

THE FUTURE

ACCORDING
TO THE

BIBLE

*He that sat upon the throne said,
I will make all things new.
And he said unto me, Write: for these
things are true and faithful.*

Revelation 21:5

David W. Cloud

The Future According to the Bible

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“What a long, dreary night with what frightful disturbing nightmares, if I may so speak, has this world known since sin, with all of its attendant evils, came in to wreck man’s hopes of joy and gladness! But how precious to know that evil shall not always have the upper hand; that a time is coming, aye, and is very near, when the curse will be lifted, the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose; even the lower creation will be changed and revert to former habits before sin entered, ‘the lion shall eat straw like the ox’ (Isa. 11:7); the little child need not fear the most savage of beasts because they shall not hurt nor destroy in that day. Then government will be righteously regulated; abuses of every kind will be stopped, and for a thousand glorious years our Lord Himself shall reign in righteousness” (Harry A. Ironside).

Introduction

The Bible is the world's most amazing, exciting book, more valuable than all other books combined.

I've studied the Bible every day for forty years and have also studied the major non-Christian religions and their sacred writings. (I was a member of a Hindu society before I received Jesus as Saviour.) I have built a personal religious library of more than 6,000 volumes and have done firsthand research in more than three dozen countries.

And it is obvious to me that between the Bible and other books purporting to be revelations from God a vast gulf exists.

While working with university students in South Asia the question is often asked, "What sets the Bible and Biblical Christianity apart from other religions?"

My answer is *EVERYTHING!* The Bible's teaching about God, about man, about origins, about salvation, about heaven and hell and angels and demons, about past and future ages--everything is different from other religions, and not just different but *dramatically different!*

In the Bible's pages are found the answers to life's most pressing and puzzling questions: What is man? What is man's purpose in life? Is there a God? What is He like? Why is the world at once both glorious and corrupt? Why is man's life so trouble-filled? Why is man both good and bad? Why do men die and what happens when they die?

The Bible is the revelation from God that cannot be found from any other source.

Through creation we can learn many things about the Creator God, particularly His almighty power and wisdom. Recently we asked four of our grandkids, the oldest being seven years old, "What do flowers teach us about God." Their answers included the following:

- “That God is very strong.”
- “That God loves the whole world, because you can look at the petals and they're nice.”
- “That God likes light.”
- “God wants us to enjoy them.”
- “God wants to make the earth beautiful.”

Indeed, the creation teaches many things about God even in the eyes of a child, but only through the Bible can we learn the very heart and mind and character and purpose of God.

And only through the Bible can we properly interpret the light of creation, which is not only glorious but also fallen and corrupted, and its message can be confusing. What do we learn about God from a lion killing a helpless deer, for example, or from disease and war? What does death itself teach about God apart from a higher revelation to explain such things? Trying to learn about God from creation can be both enlightening and confusing.

God has solved this problem by giving mankind a higher and perfect revelation of Himself in the Bible, and it gives every evidence of being exactly that, with fulfilled prophecy being one of the great evidences. You and I cannot accurately predict even what will happen tomorrow, but the Bible describes the details of events hundreds and thousands of years before they occur.

I became a Bible believer at age 23, and one of the reasons I received the Bible as God's Word is fulfilled prophecy.

The entire history of Israel was written down in Scripture nearly 3,500 years ago in Deuteronomy 28-30 before Israel even entered her Promised Land. The Deuteronomy passage prophesies of Israel's rebellion against God, her eviction from the land, her dispersal throughout the earth, her persecutions, and her eventual return to the land. This is exactly what happened to Israel over the past 2,000 years.

Consider, too, the first coming of Christ. His birthplace, Bethlehem, was prophesied by the prophet Micah about 700 years before Jesus was born. The details of His crucifixion were described in the book of Psalms 1,000 years before He walked this earth, and this prophecy included the minute details of what happened on the cross--the piercing of His hands and feet, the mocking crowds, his great inner pain, his thirst, and the soldiers gambling for His garments.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. ... I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:7-8, 14-16).

That the Bible’s prophecies pertaining to past events have been fulfilled perfectly is clear evidence that its prophecies of the events yet future will be fulfilled in like manner.

To put one’s trust in such a Book is not blind religious faith.

(For more evidences of the divine inspiration of the Bible see *The Bible’s Proof*, a free eBook available from www.wayoflife.org.)

