

# 5 'Signs' That Have So Many Pastors Believing the Biblical End Times Are Approaching

Our culture has become increasingly captivated by apocalyptic themes and storylines, with a plethora of popular TV shows and feature films embracing zombies, plagues and other terrifying end-of-days scenarios.

But the idea of a future Armageddon-like scenario isn't merely reserved for fictional entertainment plots, as the concept is deeply embedded in Christian theology, impacting the way believers have read, interpreted and processed biblical Scripture over the past two millennia.

In fact, many contemporary theologians and pastors believe they're observing numerous signs in the current culture that mirror the supposedly prophetic contents of Scriptures in Old and New Testament books like Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation—events that they say could soon come to fruition.

So what has convinced these theologians and pastors that the end times could be ramping up? That's a question that I cover in-depth in my newly released book, *The Armageddon Code: One Journalist's Quest for End-Times Answers*, through interviews with around 20 of the most prevalent eschatology experts.

Many of these theologians and pastors told me that sweeping moral decay, biblical disconnectedness and ongoing violence in the Middle East are just a few of the prophetic markers that they believe were foretold thousands of years ago in both the Old and New Testaments.

But how can Christian leaders be so sure that the biblical end

times are approaching? Jesus Himself foretold of His future Second Coming. The problem? Christ also proclaimed in Matthew 24:36 that “no one knows” the day or the hour of His return. While the Bible proclaims that humanity cannot know the “when,” Jesus did reveal to the disciples some of signs of His Second Coming in Matthew 24:6-8:

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled. ... For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, epidemics, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

Surely war has always been with us, though the 20th century—and 21st century thus far—has seen broader and more sweeping world wars that involve many nations, with the contemporary battle against Islamic terror crossing international borders. This is collectively caused some end-times experts to look more deeply at what is unfolding.

With that in mind, the first sign that has some Bible scholars positing that the world is either in or is rapidly approaching the end times is the ramped-up **chaos in the Middle East**. In recent years, the situation in the region has been raising more than a few eyebrows, as the seemingly never-ending tensions between Israel and its neighbors continue to intensify.

But that’s only a slice of the chaos that’s been raging there, as the **Islamic State’s murderous and bloodthirsty quest for power** forges on. Taking those events into account, many Bible experts will point out that some of the battles described in Scripture—clashes that they believe are still unfulfilled—are slated to take place in the Middle East.

Many of the experts I interviewed for *The Armageddon Code* couldn’t help but wonder if the groundwork is currently being set for the fulfillment of the “Gog and Magog” battles that

are referenced in the books of Ezekiel and Revelation—a controversial concept that I address in detail in the book.

That brings me to the next modern-day phenomenon that has piqued the interest of Bible experts: **the 1948 re-emergence of Israel** after a Jewish state was noticeably absent from the map for nearly 1,900 years.

Here's why that matters: Futurists who see many Bible prophecies as being currently unfulfilled believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures consistently predicted that a state of Israel would once again emerge at some point in the future.

Consider that Ezekiel 36:24, which was written 2,500 years ago, includes the following words that are attributed to God: "For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all countries and will bring you into your own land."

Futurists believe that the Old Testament verses clearly reference a future restoration of Israel that was unlike anything that unfolded prior to the end of the Holocaust and World War II. Modern-day Israel is seen by these theologians and pastors as a "super sign" of the end-of-days events to come.

"I cannot fathom how this modern-day prophetic fulfillment—a 'super sign' of the end times—can be ignored," author Jeff Kinley, who takes a futurist approach, told me in interviews for *The Armageddon Code*.

Other experts, though, would counter that this verse, among others, related to the Babylonian captivity during which the Jews were forcefully taken by King Nebuchadnezzar II and were held in Babylonia after being expelled from Judah following its conquest around 597 B.C.—and not to the 1948 re-creation of Israel.

Persian leader Cyrus the Great later permitted the Jews to

head back to their land in 538 B.C., which could be perceived as a fulfillment of those prophecies, though the temple and Jerusalem again came under assault by the Romans in A.D. 70, leaving the Jews scattered throughout the world for centuries.

The third issue that is sparking intrigue among Bible enthusiasts about the world's proximity to the end times is the fact that **American culture is changing at a rapid rate**, with traditional understandings of marriage and gender transforming, as a more progressive view of sexuality takes root.

From the Supreme Court's legalization of gay marriage last summer to the current transgender debate—including the Obama administration's recent directive that public schools allow students to use the bathrooms that correspond to their self-perceived gender—there's a sense among many faith leaders that immorality is intensifying.

Last but not least is the idea that **the Christian gospel continues to be preached** in even the most remote and hard-to-reach geographic areas throughout the world. This matters to many Bible experts due to the fact that Christ, after His resurrection, gave the disciples the commandment in Matthew 28:19 to "go and make disciples of all nations." Jesus also mentioned this preaching of Scripture throughout the world earlier in the book of Matthew as a sign of the end times.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come," Christ said in Matthew 24:14.

So there you have it: just a few of the reasons why some Christian leaders believe that the biblical end times are approaching, though the debate over prophecy can be a heated one, with many dismissing or rejecting these five dynamics as having anything to do with eschatology. Why does this matter, you ask?

Whether or not you believe in the Bible or, more specifically, in end-times prophecy, understanding what so many Christians believe and why they believe it helps provide a lens through which all of us—atheist and believer, alike—can better see how certain viewpoints have been formed. Find out more about this fascinating discussion in my new book, *The Armageddon Code*.