic. Yes, these things must come, but the end won't follow immediately. The nations and kingdoms will proclaim war against each other..." (vs. 6-7). This is also another sign pointing towards the Second Coming of Jesus.

One can see from the following table the frequency of wars increasing as the years go by, just as Jesus had foretold. Following data is obtained from www.historyguy.com/war-list.html

Date AD	Name	# of wars
1000—1500 (500years)	Anglo-French Wars	18
1500—1900 (400 years)	Anglo-French Wars	52
1900—2000 (100years)	Major world conflicts	160

Casualties are also mounting due to the sophisticated weapons used in modern warfare. One can read this from the daily newspapers. Many conflicts are still being fought around the world and new ones are waged. There are nations making hasty preparations for war against one another too.

3. FAMINES

"... and there will be famines..." (v.7). This is now happening in many countries around the world, for example, North Korea, some countries in Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq and many more. And the numbers are increasing each year according to newspaper reports. Read the Straits Times report on page 14 of Feb 8, 2002, **"World expected to be hit by drought and flood... The return of El Nino whose full force will be felt in the coming months."**

4. EARTHQUAKES

Verses 7-8 **"There will be earthquakes in many**

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parts of the world. But all this will only the beginning of the horrors to come." As for the earthquakes the number and intensity increases as the years go by, just as Jesus had prophesied. The following information is obtained from:

www.neic.cr.usgs.gov/bulletin/bulletin.html

See the following chart:

Year (AD)	# of Earth-quakes	Death toll
1000 -1500 (500 years)	6	286,000
1500-1800 (300 years)	10	1,500,000
1800-1900 (100 years)	14	179,103
1900-2000 (100 years)	103	1,824,857
2000-2001 (1 year)		Data not yet released

5. YOU WILL BE ARRESTED, PERSECUTED AND KILLED

"Then you (*the followers of Jesus*) will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because of your allegiance to Me" (v.9).

One should not be surprised when this happens because Jesus had already warned us. He said, **"God blesses you when you are mocked and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted, too"** (Matthew 5:11-12). Again He said, **"Since they persecuted Me, naturally they will persecute you"** (John 15:10). **"..and indeed the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service"** (John 16:2). These persecutions will intensify as we approach the Second Coming of Jesus.

6. MANY WILL TURN AWAY FROM CHRIST, BETRAY and HATE EACH OTHER

"And many will turn away from me, betray and hate each other" (v.10). When the persecution becomes intense, the tendency is to deny that they belong to Jesus and thus betray and hate other Christians to find favour with their persecutors. This is another sign pointing to the Second Coming of Jesus. But God has promised Christians, **"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? ... No, despite**

all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

7. DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD WILL BE WIDESPREAD

"Sin (*Doing things that are displeasing to God*), will be rampant everywhere and love of many will grow cold. But those who endure to the end will be saved" (vs.12,13). "...vile will become more vile; good men will be better; those who are holy will continue on in greater holiness" (Revelation 22:11).

8. THE MESSAGE OF JESUS WILL BE PREACHED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

"And the Good News about the Kingdom of God will be preached throughout the world, so that all nations will hear it...and then finally, the end will come" (v.14).

In summary, what Jesus foretold is already happening in many parts of the world today. He told His disciples, "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe Me" (John 14:29).

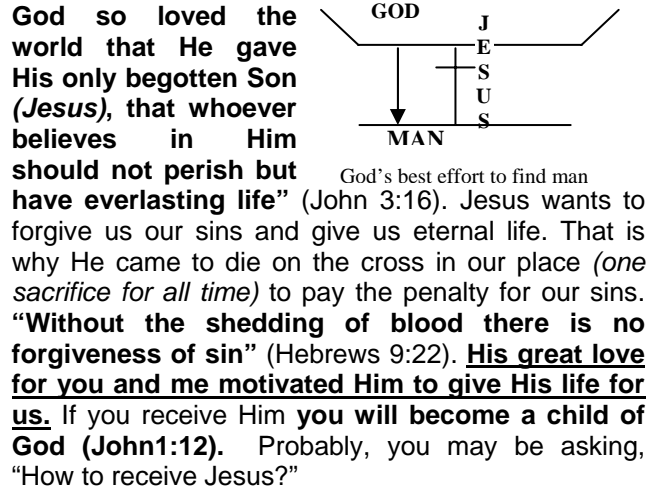
III. WHY DID JESUS PROPHESEY THESE?

- ❑ So that when they happen we will not be surprised, or be misled by misinterpretations of these events by some clever men.
- ❑ Fulfilment of all this will prove that Jesus is truly the Messiah and that His promised Second Coming is near.
- ❑ When we hear the gospel (*Gospel refers to the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the Bible*) of Jesus Christ we might repent of our sins and receive Him as our Saviour and Lord.
- ❑ He wants us to eagerly wait for His return to take us to be with Him in Heaven forever.

The Holy Bible says, "And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that

comes judgement, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins. This time he will bring salvation (saving from the power and effects of sin) to all those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (Hebrews 9:27-28).

You may be asking, **WHY SHOULD I RECEIVE JESUS?** Because Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father (God) but through Me" (John 14:6). The Bible says, "All have sinned (disobeyed God) and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death (both physical and spiritual death), but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus wants to forgive us our sins and give us eternal life. That is why He came to die on the cross in our place (*one sacrifice for all time*) to pay the penalty for our sins. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). His great love for you and me motivated Him to give His life for us. If you receive Him you will become a child of God (John 1:12). Probably, you may be asking, "How to receive Jesus?"



V. HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOUR AND LORD?



Jesus said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him" (Revelation 3:20). Opening the door here means inviting Him to

come in to our lives. Dear friend, you can invite Jesus Christ into your life as your Saviour and Lord if you wish to. We talk to God through prayer. The following is a suggested prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Saviour and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen."

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, you can pray this prayer right now and Jesus will come into your heart just as He promised. Take a minute to do so right now. After you have prayed to receive Jesus, trust that He has come into your life on the basis of His promise in Revelation 3:20 mentioned earlier. Remember that God does not lie.

If you have prayed the above prayer in faith, many things happened to you including the following:

- Jesus came into your life (Revelation 3:20).
- Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
- You became a child of God (John 1:12).

- You received eternal life (John 5:24). "He will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) therefore you invite Him into your life only once. Would you like to thank Him for what He has done for you?

Here is a short thanksgiving prayer that you may pray.

"Thank you Jesus for coming into my life, for forgiving my sins, for making me a child of God and for giving me eternal life. In your name I pray. Amen."

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For your spiritual growth, please attend regularly a nearby church where Jesus is honoured and the Bible is taught.