Through the Bible we can peer into the distant past and gaze upon future ages. Through Bible prophecy we can witness the fearful events that will come upon the earth prior to the return of Jesus Christ. We can see the rise of the Antichrist who will come to power as a great man of peace, a dynamic world problem solver, but will become a brutal world dictator. We can see the unspeakable wars and judgments that will destroy perhaps two-thirds of the world’s citizens. We can witness Christ’s second coming and visit the

kingdom He will establish on earth. We can walk through the glorious Millennial Temple that will be built according to the detailed plans of Ezekiel 40-48. With John, we can gaze in amazement on the New Jerusalem that will lie at the heart of a new heaven and a new earth. We can stroll its street, follow the river of life, smell the fragrance of its trees, observe its citizens coming and going through the 12 gates, adore the One who sits on its throne in eternal glory.

The pressing question for every student of Bible prophecy is this: What is my personal future? Will I be with Christ in His eternal kingdom, or will I be with those described in Revelation 21:5?

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

The Bible says all men have sinned against God. We have broken His laws. We have worshipped idols, which God forbids. We have lied, cheated, stolen, hated, committed adultery, coveted other people's goods. The Bible says all men have broken God's holy laws and are sinners before Him. We deserve to be punished and we will be punished. And the punishment is eternal suffering in a place called “the lake of fire.”

The Gospel or Good News is that Jesus came to earth to save sinners from this horrible judgment. He died for sinners. On the cross, He suffered in our place for the crimes we have committed against God's holy laws.

It is as if a thief who has stolen a great amount of money from many people stands before the court and the judge condemns him according to the law and demands that he spend 20 years in prison. But the judge then comes down from the bench and says, “I am going to be punished in your place, so you are free to go. The law is satisfied.”

This is what Jesus did. We all stand guilty before God because we have broken His laws. But the Son of God was punished in our place, and those who repent of their sins against God and repent of worshiping false gods and believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour are forgiven of their sins and given the gift of eternal life.

It is as if a man has a debt of millions of dollars, a debt so large he can never pay it, but a kindly, wealthy man comes along and has pity on him and pays the debt for him.

This is what Jesus did for those who trust Him.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

Those who know Jesus Christ personally as Lord and Saviour are given eternal life, are adopted into God’s family as beloved children, and will live with Christ forever in His kingdom.

SAMPLE

Prophecies Being Fulfilled Today

The next major event on God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the New Testament believers, an event in which the dead in Christ will be raised and the living saints will be changed from mortal to immortal and all will be caught up to meet Christ in the air.

The Bible tells us that the Rapture is imminent. We don't know exactly when it will occur but it can happen at any time. As Jesus said,

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 24:44).

True Christian living, as exemplified by the believers at Thessalonica 2,000 years ago, is to serve the living and true God in this present world while living in expectation of the return of His Son from heaven.

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

We will deal with the Rapture in a separation chapter, but the point of this section is to demonstrate that the time is very late. Though we cannot know the exact time of the Rapture, we can know that it is drawing near because we can see many prophecies being fulfilled.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING"
(Hebrews 10:25).

Following are some of these prophecies:

Men Running to and fro

“... many shall run to and fro” (Daniel 12:4).

Men running to and fro is a definite sign of the end times. For the first 6,000 years of man’s history transportation didn’t change much from century to century--with men walking, riding beasts of burden, or traveling on sailing ships--but since the 19th century there has been an explosion of transportation technology to allow men to “run to and fro.” First there were railroads and steam ships, then automobiles and modern all-weather highways, airplanes, and space shuttles. When Adoniram Judson traveled from Boston to India as the first American foreign missionary in 1812, the journey took four months. Today the same journey takes one or two days.

The Knowledge Explosion

“... and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4).

The explosion of knowledge is a sign of the end times.

“Up until the 1900s it was said that the accumulation of knowledge doubled every century. At the end of World War 2 every 25 years. Today knowledge is doubling every year and a half. IBM predicts that in the next couple of years, information will double every 11 hours” (“Knowledge Doubling Curve and You,” MartinGover.com, Oct. 6, 2009).

