

# Are We Living in the Last Days?

There was a time when people who warned that the end of the world was eminent were viewed as crazy. They were usually seen in public squares wildly shouting a message of gloom and doom or holding up signs that read, "REPENT! THE END IS NEAR." It was easy to dismiss their message for two reasons: first, those who delivered it almost always suffered from some mental defect. And secondly, the message itself made no sense. After all, our world with all its problems still appeared to be manageable.

Today however, things seem very different. Our world no longer looks like a place where hope can thrive. Serious problems seem to be everywhere. The threat of global terrorism has now migrated from the pages of spy novels to the pages of newspapers. Additionally, issues like crime, racism, poverty, illiteracy, the environment, and even natural disasters appear to be gaining the upper hand on mankind. It would seem that civilization itself is poised for a total meltdown. So now the big question appears to be: were these religious quacks right? Are we living in the last days? Furthermore, is it possible that those who proclaimed such things on street corners just a few decades ago were actually inspired by the forces of darkness so that when the real warning came no one would believe?

## How Can We Know for Sure?

The God of the Bible has staked his reputation as the King of the Universe on His ability to predict the future. The book of Isaiah records His exact words.

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.  
(Isa. 46: 9-10)

These words are clear and direct. They are not cloaked in some cryptic imagery. Here, God is declaring that the future described in the pages of your Bible is as real as He is. With that said what do the scriptures reveal about the end of the world and how do its pronouncements coincide with the world we live in today?

The following are seven keys that identify what the scriptures refer to as the last days. Each key was revealed by Jesus Christ in response to His disciples query: "what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world" (Mt. 24:3)? Additionally, each key is accompanied with a brief analysis of the world we live in today and how that world perfectly reflects Jesus' warning about the time of the end.

### Key I

## A Proliferation of False Religions

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.  
For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;  
and shall deceive many."

Mt. 24:4-5

We live in a world full of religions, with new faiths emerging every day. Today there are 20 different religions with at least 1 million members. Furthermore, In a study on contemporary beliefs in America conducted by Syracuse University in 1990, it was discovered that there were over 2,000 practicing religious leaders calling themselves Christ. Imagine the audacity.

# Major World Religions

Religion	Size
Catholic	1 billion
Christian	1 billion
Islam	1.3 billion
Hinduism	900 million
Secular/Agnostic	850 million
Buddhism	350 million
Chinese Traditional	225 million
Primal-indigenous	150 million
African Traditional	95 million
Sikhism	23 million
Juche	19 million
Spiritism	14 million
Judaism	14 million
Baha'i	6 million
Jainism	4 million
Shinto	4 million
Cao Dai	3 million
Tenrikyo	2.4 million
Neo-Paganism	1 million
Unitarian	800 thousand
Rastafarianism	700 thousand
Scientology	600 thousand
Zoroastrianism	150 thousand

However, when Jesus spoke of religious deception He was addressing something most professing Christians today find nearly impossible to believe. Jesus was warning that in the last days there would emerge false religions that asserted a belief in Him: "Many will come saying I (Jesus) am the Christ and shall deceive many." He actually warned of false ministers on three different occasions during this message. The Messiah even indicated that these "Christ professing" movements would attract large followings but would be false none-the-less (see also: Matthew 24:11).

Today there are literally hundreds of "Christian" denominations in the world. Furthermore, each of these faiths claim that Jesus is the Christ. However, despite this claim, very few of them actually follow the Messiah's example with respect to their walk of faith. And as difficult as this might be to grasp, most of these "believers" proclaim a message of deception.

How is this possible? How can those who profess Jesus Christ be guilty of misleading others? The answer is simple. The vast majority of professing Christians today are not true Christians. They do not teach what Jesus taught, believe what Jesus believed, or do what Jesus did. Instead, most Christians believe they have the right to decide for themselves how they will worship God and His Son. As a result, most "believers" have embraced a faith that is light years away from that found in the scriptures. The apostle Paul understood this reality and wrote of it to the evangelist Timothy. Notice what Paul observed.

