

# Panousia

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## Are We Experiencing the Birth Pangs?

Roger D. Best

Back many years ago when we were expecting our third child, my wife had gone three weeks past the due date given her by the doctor. At about eight o'clock in the morning she began to have labor or birth pains, and we rushed her to the hospital. Those pains or birth pangs continued throughout the day and finally, at nine minutes to twelve on a New Year's eve, our third son was born. You see, the pains all day were not the birth but merely a sign that the time of the birth was near.

As the events of the end times begin to unfold, Jesus states what will be taking place in His Olivet Discourse. He tells us there will be an abundance of false Christs, there will be an increase in wars, and there will be famines and earthquakes. He then says in Matthew 24:8, "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs." In light of this there are two important questions that ought to be considered: Are we now experiencing the beginning of birth pangs? And if not how will we know when we are?

Both questions can be answered by comparing what Jesus said in Revelation 6 with what He said in Matthew 24. These passages describe the events preceding the Rapture; God's wrath immediately follows with the beginning of the day of the Lord. Back in Daniel 9:27 God tells us that the seventieth week (commonly called the tribulation) will begin with the signing of a "covenant with the many." It is clear that a world leader will sign or strengthen a covenant between the nations and Israel guaranteeing peace to Israel. Daniel tells us that in the middle of the week that covenant will be violated; Jesus

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confirms it in Matthew 24:15, “Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was Spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . .” And Paul explains it in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the day of the Lord) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” With this in mind, Revelation 6 and Matthew 24 tell us what will take place, after the covenant is signed, during the first half of the seven year period.

Revelation chapter 6 begins with the opening of the first seal or, as it is commonly referred to, the first of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. It is important to understand that the seals of a book or scroll are on the outside

**Birth pangs are a *sign* that a birth is near not the event of a birth itself.**

and give the requirements and conditions that must be met in order to open the book. As we look at the passage you will also notice that the opening of a seal results in common or ordinary occurrences such as false christs, wars, and famines; there is nothing supernatural about them. In other words this is not the wrath of God but only the beginning of birth pangs. Revelation 6:1-2 describe the first seal as a rider on “a white horse, and he who sat on

it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.” Now without help we can only speculate as to the meaning of this verse; however, as we compare what Jesus said in Matthew 24:5 we gain significant insight. “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.” So we conclude that the first rider represents false Christs. As the seventieth week begins we see a great increase in those who claim to be the Christ.

The details of the second rider are given in Revelation 6:3-4 where we read that “a red horse went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.” Now that sounds like wars, but let’s confirm it with what Jesus says in Matthew 24:6. “And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.” This rider represents the conflict, wars, and rumors of wars that will spread throughout the world during the first half of the seventieth week.

Verses 5-6 tell us about the third rider. “And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.’” Since a denarius was a day’s wage it seems that there will be food shortages. Matthew 24:7 comparatively says, “And in various places there will be famines and

earthquakes.” Once again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, we find the explanation of the horseman.

Therefore, the Word of God, in two parallel passages clearly portrays the first half of the seventieth week as a time of false Christs, wars, and famines. Then in Matthew 24:8 Jesus tells us that “All these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.” Remember that birth pangs are a *sign* that a birth is near not the event of a birth itself. Once these signs take place, the event of Christ’s second coming occurs when Jesus cuts the great tribulation short (Matthew 24:21-22), the great cosmic disturbances happen, and Jesus comes to take us to be with Him (what we commonly call the Rapture). Then immediately following the Rapture, the day of the Lord’s wrath begins.

To answer our two questions — no, we are not yet experiencing the birth pangs, but when a world leader signs a covenant of protection with Israel we will know that the seventieth week has begun and that the birth pangs will follow shortly. What we are seeing today are the precursors that are leading up to crucial events that are yet before us. Therefore, keep your eye on Israel; she is back in her land, and she does control Jerusalem. One of these days a desperate Israel that longs for peace will sign the covenant, and the world will begin to experience the birth pangs. Let us heed the warning of the apostle Paul, “So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

# The Lighthouse Alliance

We are excited about our participation in a new organization that we believe God has brought together for the purpose of sounding the alert as we face the end times. We will, as "watchmen on the wall," attempt to present one End Times Prophecy Conference a month in major cities throughout the U.S. The Lighthouse Alliance is made up of several key individuals: Dr. Larry Bates, economist and best-selling author of *The New Economic Disorder*, who is publisher and editor of *Monetary and Economic Review*; Mr. Dan Collier, president of Legacy Partners, Inc., an international strategies company offering prudent stewardship alternatives in times of economic uncertainty and dislocation; Mr. Joe Dockery, who

brings a wealth of experience as chairman and CEO of a number of corporations, is chairman of Legacy Partners, Inc.; Pastor Larry Napier, nationally known for his Empowerment Seminars, a biblically based motivational approach showing how the heart of man is the key to true empowerment as God intended; and Pastor Roger Best, executive director of The Sign Ministries.