Those who were born near the turn of the 20th century, such as my parents, witnessed an explosion of knowledge such as the world has never seen. In that one lifetime the world moved from the buggy age to the space age. When my mom was born in rural central Florida, they had no electricity or indoor plumbing. The airplane had only recently been invented and even the telephone was still relatively new. Those who had telephones were on “party lines” and could hear other people’s conversations, but in her lifetime, the ultra-modern Kennedy Space Center was built

not far from where she was born as the prominent symbol of the rocket age.

The increase of knowledge has brought us into the computer age. The first general purpose computer, UNIVAC, was built in 1951. It weighed 29,000 pounds, took up 350 feet of floor space, stood 8.5 feet high. In the 1960s the integrated circuit was invented, and today's tiny laptops are millions of times more powerful than the UNIVAC.

The increase of knowledge has allowed man to walk on the moon and to send robot craft on a 154-million-mile journey to explore the surface of Mars.

The increase of knowledge has allowed scientists to discover the fundamental elements of the universe and map the DNA of the living cell.

The increase of knowledge has brought us into the global communications age, with its satellites, Internet, and smart phones. There are nearly six billion connected mobile devices and two billion people on the Internet (“No Borders Mean Flatter World,” *BBC News*, June 29, 2012). With this technology the nations will be able to observe the events described in Revelation 11.

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth” (Rev. 11:8-10).

Global Rebellion against God's Law

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and

cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:1-9).

The Psalms contain many prophecies, some of which were fulfilled at Christ's first coming and many of which point ahead to His second coming.

Consider the events described in this Psalm.

The Gentile kings and their people will unite in rebellion against Jehovah God and His Anointed. The "heathen" are those who reject the God of the Bible. They "rage" against God. They intend to cast away His bands and cords, referring to His holy laws, so they can live as they please. This is fulfilled throughout the earth today. The heathen have been raging against God since man's fall and since Cain, the first son of Adam, killed his prophet brother, Abel (Genesis 4). But the rage has grown in intensity in these last days and will culminate in Armageddon.

Rage against God and His holy laws is the chief characteristic of humanistic philosophy of the past three centuries, the philosophy that has largely overthrown Christianity in Western culture. In *The Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) called the Bible "a book of lies and contradictions" and said it is more likely "the word of a demon than the word of God." Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) mocked God as "an Invisible Being" and blasphemously rejected a God who punishes those who displease Him. Bentham was an apologist for homosexuality and instructed governments not to legislate against "drunkenness and fornication." Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) called himself

“the most terrible opponent of Christianity.” Nietzsche concluded his autobiography *Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)* with the blasphemous words, “Dionysus vs. the Crucified” (not long before he went insane). John Dewey (1859-1952), father of “progressive education” and co-author of the *Humanist Manifesto*, called God “a faded piece of metaphysical goods” (Dewey, “The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy,” 1916). Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), father of existentialism and the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, was an atheist whose “life was one continuous celebration of debauchery.” In his autobiography, Sartre blasphemed the Holy Spirit, claiming that he caught him and threw him out of his life.

Rage against God’s holy laws is the chief characteristic of the western pop culture that has spread throughout the earth. The rage is expressed continually through movies, television, literature, the news media, the fields of education, fashion, and art. The rebellion is seen in the pagan religions, communism, evolution, militant atheism (e.g., the American Atheists paid for billboard ads in September 2012 calling the God of the Bible “sadistic” and Jesus a “useless Savior”), and the homosexual rights movement.

Consider that God’s gracious gospel of eternal salvation in Jesus Christ has been preached in every nation and at least portions of the Bible have been translated into most languages, but the vast majority of the people have turned their backs to God’s Son.

The Psalmist says that God will laugh at the rebels, not in joy but in scorn, because puny man cannot pull Him from His throne or thwart His plans.

God will establish Christ’s kingdom with its headquarters in Jerusalem in spite of worldwide opposition, and He will not establish it by a-millennial reconstructionists or by charismatic or emerging kingdom builders, but by almighty power and the rod of iron (Psa. 2:5-6).

Consider, too, the exhortation by the Psalmist.

“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Psalm 1:10-12).

Men are exhorted to submit to the Son of God and put their trust in Him now while there is an opportunity. Compare 2 Corinthians 6:2. “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

The expression “kiss the son” signifies, first of all, submission. It was customary in Bible times for subjects to kiss kings. “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?” (1 Samuel 10:1). To kiss an idol was a sign of submission to the god represented by the idol (1 Kings 19:18). To “kiss the son” therefore refers to a sinner repenting of his rebellion against God and surrendering to Christ as Lord. By application, the expression “kiss the son” is also a sign of tenderness. The mention of a kiss reminds us that salvation in Christ is not a matter of cold religious duty; it is a personal and intimate relationship with the Son of God. Compare Matthew 11:28-30.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

We are reminded that God delights in mercy more than judgment.