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; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2Tim. 4:3-4)

With this in mind think of how many practices and beliefs exist in mainstream Christianity today that are found nowhere in the Bible. For example: the Bible does not say the soul is immortal, that the saved go to heaven or the condemned suffer for all eternity in an ever-burning hell. Nowhere do the scriptures claim that God is trying to save all mankind at this time or that God accepts you just as you are. Furthermore, festivals like Christmas and Easter are not enjoined in the scriptures but rather come from ancient pagan rites and traditions. But these beliefs and festivals are taught from the pulpits of Christian churches every week. If true believers in the first century church were alive today, they would be astonished at where the faith has gone.

The apostle Paul repeatedly warned God's church to beware of those preaching another Jesus (2Cor. 11:4). He actually pronounced to the churches in Galatia a curse on anyone who would preach another gospel (Gal. 1:8-9). Peter not only dealt with men who were willing to pay for the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 8:19-22), but warned in an epistle that "there shall be false teachers... who bring in damnable heresies" (2Pet. 2:1). The apostle John warned Christians to "try the spirits whether they are of God... because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1Jn 4:1). See also Jude 3-4.

When Jesus warned of religious deception thriving in the last days He was proclaiming that man-made faiths would be everywhere with a doctrine to fit anyone's way of thinking. And although false teachings infested the true faith in the first century, such teachings have literally consumed the world today. They are everywhere.

## Key II A Fascination with the Occult

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

1Tim. 4:1

In the western world today there is a significant rise in curiosity about spiritism, psychic phenomena, and even demonology and witchcraft. The Manchester (England) Guardian Weekly reported in the late 1990's that there were an estimated 60,000 witches in England. Today that number has grown to 80,000. This growth has been called a "renaissance in witchcraft". Furthermore, there are now open schools in witchcraft that teach "psychic self-defense" as well as the history of witchcraft. "Paganism is also becoming prominent in the United States. There are approximately 2 million Americans who adhere to some form of the occult. Additionally, although the Bible and prayer were officially banned from U.S. public schools in 1962, many of these same institutions offer their pupils accredited courses in witchcraft and other pagan practices.

Furthermore, the demonic religion of Satanism has dramatically increased among teenagers. According to Rick Hatfield, director of Bry Lin Hospital's adult and adolescent inpatient chemical dependency treatment facility near Buffalo, New York, "Satanism is one of the greatest and most prevalent threats facing kids today." Hatfield, who has worked in drug treatment programs throughout the United States, said during the last six years he has seen a dramatic increase in the number of adolescents lured into Satanism.

Some authorities believe that a major cause of people getting caught up in the "dark side" of the spirit world is that they've been disillusioned by the apparent absence of spiritual reality in traditional religions. One such authority is Colonel Kobus Jonker, the head of the police's Occult Investigations Unit in Pretoria, South Africa. Colonel Jonker blames what he calls the "spiritual bankruptcy" of established churches in South Africa for the tendency of teenagers to dabble in the occult. He went on to say, "You can actually feel the deadness in many of our churches. There's nothing going on." As a result, "Satanism is increasing, especially the serious cases; murder, assaults."

To many Satan is viewed as a fascinating creature with a genuine interest in mankind and his carnal existence. According to Anton LaVey, Satanist High Priest of the First Church of Satan in San Francisco in his book *The Satanic Bible*: "We hold Satan as a symbolic personal savior, who takes care of mundane, fleshly, carnal things." LaVey went on to say that "God exists as a universal force, a balancing factor in nature, too impersonal to care one whit whether we live or die. Therefore, the Judeo-Christian God is inaccessible and has no compassion. Thus, Satan becomes the solution to man's deepest needs."

Another field in which witchcraft and Satanism have made tremendous inroads is our contemporary culture—especially music. One only has to see the avalanche of album covers and rock videos that promote the symbols, liturgies, and rituals of witchcraft and the occult to draw this conclusion. Many display an open worship of Satan and the netherworld. These brazen acts of simulated evil are now socially acceptable and defended in the name of "freedom of expression." However, the Bible sees them quite differently. They are manifestations of a very dark spirit world—a world bent on destroying man and God's plan for him. Is it any wonder that at the time of the end the forces of darkness would exert such pressure on mankind to reject the God who made him?

