



SUGAR LAND BIBLE CHURCH  
"BRINGING THE BIBLE TO LIFE FOR 39 YEARS  
1982 - 2021"



THE CORNERSTONE

June 2021



# All aboard!

Sugar Land Bible Church

VBS June 7-11, 2021

Boys and Girls, Moms and Dads, prepare yourselves for a great adventure on the Rocky Railway Express!

It's Here don't miss the train. It departs June 7th at 9:00 am.

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## Missions for the Month

# Village Ministries!



Buildings for Sri Lanka

## Matching Grant Opportunity

Sri Lanka's constitution allows for freedom of religion. However, there are some requirements that must be met for a church to legally function. One such law is that churches must own their own property and building. Until a few years ago, the government pretty much turned a blind eye to churches that rented

houses, buildings, or used other facilities to meet. In some cases, even tea plantation owners would grant the use of one of their buildings for a church to use. All came to a screeching halt just over a year ago.

*Persecution of Christians in Sri Lanka is brought about by Hindus, Buddhists, and a few isolated radical Muslims. They do anything they can to disrupt Christians from meeting for worship and evangelizing. Verbal confrontations and physical violence are common and in some cases they even bomb or burn church buildings. Since the Easter suicide bombings in 2019, the Islamic faction residing in Sri Lanka has come under intense government scrutiny, essentially eliminating them as an imminent threat. However, this has given way for the Hindus and Buddhist to step up their activities against Christians. In late 2019 these groups began to use the technicality of Sri Lankan law to further disrupt Christian church activities. These groups put constant pressure on the local police to go to churches that don't own their own property and building and insist that the police shut them down. This is the case for a few of our churches in Sri Lanka.*

The situation with church buildings in Sri Lanka is a critical issue. Churches are not being allowed to operate, severely hindering His message from going forth. God in His grace cannot be stopped and He has given a provision to assist with this critical need. VMI recently received a matching grant from SLBC to provide for three completed church buildings in Sri Lanka. This matching grant will match dollar for dollar up to \$20,000 for church buildings. We are so thankful to the Lord for providing for this need and ask for your prayers for this project as we look to the Lord. As always, updates will be reported on what the Lord provides as well as details of the



**Andy Woods—Pastor**

## **Signs of the Times for 2021**

### **(Part 16)**

In our first installment, we observed that the Bible places much emphasis on the signs related to Christ's return (Matt. 24:33; Luke 21:28; Heb. 10:25, etc.). Observing these signs helps us ascertain that general time of human history in which we find ourselves. We noted that if the signs of the Tribulation period are rapidly approaching, and the rapture of the Church precedes the Tribulation period, then the rapture must be coming even faster. Thus, we began to ask ourselves, what are some of these signs that are now setting the stage for the coming Tribulation period? We selected the following *seven* signs as deserving of analysis to be covered in this series:

1. Signs related to Israel
2. Signs related to international politics
3. Signs related to economics
4. Signs related to technology
5. Signs related to spirituality
6. Signs related to society
7. Signs related to understanding Bible prophecy

Therefore, this series is dedicated to exploring the *seven* signs related to the soon return of Jesus Christ. As a result of this teaching, may we all grow in our understanding of the unique time in which we now live. As dealt with in the prior installments in this series, there are several signs meriting discussion concerning the modern state of *Israel* and *international politics* and signs related to *economics* and *technology*. In this installment, we continue to turn our attention toward the predicted *spiritual signs* of the last days.

### **5. Signs Related to Spirituality**

The Bible has much to say about the *spiritual* climate that will characterize the world at the time of Christ's Second Advent. While there is much to consider, for our purposes we will limit ourselves to just six categories. These include the advent of *global persecution against believers*, *global religion*, *ecumenism*, *ridicule of the doctrine of the Second Advent*, *the last days apostasy of the Church*, and *the rise of Antisemitism*. Having already explored the trend toward *persecution* and *global religion* and *ecumenism* in prior installments, let us now turn our attention to *ridicule of the doctrine of the Second Advent* and *the last days apostasy of the Church*.

### **Ridicule of the Second Advent**

Another spiritual sign of the last days will involve ridicule of the doctrine of the Second Coming. Second Peter 3:3-4 says, "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.'" Interestingly, according to Peter's predictions, when people malign the subject of Bible prophecy, they are fulfilling it. Although disparaging the doctrine of Christ's physical and soon return is expected from the unsaved world, it is shocking to see such ridicule of



the Second Coming emanating from within Christendom itself. Pastor Rick Warren, in his *Purpose Driven Life*, which is a runaway best seller, says this concerning the whole field of Biblical Eschatology:

When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. He said in essence, 'The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I have given you. Focus on that!' If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy. Speculating on the exact timing of Christ's return is futile, because Jesus said, 'No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.' Since Jesus said He did not know the day or hour, why should you try to figure it out? What we do know for sure is this: Jesus will not return until everyone God wants to hear the Good News has heard it.

