

## **Lift Up Your Heads**

*Luke 21:28: And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

The first time the Lord Jesus came to Earth, several prophets foretold signs of His coming. Let us focus on two key signs. The first is the prophecy about His birthplace, Bethlehem: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Consider the wise men who followed the star to Bethlehem. Despite not being Jews and seemingly unaware of the Bible’s prophecies, their humility and willingness to follow the star led them to Jesus. Meanwhile, the Israelites, with the Scriptures and prophets at their disposal, failed to follow the very prophecies meant to guide them. When God’s people are unwilling to heed His word, God can even use "pagans" and unbelievers to fulfill His plans. One such example is King Cyrus of Persia, who, though a pagan, fulfilled a prophecy by allowing the Jews to return to their homeland after the Babylonian exile.

*Isaiah 45:1 tells us, "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus...to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."\* Likewise, 2 Chronicles 36:22 recounts how the Lord stirred Cyrus's spirit to issue a proclamation fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy.*

### **Are We Heeding Prophecy Today?**

Just as many in Israel ignored the signs of Jesus' first coming, are we today neglecting the prophecies about His return? The Bible is full of warnings and signs about the Second Coming, but are we paying attention? If the Israelites had truly believed and feared the Lord, the star of Bethlehem would not have been necessary; the prophecies were enough. Miraculous signs are often for those who do not believe.

The next great sign for Israel was John the Baptist. Isaiah had foretold his coming 700 years before: \**“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD...”* (Isaiah 40:3). Despite all of Israel coming out to see John, how many truly followed Jesus? Of the thousands, only 12 disciples? Micah prophesied about Bethlehem 500 years before Christ, yet only a handful were there at His birth. Isaiah's prophecy of John was older still, and only a small group followed Jesus.

## **Looking Ahead: The Second Coming**

Fast forward to today, and we have been given numerous signs and warnings about Jesus' return. Consider the rise of technology: \**"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased"* (Daniel 12:4). Technology, while neither inherently good nor bad, can be used for evil. As sin abounds, technology will likely be misused to glorify the Devil, as Revelation warns: \**"And he causeth all...to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads...that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark"* (Revelation 13:16-17).

Who are we worshipping with today's technology? How much of it is dedicated to spending time with Jesus? We should channel our time and energy online toward glorifying the Lord, as the world will soon be dominated by technology used to worship the Antichrist. Artificial intelligence is already transforming our world—just imagine its potential in fulfilling prophetic warnings. Revelation 13:15 describes an image brought to life that speaks and enforces worship, which may allude to such technology.

## **The Signs Are Here**

The prophets and apostles have given us ample signs: the return of Israel to its land, the coming Battle of Gog and Magog (possibly involving Russia, Persia, and others), the rebuilding of the Third Temple in Jerusalem, the great falling away from the faith, and an increase in demonic activity (note the growing interest in aliens and UFOs).

Let us believe the prophets and lift up our heads, for our redemption draws nearer each day. We do not need more signs and wonders—just faith in the words of the prophets and apostles.

**Lift up your heads!**