### Key III War and Violence

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... For nation will  
rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

Mt.24:6-7

When giving the Olivet Prophecy, Jesus identified a series of events that would define the end of the world. Furthermore, He exhorted His followers to be mindful of conditions in the world and how they would play out. Early in this extraordinary message, Jesus indicated that in the last days the world would be filled with war and conflict.

The term "nation" used by Matthew when recording Jesus' words is very interesting. It comes from the Greek word *ethnos*. It is where we get the terms "ethnic" and "ethnicity." *Ethnos* is a term that pertains to race or nationality, not to country or realm. Here, almost 2000 years ago, Jesus was warning that in the last days, great racial strife would punctuate a significant part of our world.

Today, race is at the center of almost all political discourse and the emotions run deep. In the United States, racial tensions have fractured what was once a great melting pot, and if Jesus' words come to pass, the emotions will move from words and escalate to full-blown violence.

But it is not just the United States that faces increased racial conflict.

According to the Associated Press (AP) murders perpetrated by dominant clans or ethnic groups in nations against other clans or ethnic groups in their own countries have exceeded the deaths caused by wars with rivals outside their borders. In the seven years following the end of the Cold War in 1989, an estimated 101 conflicts raged. Most were wars not between states but within states. They were fought by

opposing groups with unsophisticated weapons. In Rwanda, for example, much of the killing was done with machetes. The following reveals the scope of death suffered as a result of internal conflicts within nations.

### Estimated death tolls resulting from Civil wars fought in the 1990's.

Nation	Year(s)	Casualties
Algeria	1992-1993	75,000
Burundi	1993-1999	200,000
Guatemala	1960-1996	200,000
Kosovo	1998	unknown
Liberia	1989-1997	150,000
Northern Ireland	1968-1998	3,250
Rwanda	1994	500,000-1 million
Sierra Leone	1992-1999	14,000
Sri Lanka	1983-1999	57,000
Sudan	1983-1999	1.5 million
Turkey	1984-1999	37,000

### “Kingdom [shall rise] against kingdom”

Although war has been a part of human history down through the ages nothing matches the destructive power it has unleashed on our planet during the 20th century. According to the International Red Cross over 100 million people have been killed in wars during this period.

Prior to 1914, war had never been global. However, in both World War I and II, that all changed. In WW II only 12 small nations on earth were not militarily or technically involved. During that period 93 million people served in the armed forces of both sides. Of those, a staggering 25 million lost their lives. Additionally, civilian casualties were unprecedented: In the Soviet Union alone, over 20 million civilians died as a result of the war.

Military conflicts in the 20th century have reached an unprecedented level. One leading journalist characterized such conflicts as “total war on total population for total stakes”—and for good reason. Since World War II, which was supposed to be “the war to end all wars,” there have been over 150 major wars (conflicts resulting in over 1,000 deaths a year), as well as hundreds of smaller conflicts, armed rebellions and revolutions. The death toll in armed conflicts since the end of World War II is more than 23,000,000 people. The barbarian wars of centuries past were alley fights by comparison.

### The Threat of Extinction

No matter how leaders try to masquerade it, we are a world at war. Violence now manifests itself in every corner of the globe. And the casualties are growing by the day. The threat of terrorism is so real that experts are now regarding it as imminent. Some have even suggested that in the next few months the United States may suffer an attack that will be far more devastating than the one it experienced on 9-11. Imagine the impact such a thing would have on our nation.

Additionally, America and some of its allies are still entrenched in a bloody war in Iraq. And although its motives may be honorable, the price it must pay may be greater than it can bear. Since coalition forces inaugurated the war to liberate Iraq over 1,500 US servicemen have lost their lives in that region, not to mention tens of thousands of Iraqis.

Furthermore, pro Saddam factions as well as terrorist sympathizers within Iraq have resorted to barbaric savagery in an attempt to win the hearts of fanatics throughout the Middle East, as well as to strike fear in the hearts of America and its allies. Who can block out the images of people like Nicholas Berg, Jack Hensley, Eugene Armstrong, and Daniel Pearl whose grizzly executions now appear on the Internet for all to see?