These Conferences will provide information about: avoiding confusion surrounding the end times; understanding the sign of the rapture and the day of the Lord; the economic, political and monetary systems of the end times; the biblical response to the new world order; the biblical time table for the events of the

last days; and many other topics! Conferences are currently scheduled for the following cities:

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**  
**JANUARY 11, 1997**

**ORLANDO, FLORIDA**  
**FEBRUARY 1, 1997**

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA**  
**MARCH 1, 1997**

**COLUMBUS, OHIO**  
**APRIL, 1997**

You are invited to attend any one of these conferences. If you would like further information call us at **1-800-627-5134**. You may also email us at [info@signministries.org](mailto:info@signministries.org).



## Spanish Ministry

Bob and Serena Myers, The Sign Ministries representatives in the Spanish-speaking world, continue to experience the blessing of the Lord on their ministry. During the month of October, Bob had the privilege of presenting the prewrath position to thirteen pastors' groups in twelve cities outside Mexico City and two pastors' groups in Mexico City. He was able to put a copy of *La Señal (The Sign)* into the hands of 184 pastors and church leaders during the month.

Bob is available for church meetings, seminars and conferences. If you would like more information about this ministry you may contact Bob Myers at 011-525-813-0419 or write him:

**Rev. Bob Myers**  
**Cda. de Veracruz 11, B-101**  
**Col. Jesus del Monte**  
**Huixquilucan, Edo. de Mexico**  
**C.P. 52764, Mexico**

## Website Receives Award

We have recently been acknowledged with the "Best of the Christian Web" award which we received with much appreciation. Their statement concerning our website is reprinted below. A special thank you is due our excellent graphics man, Scott Holmgren, who designed our site and puts it all together each month. If you have access to the internet we would invite you to visit our site at [www.signministries.org](http://www.signministries.org). Please let us know what you think of the site. You may reach us by email at [info@signministries.org](mailto:info@signministries.org).



This is an incredible site that answers many of the questions relating to one of the best selling prophecy books of all times, *The Sign*. Author Robert Van Kampen teaches the prewrath rapture of the Church in a concise, scripture based manner. The Sign Ministries is full of good reading but the gem of this site is the Eschatological Glossary. The glossary covers nearly 200 prophecy terms and gives detailed scriptural explanations of each. The graphics are excellent and the site is well designed. This is a must see for students of Bible prophecy.

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## Introducing

The Sign Ministries has been blessed by the recent addition of **Rev. Charles Cooper** to its staff as the Director of Field Ministries. Born in Wilmar, Arkansas, Charles graduated from Ouachita Baptist University with a BA in Pastoral Ministries and a minor in Greek. He then went on to Dallas Theological Seminary where he received a Master of Theology degree in 1986. After graduate school, Charles taught Homiletics and Hermeneutics at Moody Bible

Institute in Chicago, Illinois for six and a half years. He and his wife Sondra have been married for just over a year.

“Coop” (as he loves to be called) has been preaching the gospel and communicating God’s truth across America, Europe and Africa since his teen years. He has taught seminars designed to help local church pastors and layworkers develop men’s ministries in their churches. God has also used him through Bible con-

ferences, couples retreats, leadership training seminars, Walk Thru the Bible Seminars and effective worship seminars. Most recently, Charles founded and pastored Hi-Praz Bible Fellowship, a church-plant dedicated to the praise and worship of the Triune Godhead.

As Director of Field Ministries, Charles will be active in declaring, defining, and defending the premillennial prewrath return of Christ. He will write articles and

A Ministry of Sola Scriptura

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books, respond to inquiries about and arguments against the position, and present seminars at colleges, universities, local churches, and wherever else God provides the opportunity.

Please continue to pray for Charles and The Sign Ministries as we seek to teach the truth of God’s Word concerning the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.