Warren goes on to say:

Jesus said, 'The Good News about God's kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come.' If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy. It is easy to get distracted and sidetracked from your mission because Satan would rather have you do anything besides sharing your faith. He will let you do all kinds of good things as long as you do not take anyone to heaven with you. But the moment you become serious about your mission, expect the Devil to throw all kinds of diversions at you. When that happens, remember the words of Jesus: 'Anyone who lets himself be distracted from the work I plan for him is not fit for the Kingdom of God.' [Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 285-86.]

This quote represents what is called in logic a straw man argument. When people employ this logical fallacy, they misrepresent their opponent's position and then tear down their misrepresentation. Warren here builds a mischaracterization of those involved in the study of and proclamation of Bible prophecy. In other words, he says a lot of things about them that simply are not true: they are focused on something that God does not care about, they do not care about evangelism, they are speculating about the exact date of Christ's return, they are distracted from their God-given mission, they are giving in to the influence of Satan, they are not serious about their ministry, and they are not even fit for the kingdom of God. Notice again how this ridicule against the doctrine of the Second Coming emanates from within the church. It is being launched from a popular Christian pastor and Christian best-selling author.

Other examples of internal attacks against the doctrine of the bodily return of Christ, in fulfillment of Peter's last days predictions, abound. For example, the Evangelical Free Church of America recently amended its time-honored statement of faith to exclude Premillennialism, or the belief that Christ would usher in His kingdom following His Second Advent, on the grounds that such a belief allegedly represents a mere secondary issue.

The denomination drops end times doctrine from its statement of faith in a move to 'major on the majors' and 'minor on the minors.' The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) changed its position on end times theology, voting this summer to drop the word 'premillennial' from the denomination's statement of faith... Premillennialism has been a 'denominational distinctive' for the EFCA, according to the document, but shouldn't be overemphasized. [EFCA Now Considers Premillennialism a Non-Essential," by Daniel Silliman, Christianity Today, 8/23/19].

One well-known pastor recently even went so far as to say that if you post your eschatological beliefs on

your church website, then you are in sin since you are allegedly dividing Christ's church by transforming a secondary issue into a primary one.

Therefore, I conclude that it is sin to divide the body of Christ—to divide the body that he prayed would be united. Therefore, for us to conclude that we must agree upon a certain view of alcohol, or a certain view of schooling, or a certain view of meat sacrificed to idols, or a certain view of the millennium to have fellowship together is, I think, not only unnecessary for the body of Christ, but it is therefore both unwarranted and therefore condemned by scripture. So, if you are a pastor and you are listening to me, you understand me correctly if you think I am saying you are in sin if you lead your congregation to have a statement of faith that requires a particular millennial view. I do not understand why that has to be a matter of uniformity to have Christian unity in a local congregation." [Justin Taylor, "Dever: 'You Are in Sin If You Lead Your Congregation to Have a Statement of Faith that Requires a Particular Millennial View,'" online <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/dever-you-are-in-sin-if-you-lead-your/>, July 14, 2009, accessed May 28, 2019].

Of course, the idea that Premillennialism is a secondary issue would be a notion foreign to the church's earliest church fathers. According to early church father Justin Martyr:

But I and every other completely orthodox Christian feel certain that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, followed by a thousand years in the rebuilt, embellished, and enlarged city of Jerusalem as was announced by the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the others. [*Dialogue with Trypho*, 80.]

### **The Apostasy of the Church**

Another spiritual sign of the last days is the apostasy of the church. Second Timothy 4:3-4 predicts, "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." Paul here anticipates a time when Christ's church would become *anthropocentric*, or man-centered, rather than *theocentric*, or God-centered. Sadly, today, the carnal impulses and dictates of the masses largely control the direction of most churches rather than divine priorities.

What controls many churches are people placing exorbitant pressure on their own shepherds with the following slogans: "Remember how much money I give to this church. Make sure there are enough programs for my kids. Tell me again how God wants to bless me. Please refer to sin as bad choices. Do not mention hell too much, it makes me feel bad. What can Jesus do for me? Tickle my ears. Tell me how to get rich. Be relevant. Give me only good news. If you do not do things my way I am leaving." What is happening to a large extent is the shepherds are being controlled by the sheep. It is supposed to be the other way around! Shepherds are supposed to lead the sheep and not to be bullied by their own sheep. Yet, such a perversion of God's normal hierarchy is also another spiritual sign of the last days.

In sum, according to prophetic Scripture, the last days spiritual scenario will involve a trend toward *persecution of believers*, the ever-increasing call for a *global religion* and *ecumenism*, the *ridicule of the Second Advent*, and the *apostasy of the church*. In our next installment, we will briefly examine the rise of *anti-Semitism* as a final last days' sign related to spirituality.

(To Be Continued...)

# Scripture for the Month

## Psalm 30 KJV

A Psalm *and* Song *at* the dedication of the house of David.

I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me:

LORD, be thou my helper.

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing:  
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;  
To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

church building projects. Thank you so very much for your prayers.

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# SLBC Graduates of 2021

"I want to thank all the graduates and families for participating and making this year's grad celebration a memorable one."



In Him,  
Gabe Morris  
SLBC Youth Pastor