The real tragedy here is that there is no evidence things are getting better. By all indications things may actually be getting worse. While the U.S. is embroiled in mortal combat in Iraq, other nations may pose an even bigger threat. In addition to countries like the United States, England, Russia and even Israel having nuclear capabilities, new players have now emerged on the nuclear scene. Places like North Korea, Iran, India and its mortal enemy Pakistan each have aggressive nuclear weapons programs that may pose a clear and present danger to what little stability exists in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, sales in the world arms trade continue to soar with estimates approaching over 50 billion dollars. Furthermore, global military budgets are in excess of 850 billion dollars with the United States consuming nearly half.

## A Culture of Violence

Another condition Jesus said would be prevalent immediately prior to His return would be unrestrained violence: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Mt.24:37). According to the book of Genesis the days of Noah were punctuated with unspeakable violence, "the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11).

Tragically, society today is replaying the savagery that filled the earth nearly 5,000 years ago. One only has to read the headlines of any newspaper to see the escalation of horrible acts of carnage man commits with seeming impunity. In the U.S. alone, the statistics for violent crime are staggering. According to the FBI, on average a person is murdered every 22 minutes; someone is raped every four minutes, and a robbery is committed every 26 seconds.

The Reuters News agency reported that U.S. crime levels are skyrocketing. "America is a ticking violent crime bomb, and there is little time remaining to prepare for the blast," said the report, which noted the rise in youth violence. Reuters went on to report that official FBI statistics on crime were only the tips of the iceberg. The research indicates that based on surveys of victims and not just crimes reported to the police, violent crime — including murder, rape, assault and burglary — was 5.6 times higher than those reported.

According to the Washington Post, Murders and suicides [in the U.S.] are now occurring at a rate of more than 145 a day. In the past 30 years alone, the total exceeds 1,200,000 people, more than all the men killed in all the wars in the history of the United States. And many of these recent victims are not men and women; they are children.

Jack Levin, a sociology professor at Northeastern University in Boston, warned that the current increase in homicides by juveniles as young as 14 and 15 is a precursor of worse things to come: "They are in the leading edge of the mini-baby boom of children of the original post-World War II baby boomers, and they haven't yet reached the 18- to 24-year-old age group that traditionally commits the overwhelming majority of murders." Levin went on to say "They aren't even there yet, but they're committing homicide. What are they going to do for an encore?"

Furthermore, in the United States, simulated killing has become a part of its obsession with violence. It has been estimated that the average child will witness over 25,000 acts of violence via movies, television and video games before he or she reaches 18. Consider what our children are learning: One of the most popular video games in America requires players to steal cars, fornicate with a prostitute, then kill the prostitute in order to retrieve the money paid for her "services." One mother who purchased this game

stated, "I don't think it's wrong because that is not where my child learns morals." When her 13-year-old son was interviewed regarding the game his mother had purchased for him, he said, "I think it's cool. It's the closest thing to killing someone without really doing it."

Today, America is more violent than at any time in its history. Whether it's talk of war, gangs, domestic violence, crime, recreation, or abortion, we have become a nation obsessed with blood. This obsession has driven a wedge between America and the God of Heaven. The great prophet Isaiah was inspired to proclaim that Israel was estranged from its Creator because of their sins. And specifically mentioned were acts of violence.

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness."  
(Isa. 59:2-3)

Consider these words in light of America's position on abortion. Since the Supreme Court handed down its decision (Roe v. Wade) in 1973, over 46 million have been performed. This practice which was once viewed as heinous is defended in the name of liberty. If the United States and its people truly wish to be reconnected to a God who is perfectly capable of protecting them from terrorist attacks or any other threat, then perhaps they should stop engaging in such acts themselves. Americans can shout to the top of their lungs that they are lovers of freedom if they wish. But when that freedom means the right to destroy the unborn, the voice of the King of the Universe also thunders. And His words are clear: "CHOOSE LIFE" (Dt. 30:19).

Meanwhile as America proclaims that murder can be treated as a game or an expression of freedom, Arab nations around the world teach their children to aspire to become "suicide bombers." They actually sing songs in primary schools that proclaim the nobility of strapping on explosives and going out to kill the "apes and pigs" (Jews).