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

We see that men are to serve the Lord in fear and trembling. This is the evidence of true salvation. It is not a mere sinner’s prayer. It is a life-changing conversion experience.

Willful Skepticism

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:3-7)

This amazing 2000-year-old prophecy describes the skepticism that prevails in the 21st century. “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days SCOFFERS...” (2 Pet. 3:3).

The prophecy indicates that the 19th century marked the beginning of the “last days” of the church age, because it was in the 19th century that this prophecy began to be fulfilled to perfection. The 19th century witnessed an explosion of skepticism in the form of theological modernism, humanism, Unitarianism, Darwinian evolution, communism, and agnosticism.

1. We see the rejection of the Bible's doctrine of the Flood (2 Peter 3:4-6).

Peter describes scoffers in the last days who will say that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:4). This is a perfect description of the "uniformitarian" view of geology, which came to the fore in the 19th century through Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. Lyell had a great influence on Charles Darwin. According to this view, the geological strata were laid down gradually over millions of years and there was no global Flood. Walt Brown, Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), describes the view that has prevailed since those days.

"Professors in the new and growing field of geology were primarily selected from those who supported the anti-catastrophe principle. These professors did not advance students who espoused catastrophes. An advocate of a global flood was branded a 'biblical literalist' or 'fuzzy thinker'--not worthy of an academic degree" (*In the Beginning*, p. 253).

Prior to the 19th century, it was generally believed even by scientists that God created the world and that there was a catastrophic universal Flood. In 1930 Merson Davies observed, "We should remember that, up to 100 years ago [up to 1830], such a marked prejudice against the acceptance of belief in the Deluge did not exist." For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries Cambridge University scholars believed in a universal Flood, but by Darwin's day in the mid-19th century they did not. Thomas Burnet (1635-1715), royal chaplain to king William III, argued for a worldwide flood in *A Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681). This was one of most popular works on geology prior to the 19th century. John Woodward (1665-1728), founder of the Woodwardian Professorship of Geology at Cambridge, argued that the global Flood was the cause of the fossil beds. This position

was published in *An Essay Toward a Natural Theory of the Earth* (1695).

But by the 19th century, the evolutionary view took control and the prophecy of 2 Peter 3 was being fulfilled.

2. We see mankind's rejection of divine creation.

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that BY THE WORD OF GOD THE HEAVENS WERE OF OLD, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (2 Peter 3:5).

Peter says the scoffers will reject the Bible's teaching that the world was made “by the word of God.” The doctrine of evolution has gone hand-in-hand with agnosticism, atheism, and a denial of the supernatural. It was Thomas Huxley, “Darwin's Bulldog,” who coined the term “agnosticism” to describe the view that man cannot know whether or not there is a God, that man can only know the truth through “science” and that “religion” isn't allowed a voice.

The scoffers do mention “creation” (2 Pet. 3:4), but by this they don't mean the six days of creation according to the Bible. Even Charles Darwin used the word “creation” at the end of *On the Origin of Species*, but he later explained that by this he simply meant that life “appeared by some wholly unknown process” (Darwin, *Autobiography*, p. 272).

3. We see the motive of the scoffers.

“... scoffers, walking after their own lusts ... For this they willingly are ignorant of” (2 Pet. 3:3, 5).

The Bible is a supernatural Book that reveals the secrets of men's hearts. It pierces “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit” (Heb. 4:12). In the case of the last days scoffers, the Bible peers deeply into the human soul and reveals that their unbelief is “willful” because their motive is to walk in their own lusts and not be bound by God's moral laws. It is their love of sin that puts them in rebellion against God. Men

first refuse to submit to God, refuse to believe, then Satan blinds their minds.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4).

The will of man must surrender to God and His truth for the blindness to be lifted.

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” (2 Cor. 3:14-16).

The will is the difference between a Ph.D. like Lowell Coker (microbiology and biochemistry, author of *Darwin's Design Dilemma*), who believes the Bible, and a Ph.D. like Richard Dawkins (author of *The Blind Watchmaker*), who doesn't. Both men are trained in modern science at a high level and both look at the same evidence, but they come to completely different conclusions, and this is because one man simply refuses to believe the implications of what he sees with his own eyes.

