

IT MIGHT BE TODAY

“Churches? We Don’t Need No Stinking Churches” Prophecy Update #732

Christians are encouraged to look for “the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). We are encouraged to look ahead to *tomorrow*, living with the awareness Jesus could come *today*.

One of the ways we look ahead to tomorrow is to consider the hundreds of unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible. We can expect the world to be moving in the direction predicted for the End Times.

We reserve a few minutes Sunday morning to suggest news, or trends, that seem to be predicted by our futurist reading of the Bible.

To avoid sensationalism, we are careful to use recognized, reliable sources for news.

We’re not saying the things we report are the fulfillment of prophecy. We’re saying that they are the things you’d expect to be happening in the build-up to the future seven year Great Tribulation.

The Bible indicates that there will be a “great apostasy” during the end times. It is mentioned in Second Thessalonians 2:3. The KJV calls it the *falling away*, while the NIV and ESV call it the *rebellion*. It is an active departure and deliberate abandonment of biblical Christianity by those who profess to be Christians.

Recent survey results show that church attendance in the United States continues to decline in troubling ways:

- Before COVID19, 75% of Americans reported attending church at least once a year. In spring of 2022, only 67% said they had gone to church.
- In-person church attendance plummeted by 45% in the pandemic. Most churches have reopened, but attendance is down.
- In 2019, Lifeway Research reported 4,500 Protestant churches closed, compared to 3,000 new churches opening. It was the first time the number of churches in the US hadn’t grown since the firm started studying the topic

- A 2017 Lifeway survey of young adults found that 7 out of 10 who had attended church regularly in high school stopped attending during their college years.
- A quarter of the young adults who dropped out of church have said they disagree with their church's stance on political and social issues.
- A 2020 Pew Research study found that 30% of the US population now describe themselves as "religiously unaffiliated."

Pew Research also noted, "Since the 1990s, large numbers of Americans have left Christianity to join the growing ranks of US adults who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular.' "

But isn't apostasy present in every generation? Of course it is. But note this: Church membership held steady at around 70% of the US population from the 1940s through the 1990s. **Membership has plummeted in the new millennium.**

Researchers divide folks into three categories: "nons," "nones," and nonbelievers:

- Nons are nondenominational Protestants.
- Nones are Americans who claim no religion.

Christianity Today said, "The decline of Christianity shows no sign of stopping." It is exactly what you would expect to be happening from reading your Bible as a futurist.

We are witnessing the stage-setting for the seven year Great Tribulation that is described in the last book of the Bible.

We will not be on Earth during that terrible Time of Jacob's Trouble. The resurrection and rapture of the church are imminent. It could happen any moment; nothing needs to happen before it.

Jesus will come, in the clouds, and raise the dead believers of the Church Age. He will transform the bodies of living believers to glorified, resurrection bodies.

We will join Him in Heaven while the earth endures one final seven-year campaign of severe evangelism.

Are you ready for the rapture? If not, Get ready; Stay ready; Keep looking up.

Ready or not, Jesus is coming!