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End Times Berean Watchman Report - Recognizing the Signs Part 3

By [Dr. Christian Widener](#) • [Issue #21](#) • [View online](#)

March 18th, 2022

Welcome to the third part of the series on Recognizing the Signs.

I'm also excited to be able to share a first look at the finished cover design for my upcoming book, Witnessing the End.

Let's begin!

[Recognizing the Signs - Part 3](#)

SHIFTING OUR APPROACH

There is an incredibly important shift in our approach to examining prophecy that must take place when we are considering how to analyze it for the future versus recognizing its fulfillment in the present, or the past. This concept is akin to understanding that when playing football and the ball is in your control, you play offense, but when you lose the ball, you must switch your lineup and play defense. In a metaphorical and parallel way, you must do something similar when studying prophecy.

For example, when examining prophecy and considering the future possibilities for its fulfillment, we must think broadly about all those possibilities and recognize that even our best imaginations may be unable to supply the true or full meaning. That's like playing offense. But when we look at prophecy and compare it to things that have already happened, we must take a different approach. You no longer are worrying about every possibility, but instead are examining whether the past event can be reasonably described by the prophecy or not. That's like playing defense. Accordingly, when looking at the past, we should not be easily shaken from identifying a clear alignment of events with the prophetic text based on the existence of any number of alternate possible or suggested meanings of the prophecy—unless it is obviously not fully completed by the past events. In that case, we should recognize only a partial fulfillment

or an intermediate fulfillment, without denying the expectation for another more complete fulfillment in the future.

Here's an example of what I mean. A man receives a message from his pastor that someone from his church will be dropping by to bring him a meal because his family is sick. At that point, the sick man is free to imagine who precisely from his church might be visiting him, and to wonder what kind of food it might be. Next, a colleague from work brings by a box of oranges and drops them off at the sick man's house. Was this the promised meal from a church member? No. It was sort of similar, but the colleague was not from his church and a box of oranges, while they represent food, are not a full meal. Hence, he continues to wait and wonder. He suspects that the meal will be brought by the Jacksons who are well known for often providing that service to people who are sick from the church. He imagines that it will be Mrs. Jackson's famous chicken piccata. Then the doorbell rings. And it is someone else. It is a man he recognizes from church, but he doesn't even know his name. The man kindly drops off a big bag of hot food, pasta by the smell of it. Then he wishes the sick man well and departs. Now at this point, for the sick man to continue to expect Mrs. Jackson to show up with her chicken piccata, is just silly. Because it is no longer about imagining who and what might show up, it is about evaluating whether someone from the church showed up with a meal, or not. In the same way, we need to avoid failing to recognize that a prophecy has been fulfilled when the stated conditions have been met, regardless of whether it was what we were expecting.

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God wants us to recognize it when he fulfills his promises. We know that this is his heart when we read passages like this one in Isaiah. It applies specifically to the people recognizing the hand of the Lord when he restores the land, but it is also obviously a general statement that can be applied to the fulfillment of all of God's promises. Otherwise, men would be tempted to conclude that it was either done by their own efforts or that it happened by accident, questioning whether God is truly sovereign over the affairs of men.

[Speaking of the restoration of Israel] ... so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it. – Isaiah 41:20 NIV

WATCHING FOR HIS RETURN

So again, the Bible clearly teaches that we are to wait expectantly for the literal second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth at some future time. We are to watch for the signs of his return so that we will know when it is near. Jesus warned us that if we do not, we may be caught by surprise and assigned a place with the hypocrites and unbelievers, where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come...But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a

long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” – Matthew 24:42,48-51 NIV

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” – Mark 13:35-37 NIV

However, even though most know about these admonitions to watch, it seems that oftentimes when I begin a conversation with someone about Bible prophecy, who is not already a prophecy watcher, I hear something like, “But, you know, Jesus will come just like a thief in the night, so we really can’t know when He’s coming back.” To which, I generally want to respond, “*You are in error, because you don’t know the Scriptures...*” But even though Jesus made statements like that to the Pharisees, it doesn’t feel like we can get away with speaking like that these days, so I am generally much more diplomatic. Nevertheless, when people quote the reference to the thief in the night, they are typically ignoring the words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians that “children of the light and children of the day” would NOT be taken by

surprise “like a thief.” The most common sense and obvious way to understand Paul’s words is that only those not watching as Jesus commanded will be taken by surprise. In the same way, we know that Noah was not surprised by the flood. God told him far in advance. Noah even had to build the ark first; but everyone who was not on the ark was taken by surprise.

Therefore, we again see that the only logical way to avoid being surprised by the judgment that is coming, “*like a thief in the night,*” is to be watching for the signs of the times that Jesus, the prophets, and the Apostles warned us about in the Bible. And if you have been watching, then you already know that we are currently seeing events in the world around us that match very closely with the conditions we were warned about. The chief sign was the return of Israel as a nation (this is the subject of Chapter 4 in my upcoming book, and it will be the subject of the next series).

Having been warned, we cannot afford to ignore such obvious signs. While every Christian generation has longed to see the return of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, and some have even falsely predicted past dates for his return, no Christian generation has ever seen the preponderance of things we are witnessing today, except for those who lived in the time of Christ. Yet, when we look forward, it is as if we are looking through a dim glass window, where not everything is perfectly clear.

| *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face;*

now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. – 1 Corinthians 13:12 NASB

We know the events being described in the Bible are real events that will happen in the course of human history, and that everything God has declared will someday come to pass. Although, it may come in parts or stages, and it may have an early fulfillment and a last days' fulfillment, etc. Accordingly, we need to keep an open mind that God may literally fulfill a prophecy in a way that we cannot imagine or guess beforehand. *We must remember that what God says in his Word is inerrant, but our preconceived notions and interpretations of the text are not.* **Thus, we must watch with humility. However, when we recognize that God has fulfilled his Word, we must also call it out with courage.**

Witnessing the End

And now, hopefully, for the moment you've been waiting for... :)
Here's a first look at the cover of my upcoming book. I'm targeting an April-May release date, and things are progressing nicely. I'm excited to be so close to having it ready for release. It's something that I first wanted to do in the 2009-2010 timeframe, but it just felt like the Lord was saying not yet, so I waited. Well, the wait will soon be over! I'm also working on a Spanish translation of the book, which should be ready about that same time, too.

WITNESSING
THE
END

DANIEL'S
SEVENTY SEVENS
AND THE
FINAL DECREE
EVERYONE MISSED

CHRISTIAN WIDENER

*The Internationally Acclaimed Researcher Who Solved The Enigma Of The Temple
Location In Jerusalem Has Made Another Mind-Blowing Discovery.*



In the News...

There continues to be new tantalizing statements in the news almost every day, but there are still a lot of things hanging in the air at the moment. So rather than speculating on what they might mean, I'll keep watching the trends, and will perhaps have some more definitive analysis to share with you next week.

Until then, may God bless you and keep you,

Christian Widener

Did you enjoy this issue?



By Dr. Christian Widener

Keep up-to-date on specific trends and events which help us know where we are in the Bible's last days timeline.