Evolutionist Richard Lewontin admitted as much when he said, “We have a prior commitment to materialism. ... we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door” (“Billions and Billions of Demons,” *The New York Review*, Jan. 9, 1997, p. 31).

This is a pointed reminder that every child growing up in a Bible-believing church must make his own choice about God and salvation, and that a desire to walk after one's own lusts will produce spiritual blindness. Each child has the ability to believe or not to believe. God gives men a choice, but they must suffer the consequences of those choices. I grew up in a Baptist church and heard the gospel from my earliest years,

and I don't recall ever rejecting Jesus and the Bible in a conscious manner. What happened was that I simply loved sin and pursued sin. I "believed in" Jesus, but I didn't repent before God and bow to Christ as Lord. I was captivated by the rock & roll pop culture. As a result, my mind became blinded and I ended up as a skeptic by age 20 and an Americanized Hindu by age 22.

4. We see their ignorance (2 Pet. 3:5).

Skeptics tend to be proud of their knowledge, but in reality they are ignorant of the knowledge that counts the most, which is knowledge of God's Word. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

Most of the committed skeptics don't know anymore about the Bible than I did before I was saved. In fact, most of them probably don't know as much. I thought I knew the Bible, because I had grown up in a Bible-believing church and had attended faithfully until my teenage years, but actually I just knew some disjointed Bible stories that didn't seem to have any real bearing on daily life. I didn't understand the overall theme of the Bible; didn't understand how each part of the Bible fits together to form the whole; didn't know the rules of proper Bible interpretation or how to apply them. I had never been taught how to defend the Bible against skepticism, and didn't even know it was defensible. I didn't know any of the evidences for the Bible's divine inspiration. I didn't even have a really clear understanding of the gospel, though I had made a profession of faith in my youth. I had never read the whole Bible through, but I argued against Bible-believing Christians as if I were a true expert! (My impenitence and rebellion was my own fault, but my ignorance can be attributed to some part to the shallowness of the church in which I was raised.)

5. We see their faith.

"For this they willingly are ignorant of..." (2 Pet. 3:5).

Evolutionary skeptics typically pride themselves in thinking that they are following the scientific facts, whereas the Bible believer is pursuing “blind religious faith.”

The truth is exactly the opposite. In reality, the skeptics are pursuing their own lusts rather than truth. They are willfully ignorant and are holding blindly to myths.

There is nothing more mythical and unscientific than to believe that everything came from nothing, that life came from non-life, that intelligence came from non-intelligence, and that great intelligence is a product of small intelligence!

6. We see their undeserved opportunity.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

God is not willing that any perish. The reason that He sent His Son to die for man’s sin is His love for the world (John 3:16), and every skeptic has an opportunity to be saved through repentance and faith in Christ.

Many highly educated scientists have believed God’s Word. The book *Testimonies of Scientists Who Believe the Bible* contains biographical sketches of about 70 men and women with Ph.D.s in the hard sciences that believe in a six-day creation. This free eBook is available from the Way of Life web site -- www.wayoflife.org.

God cannot be blamed for man’s judgment. Unlike the caricature of God that many evolutionists believe, God is compassionate. For example, the late atheist Christopher Hitchens called God a “divine dictator” and likened Him to the brutal ruler of North Korea. In fact, God is so merciful and compassionate that He Himself came to this sin-cursed earth, through His Son, and suffered on the cross in the place of the very creatures who had rebelled against Him. God has not sinned against man; man has sinned against God and broken His holy laws.

I am thankful that skeptics can be saved. I was a skeptic in 1973 when God convicted me of my sin and showed me the truth through His Word and I bowed my knees before His majesty and repented of my rebellion and trusted Jesus as my Saviour. Multitudes of skeptics have been saved by God's grace, and you can be, too.

7. We see the future of skeptics who persist in unbelief.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10).

God is merciful and compassionate and longsuffering, but He is also holy and just and He does not ignore the breaking of His laws. Salvation is available in Jesus Christ for every man, but if a man dies in his sin without the Saviour he will suffer eternal condemnation. There will be no end to the judgment because there is no end to the sinning. Sinners who die in their sin do not cease to exist; the body dies but the spirit lives, either in heaven or in hell. And unconverted sinners persist in their rebellion against God even beyond the grave.

