

PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH



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Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2022

Is 2022 the Beginning of the End? (Part 1)

By Dr. Don Bierle, FaithSearch President

Did the events of 2021 help us to see with greater clarity the “beginning of the end”? Said another way, will 2022 be the beginning, not of the end, but of life eternal?

The significance of our answer to this question is brought into focus by the apostle Paul: “...there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked” (Acts 24:15). He is affirming what Jesus taught:

...do not be surprised – the time is coming when all those who are dead and buried will hear His voice and out they will come – those who have done right will rise again to life, but those who have done wrong will rise to face judgment! —John 5:28-29, Phillips Modern English

Christians of every century have watched for the “signs of the end” recorded in Scripture: false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, famines, earthquakes, persecution of Christians, and hate for one another (Matthew 24:4-11).

Today’s world scene has money laundering, human trafficking, opioid crisis, corruption, nuclear threat, abortion, international terrorists, a pandemic, domestic terrorists, and much more. Similar “signs” have been present in every generation since Jesus. Was there anything new in 2021? At a fundamental level, yes.

REJECTION of GOD Occurs First (APOSTASY)

Apostasy means a defection from belief in the existence of God. When addressing the topic of the end, the apostle Paul stated an important guideline: “Let no one in any way deceive you, for [the day of the Lord] will not



Detail from *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, a woodcut by seventeenth century Russian artist Vasily Koren. (public domain)

come unless the apostasy comes first... ” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Belief in God eroded rapidly in 2021. A recent Eurobarometer poll has belief in the existence of God at 44% in Germany; 37% in the United Kingdom; and only 27% in France. The United States registers about 60%, down from 92% just a few years ago. The danger of this is stated by Paul:

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper...haters of God...without understanding... —Romans 1:28ff

The Bible says people are often driven to apostasy as a result of persecution (Matthew 13:20-21), false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2), and moral impurity (2 Timothy 3:1-4) – all of which were prevalent in 2021. We find ourselves in the situation described, again by Paul:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good...rather than lovers of God. —2 Timothy 3:1-4

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Animal Illusion

FaithSearch has a professional illusionist on staff, but even **Adrian Van Vector** could be challenged by trying to figure out how a beetle can be eaten by a frog and later be seen very much alive.

That’s what Japanese researchers wanted to understand. What they discovered



is a testimony to God’s creative design. “This insect makes its way through the frog’s digestive system and out the back door – alive.”

How? Most predators kill their prey before eating. Frogs, however, capture their food with their powerful and speedy tongues, then digest the living meal. The **Asian aquatic beetle**, when so captured, pushes its way through the digestive system with its strong legs and “knocks” on the back door to stimulate its opening.

The frog’s digestive system is extremely low in oxygen. How does it survive that hostile environment? Being aquatic, it can carry sufficient oxygen-laden air bubbles under its wing for the “journey.” That is a great escape!

Source: *Answers Magazine* Vol. 16 No. 4 (Oct-Dec 2021), p. 22

Happy Birthday

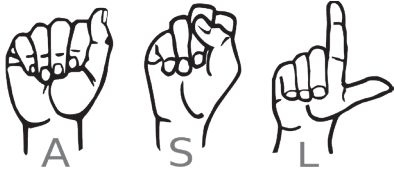
Richard Scott William Hutchinson was given a 0% chance of survival when he was born, weighing less than a pound, at twenty-one weeks gestation.

Richard beat those odds to celebrate his first birthday on June 5, 2021, the most-premature baby ever to survive, according to *Guinness World*
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IN THE NEWS

ASL Sign Language Bible Complete

It took **thirty-nine years and fifty-three translators**, but a version of the Bible entirely on video can now be “read” by the Deaf community. It is signed in their own language: the **American Sign Language version**.



“Unlike Braille, which is an alphabet that works in conjunction with many languages, American Sign Language (ASL) is a distinct language with unique grammar.”