When Jesus likened the last days to those in the time of Noah, He wasn't just guessing. He knew full well that mankind would reach a state when once again the world would be full of violence. When that time arrived, the end would be near.

#### Key IV Hunger and Famine

"And there shall be famines ..."

Mt.24:7

When speaking of the last days, Jesus warned that famine would exact a horrible blow to mankind and that the effects would cause untold suffering. Today, man battles hunger and despite his best efforts, hunger seems to be gaining the advantage. Despite all the technological advancement this world has produced, more people die of starvation than perish in war.

The World Bank reported in September 1996 that more than 800 million people go hungry every day, and more than 500 million children do not get enough food to fully develop mentally and physically. Additionally, 40,000 hunger-related deaths occur every day.

Lester Brown, president of the Washington think-tank, Worldwatch Institute, said, "Ironically, in an era of high technology, of space exploration, the World Wide Web, and organ transplants, humanity was suddenly struggling in 1996 with one of the most ancient of challenges — how to make it to the next harvest."

The WHO (World Health Organization) estimates that about 4 million people a year die of starvation, or about 30 people every minute. According to World Bank vice president Ismail Serageldin. It is estimated that one third of the world is well-fed, one third is under-fed, and one third is starving. More than 800 million people are chronically undernourished. (WHO) Furthermore, water shortages in parts of the world in the next 25 years will pose the single greatest threat to food production and human health. 1.3 billion people worldwide have no access to clean water. (World Bank)

The terrible irony is that the world can produce enough food to feed its expanding population. While some famines are caused by drought or other natural disasters, most starvation in the world today could be avoided were it not for man's selfishness and inhumanity. War, embargoes, government corruption and economic oppression are all symptoms of the real problem. While innocent children starve, some rich nations destroy millions of tons of food in order to keep prices artificially high.

## Key V Natural Disasters

"And there shall be earthquakes, in divers places ..."

Mt. 24:7

On December 26, 2004 Indonesia was hit with a massive tsunami stemming from a 9.0 earthquake in the Indian Ocean. When visiting the region, U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell said,

"I have never seen anything like it."

Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, a leader of one of the rescue teams in Thailand described the scene this way.

"Only during the great flood in Genesis have there been sights like this, so many corpses, so many. We are experiencing ... something from the days of Genesis."

Although earthquakes seem like a common occurrence today, that hasn't always been the case. According to the UNIVERSAL ALMANAC there were only 21 earthquakes of major strength between the years 1000 and 1800. Between 1800 and 1900 there were 18 major earthquakes. In the next 50 years, between 1900 and 1950, there were 33 major quakes — almost as many as the number in the preceding 850 years!

However, between 1950 and 1991 there were 93 major earthquakes — almost triple the number of the previous half century — which claimed the lives of 1.3 million people around the world. This dramatic increase of severe quakes has led many scientists to predict that we are entering a new period of great seismic disturbances. Additionally, the devastation of high magnitude earthquakes is potentially much greater than in times past because of the high concentration of populations. According to Roger Bilham, Ph.D. and professor of Geological Sciences at the University of Colorado, "Fatality counts exceeding one million are not an unreasonable projection given that 50 percent of an urban population can be lost in a single earthquake." While major earthquakes "have generally spared the world's urban centers in recent decades, this trend will not persist indefinitely."

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write of massive earthquakes in the last days,

"The foundations of the earth are shaken. The earth is ... shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut ... in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall" (Isa. 24:18-20; 30:35).

The words of Isaiah were inspired by the same God who spoke them on the Mount of Olives over a half a millennium later. In the last days earthquakes will appear in all parts of the world. And when they do know that the end is near.

## Key VI Moral Depravity

"As it was in the days of Lot ... even thus shall it be  
in the day when the Son of Man is revealed"

Lk. 17:28-30

In the United States today there are three adult bookstores for every McDonald's restaurant. Add to that the countless strip clubs, "massage parlors" and "escort services" and you begin to get a picture of our nation's obsession with promiscuity. Furthermore, movies and magazines promoting every perversion imaginable number in the thousands. Today pornography is a multi- billion-dollar industry. It floods the internet and can even be accessed on cable television.

