

Session 7

Negative Sign Trends, Events, People, and Personalities

A. Introduction

1. The Day of the Lord as mentioned in Joel 2:11 is both “great” and “very terrible”. The “very terrible” Day of the Lord speaks of increased negative trends and events that will take place. This will be the greatest crisis in all of human history (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21).
2. As believers, it is important to know and understand the negative sign trends, events, people, and personalities that will take place and arise during the End Times, as God speaks much through His Scripture about them.
3. The 150 chapters on the End Times cover these negative trends, events and people in detail. The fact that God’s Word includes so much about them means that the Lord desires us to know and understand, not so that we will live in fear and paranoia, but so that we can lean into Him for grace to grow strong and overcome.
4. In His love and concern for His people, Jesus warns us of what is ahead and also exhorts us to prepare so that we can stand in the midst of this time of great trouble.

B. The Primary Negative Sign Trends and Events in the End Times

1. There will be increasing societal moral decay, truth crises, witchcraft and idolatry, and sexual immorality that will reach their fullness at the End of the Age (Rev. 9:21; 2 Tim. 4:3).
2. The Beginning of Birth Pangs as recorded in Jesus’ Olivet Discourse in the gospels of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. When studied together, Jesus gives us 12 major worldwide sign trends that will take place as we draw nearer to the End of the Age:
 - a. False christs (Matt. 24:5; Mk. 13:6; Lk. 21:8);
 - b. War — including military and political conflict (Matt. 24:6; Mk. 13:7; Lk. 21:9);

- c. Ethnic conflict with civil disorder and racism as nations (ethnos) rise against nations (Matt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8);
 - d. Economic warfare or economic hostility and aggression that sees kingdoms competing against kingdoms (Matt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8);
 - e. Famines or massive food shortages (Matt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11);
 - f. Pestilences or fearful epidemic diseases (Matt. 24:7; Lk. 21:11);
 - g. Earthquakes in various places (Matt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11);
 - h. Troubles or events that cause pressure (Mk. 13:8);
 - i. Commotions or chaotic events (Lk. 21:9);
 - j. Fearful sights that are unusual and terrifying (Lk. 21:11);
 - k. Great signs from heaven including cosmic or atmospheric signs (Lk. 21:11);
 - l. Persecution of God's people (Matt. 24:9–14, 36–41; Lk. 21:12–19).
3. Establishment of the 10-Nation Confederation (Dan. 7:20, 24)
- a. There will be an emergence of a one-world government based on the revived Roman Empire with a 10-nation confederation.
4. Counterfeit Worldwide Peace and Safety (Isa. 28:14-18; Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:1-2; 1 Thes. 5:2-3)
- a. The Antichrist will reveal himself as a man of peace and will establish a political peace treaty with many nations, including Israel and the Middle Eastern nations, as we enter into the final 7 years of human history. This will be a time of temporary peace and safety for the world.
 - b. In the midst of this counterfeit worldwide peace and safety, there will be heavy persecution against the saints.
5. The Great Falling Away
- a. Scripture talks about how many will fall away from the faith as we near the End of the Age (2 Thes. 2:3). Thus, there will be a great harvest of souls, but also a great falling away.

- b. The Great Falling Away will not happen on a single day, but over a period of time where many in the Church will be deceived into being a part of the Harlot-Babylon worldwide economic system and religious entity.
 - c. Many false teachers will also arise to deceive believers into departing from the faith (Matt. 24:9–13; 1 Tim. 4:1 – 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:1–8; 4:3–5; Jude 1:18–19; 2 Pet. 3:3–5).
 - d. Presently, we are already seeing a few prominent and high-profile believers who have announced (primarily via online social media) their departure from Christianity.
6. The Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 9:7, 11:21, 12:11; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:2–4)
- a. The Abomination of Desolation is an event mentioned in Daniel 11 and 12, and subsequently referenced by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14), that will be the pinnacle of man’s evil and rebellion in the eyes of God.
 - b. This is an event where Antichrist will walk into God’s temple, *“sit as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”* (2 Thes. 2:4). This will result in God’s judgment being poured out on Antichrist and his allies.
7. Unprecedented Persecution of the Saints (Rev. 17:6)
- a. The Bible clearly states that the Church will undergo persecution in the End Times. The books of Daniel and Revelation give clear indication that Antichrist will persecute the saints, and that some would be martyred in the midst of persecution (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:7).
 - b. Throughout the centuries, since the book of Acts, there has been constant persecution against the Church of Jesus Christ.
 - c. In 2020, Open Doors UK stated that, *“A staggering 260 million Christians in the top 50 countries on the World Watch List face high or extreme levels of persecution for their faith. That’s 15 million more people than the previous year. Open Doors estimates that there are another 50 million Christians facing high levels of persecution in a further 23 countries outside the top 50.”*¹

¹ Simon. “World Watch List 2020: 260 million Christians face persecution in Top 50 countries.” *OpenDoorsUK*, 15 Jan. 2020, <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/world-watch-list-2020/>. Accessed 11 May 2021.

- d. The persecution that many believers face around the world will continue to escalate, become more widespread, and reach its fullness in unprecedented intensity in the last 7 years of human history.

C. The Primary Negative People and Personalities in the End Times

1. The Antichrist

- a. The final world ruler who will arise before the Second Coming of Jesus. He is a literal person who will persecute and attack Israel and the people of God (1 Jn. 2:18; 2 Thes. 2:3). He will be the most brilliant, most powerful and most evil political leader in all of human history.

2. The False Prophet (Rev. 13:11–14; 19:20)

- a. This is a real person who will seduce and deceive the nations to follow and worship the Antichrist through moving in supernatural power and performing signs and wonders. He will establish a worldwide Antichrist worship movement, which will be financed by the Mark-of-the-Beast economic system.

3. Image of the Beast (Rev. 13:15)

- a. It is a demonically empowered image of the Antichrist that will combine cutting edge technology with supernatural power that will enable this image to speak. Those who refuse to worship the image of the Beast will be killed, and laws will be enacted to legalise the killing of all who refuse to worship Antichrist and his image.

4. Mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16–17)

- a. This is both an economic and a religious mark. The Antichrist and False Prophet will require those who want to transact and trade to take on the Mark of the Beast. Putting on this Mark will also signify one's allegiance and loyalty to Antichrist and to Satan.
- b. It is one of the most important developments that believers need to be aware of and gain understanding in, as Scripture is clear that anyone who takes on this Mark will automatically receive eternal judgment (Rev. 14:9–10).
- c. This Mark will be instituted in the final 3½ years of human history, and is a counterfeit to the seal of God with which God's people who are faithful will be sealed.

5. The Harlot-Babylon (Rev. 17 – 18)
 - a. Revelation 17 and 18 prophesies of the emergence of the powerful, evil, seductive, and deceptive Harlot-Babylon — a worldwide economic and religious entity that will be Satan’s main strategy to deceive the Church, Israel, and nations during the End Times.