About 5% of the world population has hearing disability of which 300,000,000 are totally deaf. The impact is reflected by the response of Jade, a Vietnamese woman: “My heart was overwhelmed. I’ve watched each video more than ten times!” Bible translation like this is a foundational desire of the heart of Jesus to proclaim the Good News to everyone (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). 

Sources: *ChristianityToday.com/news/2022/January/deaf-bible-translation-400-2033-illuminations-pioneer.html*. *Answers Magazine* Vol.16 No. 1 (January-February 2021), p. 39

On the Lighter Side

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Records. Each of us, including Richard, is “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” in the image of God (Psalm 139:13-14). One wonders what God has ordained for Richard’s life (v. 16).

Source: *Answers Magazine* Vol. 16 No. 4 (Oct-Dec 2021), p. 40



Stock photo of a premature baby in an isolette incubator with oxygen, born at thirty-four-weeks.

Richard was born at only **twenty-one weeks**. Typical gestation is forty weeks.

Beginning of the End?

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DEFECTION from GOD’S WORD Follows

The world is under a deluding influence which the Bible says is sourced in the activity of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:9). It is described as

...the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness. —2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Jesus stated, “*I am the...truth*” (John 14:6). In His prayer for His disciples He said, “*Sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth*” (17:17). Much of the world in 2021 jettisoned God’s absolute truth in exchange for relative truth, a secular worldview. Secular humanists, socialists, communists, and materialists promoted a false perspective summarized in the “Humanist Manifesto”: No God, no creation, no life after death, no image of God in humans, no revelation of Truth, no moral absolutes, and no worship! The Bible says this rebellious mindset manifests itself in lawlessness: “*For as he thinks within himself, so he is*” (Proverb 23:7).

LAWLESSNESS is the Result

The world in 2021 experienced a widespread disregard for the rule of law. Destruction of property, looting, defamation of character, rioting, false testimony,

Sprint till I Die?

It may not impress you to hear that someone “sprinted” the **100-meter dash in 1 minute, 2.95 seconds** – and it was a *new record*. Unimpressed, that is, until you are told she is **105 years old!** Julie “Hurricane” Hawkins also holds the 100-meter record for women over 100, at 39.62 seconds, set in 2017. Competing at the Louisiana Senior Games last November she said, “I love to run.” Perhaps a special application of Isaiah 40:31 “*...they will run and not get tired...*” 



Source: *World Magazine* Vol. 36 No. 24 (December 25, 2021), p. 19


murder, and cheating were commonplace. The Bible says such lawlessness is sin: “*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness*” (1 John 3:4). Lawlessness precedes the revealing of the “*man of lawlessness... the son of destruction*” in the end times:

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed...” (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

The Prophetic Teaching of Jesus

This same pattern of rejection of God, defection from God’s Truth, and lawlessness is affirmed by Jesus’ teaching on the end times recorded in His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 23-25). He emphasized that because of false teaching, at the end of the age many “*...will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another*” (24:10-11, 24). He also warned that “*...because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold*” (v. 12).

For Jesus, this recent spread of apostasy and lawlessness is not the whole story. He gave us another motivating “marker” of the end: “*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come*” (v. 14). Today, over 7 billion of the 7.9 billion people in the world have part or all of the Bible in their own language. There are 2,500 additional languages currently in development. Could this be the sign? Be on the alert! Yet always keep in mind: “*...about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*” (Mark 13:32, emphasis added).

In the meantime, whether it is the end or not, “*preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction...fulfill your ministry*” (2 Timothy 4:2, 5). That’s good advice, not just for Timothy, but for us today as well – **until He comes.** 

[Editor: See the next issue of the *Paraclete* for Part 2.]

The **FaithSearch** Paraclete is published by **FaithSearch** International, an interdenominational, donor-supported, 501(c)(3) organization, based in Edina, MN, USA.

FaithSearch is a member in good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