The real tragedy is that smut is gaining respectability. Today it is marketed as a healthy recreation when done in moderation. We now have "gentlemen's clubs" and "soft porn." Even the Supreme Court has softened its position on sex trafficking. Last year it blocked the enforcement of the 1998 Child Protection Act. This legislation would have banned online pornography accessible to children, and set heavy penalties on those who would purvey it to any minor. The court concluded that such a law was unenforceable and therefore should be removed. Perhaps the greatest tragedy rendered by this esteemed community of jurists is revealed in what they did not do. Sadly, there were no votes asserting that pornography was horribly wrong and posed a clear and present danger to this country. But lo, it seems that these nine justices who preside over the judicial branch of our government believe that even smut is a protected form of speech.

The Bible speaks with great force regarding sexual immorality (pornea) and to suggest that God simply opposes it is a huge understatement. God HATES this sin! He abhors it! He does so in part because it goes totally contrary to His purpose for mankind. God invented sex and revealed its proper use. Consider what Jesus Himself said when explaining why God created man and woman in the first place. When speaking to the religious leaders of His day, Jesus said: "Have you not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Mt.19:4-5). The words the Messiah used when speaking to the Pharisees at this time were taken from the very first marriage ceremony in history. They were used in the Garden of Eden when God joined Adam and Eve together as husband and wife (Gen. 2:24).

Later the apostle Paul used the identical words spoken by Jesus, and explained that the God ordained purpose for marriage was to picture the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church (Eph.5:31-32). Imagine that! God designed sex and marriage to picture something divine. Marriage involves intimacy and trust and contrary to what some may argue, pornography doesn't advance either of these wonderful qualities. Pornography is a wrecker of lives, a thief of innocence, and a destroyer of civilizations. It is an enemy that man would be wise to avoid because despite what so many contend, this is one thing that cannot be done in moderation. In the United States sexual addiction has reached epidemic proportions and the numbers keep growing. Despite this fact, our culture can't seem to get enough of it. One only has to go to the Internet to find virtually thousands of examples of smut and filth laid "bare" in the name of freedom.

At this point, it is important to understand that mankind was created in the very image of God Himself. With this in mind, what does the exploitation of sex say to that Creator? Does it reinforce His purpose for

love and family or does it mock that purpose? Does it show deference to the Eternal God of heaven or does it mock Him (Gal.6:7). Mankind may be ambivalent when it comes to sexual immorality but God most definitely is not. Here is what He says about such things: Jesus said adultery "defiles the man" (Matt.15:19). In the Old Testament God declared to Israel that it was a capital offense (Lev.20:10). In the New Testament the apostle Paul called it a work of the flesh (Gal.5:9).

When it comes to fornication the scriptures are just as clear in their condemnation. Paul called it a sin against the body (1Cor.6:18). Jesus indicated that it was grounds for annulling a marriage (Mt.5:32). But it doesn't end there. The Bible also speaks powerfully against other sexual sins that are frequently seen in pornography. For example: pornographic depictions of homosexuality have become very popular in the western world. However, once again God's word thunders His indictment against this perversion. The apostle Paul called homosexuals "lawless and disobedient" (1Tim.1:10). The book of Deuteronomy states that their sacrifices were not acceptable to God (Dt.23:17-18). In the Old Testament the penalty for such behavior was death (Lev.20:13). In the New Testament the pronouncement is even worse. When writing to the church at Corinth, Paul included homosexuals among those who would not enter God's Kingdom (1Cor.6:9). Clearly the God of the Bible understands promiscuity to be a mortal threat to man's happiness and as such condemns it in all its forms. Despite this truth, America leads the way in its disdain of morality.

Today, organizations that espouse traditional values have actually been characterized as extremist. The Boy Scouts of America are just one example. This institution, which has long been regarded as a builder of character in millions of American boys is now labeled in the secular world as a "hate group" because of their position on homosexuality. They were actually booed at a national political convention when they came out as the designated honor guard carrying the American flag. But there is much more.

