

Chapter 10

"The Warning Signs"

Moving to our next thread, now we can look at what Peter and Paul say about what prophetic signs to keep a watch for at the end of days. When we looked at The Olivet Discourse above, we saw both physical signs and the moral state of man being in decline. Peter and Paul reinforce the latter thought and cite specific conditions concerning the attitudes of society just before Christ's return. Peter writes in [2 Peter 3:3-4](#) “³ 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.” Peter also talks about Jesus' return as a thief in the night, referring to those who do not study prophecy will be caught unawares or by surprise. [2 Peter 3:10-13](#) “¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” This thought about the earth dissolving by fire is reinforced by John in [Revelation 21:1](#) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And there was no more sea.” Peter also warns against those who manipulate, alter or otherwise reshape the Bible to suit their own agenda. [2 Peter 3:14-16 \(NIV\)](#) “¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

Paul's warning list is a little longer. [2 Timothy 3:1-9 \(NKJV\)](#) “¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹ but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.” If we look at the state of society, it is safe to say the conditions described are spot on for the world today. The foundation of any society is the family unit of one mother and one father. That has been radically altered. How many grandparents are raising a second generation of children because one or both parents are absentees for one reason or another? If the child is lucky enough, to have both parents in the home, married or not, both adults need to have full-time jobs to be able to pay for expenses. It used to be one parent, usually the father, worked outside the home while the other, usually the mother, stayed home to raise the children because the one salary was sufficient to carry the load. Not so today. Both parents need to work at least 40 hours, if not more, to be able to afford the necessities of life. Not to mention that in year's past families had 4-5 children or more as opposed to the 2-3 today.

People have fallen prey to the spirit of deception that Jesus warned against. Currently, there are many reasons people do not contemplate their eternal soul with regards to Christ. They are too involved in a great many distractions or diversions. A bunch of white noise if you will. Furthermore, lack of civility and respect toward one another are rampant. People are being demonized because they have an opposite opinion instead of acknowledging that the person on the other side of the argument has as much right to their opinion as you have to yours. There are loud angry visceral voices on both sides.

The church used to be the center of attention for society. Now it's just one of several events that happen on the weekend and not even a priority. There is no sense of urgency. People seem to act as though they believe either they will not be held accountable for their sins or maybe there is always time later to make a decision for Christ. You might know of John Lennon's song "Imagine." It starts with the lyric, "Imagine there is no heaven or hell. No religion too." How bleak would life be if that were true. The first observation [Romans 1:28-32](#) ²⁸ "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; ²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Does this sound like today's society? The second observation, when one begins life's journey the outlook is ahead and the attitude is invulnerable, immortal, and invincible. It's not until one has a few years life experience do they realize just how fragile, unpredictable, and precarious life can be. Jesus said in [Luke 12:19-20 \(NKJV\)](#) ¹⁹ "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" ²⁰ "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'" With the number of high profile celebrity deaths, the indiscriminate randomness of mass killings across the world, the exploding opioid epidemic, and people dying at the hands of other men shows that none of us knows when our last day on earth will be. How many of them kissed their loved ones' goodbye as they left for their daily routine expecting to return but didn't. My first thought when these situations are reported is I hope for their sake they made peace with God. I wonder how many are surprised at the first thing they encounter in the next life is that they wake up in heaven or hell. They will either be in the arms of Jesus, or sadly, they will realize too late the folly of putting off thinking about their eternal soul. The unintended consequence of putting off taking the time to consider Christ's gift is eternal separation from Him. Once you die, there is no failsafe second chance at redemption or do over. [Psalm 103:15-18](#) ¹⁵ "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. ¹⁶ For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and its place thereof shall know it no more. ¹⁷ But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children. ¹⁸ To such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them." [1 Peter 1:22-24](#) ²² "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: ²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. ²⁴ For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." We are reminded once again that our time on earth is not only short but also unpredictable. Time is a commodity that can never be renewed. We will look at what happens at death a little further on.

As bad as it is now it's nothing compared to how it's going to be in the Tribulation, which could be likened to craziness on steroids. As mentioned before, do some people think that if the Tribulation comes, they can always make a decision for Christ then. Well, they are playing against a stacked deck. There will be severe environmental global calamities or physical plague level afflictions, let alone the purges that will come from the Antichrist. There will be devastating consequences for the population of those left behind after the rapture and living during the Tribulation with day to day living. Paul expresses this condition as the earth groaning. [Romans 8:22 \(NIV\)](#) "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." As it's already been expressed the thought of people thinking they will have a second chance for salvation during the Tribulation, but what if they never get that chance? There are 3 points which we need to be aware that

will take place in the first half of the Tribulation. 1) A quarter of the population will perish. [Revelation 6:8](#) “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” 2) The devastation will be so great men call out to the rocks to kill them, but God does not allow it. [Revelation 9:6](#) “And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.” 3) An additional third of those survivors will also perish. [Revelation 9:15](#) “And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.” Just to give an idea of what these numbers mean if the Tribulation were to start today there are approximately 7.5 billion people in the world. According to the Pew Research Center’s December 19, 2011, the number of people that self-identify as Christian is 32 % or 2.4 billion. If the Rapture were to happen and every self-claimed Christian were taken it would leave 5.1 billion people on earth. From there a quarter of those left (1.275) would be dead and leave 3.825 billion. A third of those (1.275) dead would leave a total of 2.55 billion. That’s over half of the world population erased from the earth with in a relatively short period of time. These occur during the first half of the Tribulation and before the mid-point. The odds are not in favor of survival.