To reject Jesus Christ is to reject the only divinely-appointed means of salvation. To reject God's gracious offer of salvation in Christ, to resist the Spirit of God who is in the world to draw men to Christ, is the unforgivable sin.

The Peace Movement

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

The cry of peace is another sign of the end times. The first International Peace Conference was held in 1899 in The

Hague with the objective of preventing wars and ushering in world peace. After World War I the League of Nations was formed with the same objective, and after World War II the United Nations took its place. At the UN headquarters in New York is a statue of a man beating a sword into a plow and the words of Isaiah 2:4 are inscribed in a wall. But the UN will never bring peace to this troubled earth, because “there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isaiah 48:22). The prophecy being fulfilled today is not Isaiah 2:4, but it is Joel 3:10, which is a call for the nations to beat their plowshares into swords and arm themselves for war.

The ultimate fulfillment of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 will occur when the Antichrist comes on the scene as a man of peace. The world will be convinced that he will solve all problems and usher in an age of peace and prosperity.

The Me Generation

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be **lovers of their own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

The first characteristic of the end-time apostasy that the Spirit of God describes in 2 Timothy 3 is that men shall be “lovers of their own selves.” There has never been a better description of the modern pop culture that has permeated the world through the facilitation of modern communications technology.

The *Time* magazine “Person of the Year” for 2006 was “YOU.” The magazine cover featured a sheet of Mylar to reflect the reader’s own face.

It is the age of my music, my tweets, my FaceBook, my fashion, my generation, my attitude. It is the age of the “selfie.”

The emphasis on self has created the generation gap, and it has nearly destroyed the institution of marriage. Recently actor Ethan Hawke called monogamy “a childish idea.”

The pop culture is all about me, and it is a dramatic fulfillment of Bible prophecy and a sign of the end times.

The Explosion of Apostasy

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3-4).

We will look in more detail at the New Testament prophecies of apostasy in the next chapter, but here we will simply mention that it is a great sign of the times and powerful evidence that we “see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).

The apostasy has spread so widely that the vast majority of churches are false. This shows us that the hour is very late.

There is the Roman Catholic Church, which is nothing more than Christianized heathenism. Consider Santa Maria Maggiore church (Saint Mary Major) in Rome, where Mary is depicted as the Queen of Heaven sitting with Jesus on His throne, and Mary is depicted in a statue as the Queen of Peace, and Mary is even hanging with Jesus on the cross! (For photos of these and other blasphemous depictions of Rome’s Mary see “Rome’s Mary on the Cross and on God’s Throne” at www.wayoflife.org.)

There is the World Council of Churches, which has 340 member denominations in 120 countries representing 500 million professing Christians. It is totally apostate. For example, at the 1993 Re-imagining women’s conference, sponsored by the World Council, the participants

worshipped the goddess Sophia, prayed to trees, were encouraged to wear Hindu tikas to “represent the divine” in them, and gave a standing ovation to lesbians.

There is the Evangelicals and Rome movement which has brought non-Catholics into close association with the Roman Catholic Church. One of the groundbreakers in this movement was Billy Graham, the world’s most famous evangelist. Throughout his career, Graham praised the popes and turned his “converts” back over to the Catholic churches. For example, at the 1984 Graham crusade in Vancouver, British Columbia, crusade vice-chairman David Cline stated, “If Catholics step forward there will be no attempt to convert them and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes.” The Evangelicals and Rome movement can be seen in the close relationship between Charismatics and Rome and Contemporary Christian musicians and Rome. It can be seen in the spread of Roman Catholic contemplative prayer practices among evangelical Christians.

There is Rock & Roll Christianity, which is a perfect fulfillment of 2 Timothy 3:3-4 in that it is a Christianity that lives according to its own lusts (“don’t tell me how to live, what music I can listen to, what movies I can watch, where I can go”). Multitudes of churches are mere entertainment centers. A 2006 report on the largest churches in Toledo, Ohio, by a secular newspaper, was entitled “Viva Las Jesus” because the reporters had observed that the churches were presenting a Christ that was akin to Las Vegas. The reporters said they loved the rockin’ music and the “short and sweet sermons” with no hellfire.

These evidences of the explosion of apostasy are clear signs of the end times.

The Homosexual Rights Movement

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it