Social engineers like the ACLU and People for the American Way, which exert tremendous political and cultural influence, will in one breath argue that the mention of God in a public setting poses a clear and present danger to the republic, and in the next, defend an artist's right to display a work entitled *Piss Christ* as essential in preserving our liberties. Hot on the heels of this logic is an avalanche of smut and garbage posing as freedom of expression – but God forbid anyone call it what it really is.

When Jesus warned that the last days would resemble those that were lived out in the days of Lot He was identifying the basest of sexual sins. Homosexuality is not only growing in acceptance around the world, it is actually being promoted.

In 1992, The Sex Information and Education Council of the United States came up with national guidelines for sex education in America's public schools. These guidelines, from one of the most prestigious private educational groups in the country, now teach that "no form of sexual orientation or family structure is morally superior to any other." This move to teach America's children to accept homosexuality received the official endorsement of the American Medical Association.

The British Broadcasting Corporation now gives homosexual workers who take part in "a formal ceremony of commitment" a week's paid holiday to go on their honeymoon. Additionally, they also give the couple a 75-pound (\$140 U.S.) gift as a wedding present.

For over a decade France has extended medical benefits to non-working partners in homosexual relationships. According to the Associated press, the order marks a milestone for homosexual couples in having their unions officially recognized.

Last month the Reuters news agency reported that the European Parliament has ruled that the European Union should allow homosexual couples to marry and adopt or foster children. EU states should also set the same age of consent for homosexual and heterosexual activities, it said in a resolution calling for all laws that criminalize and discriminate against sexual acts between people of the same sex to be abolished.

The United Church of Christ recently began running television ads promoting their acceptance of homosexuals. This organization which claims to follow the scriptures asserts that homosexuals have suffered the same discrimination as African-Americans and deserves the same protection.

When Jesus prophesied that the last days would be like those during the time of Lot, He was underscoring how much today's world would be "without natural affection." Nothing more graphically illustrates this point than the prevalence and acceptance of homosexuality in our world. This practice is also known as sodomy (after the ancient city, Sodom, where "all the men from every part of the city, both young and old" attempted to have sex with the male angels who were visiting the home of Lot, the nephew of the great patriarch Abraham's. That night the city was destroyed (Genesis 19:4-5). Tragically, our society's view on sodomy is becoming more like that which prevailed in Sodom "in the days of Lot."

Key VII

## The Gospel Shall be Preached

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the End come"

Mt.24:14

The gospel of the kingdom is something that links all the champions of the faith, from the Old Testament prophets to his end-time servants. Furthermore, unlike other warnings Jesus said would identify the last days, this particular announcement was specifically linked to His return to earth to subdue the nations.

Never before in human history has the fulfillment of this prophecy been possible. Not only has advancements in technology opened doors that were once unavailable to God's servants, but even the geopolitical landscape has changed as well. With the fall of places like the Soviet Union and East Germany as well as the emergence of democracies, religious freedom is far more prominent in the world today.

According to most estimates almost two billion people on earth had never heard the phonetic utterance "Jesus Christ" let alone heard His gospel message just ten years ago. Today that has all changed. According to The Almanac of the Christian World Christianity has touched virtually every country in the world. Furthermore, over 50 million Bibles are distributed every year, as well as nearly 80 million New Testaments. The entire Bible or parts thereof are now available to about 98 percent of the world's population, having been translated partially or entirely into over 2,000 different languages.

Additionally, there are over 3 billion books with Christian themes being printed every year by more than 1,500 presses and publishers. Additionally, over 3,000 radio and television stations carry messages pertaining to the Bible.

Never in the course of history has it been possible to preach the Gospel in all the world to all nations as it is right now. — If not directly by God's true servants, it is certainly being preached in part via modern mediums of radio, television, and telecommunications. This is a conclusive prophecy by Jesus that shows that we are now living in the time of the end!

### **A Final Thought**

Are we living in the last days? If the answer to this question is "no" then Jesus Christ is a liar and the Bible cannot be trusted. Furthermore, God himself must be regarded as a fake. It is true that every generation has thought that it was the last, but no preceding one has ever matched Jesus warning with such precision. Every biblical pronouncement regarding the end of man's rule on this planet coincides

perfectly with the world we live in. We may not know the day or the hour of the Messiah's return to this world, but we can know the season. And make no mistake about it, we are in that season.