

8. Signs of the Times

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8. A LOOK AT SPECIFIC SIGNS



Now let us look for just a moment at some of the signs in our times that the Second Coming of Christ, preceded by the coming of Antichrist, is close. Concerning the prophecies set forth in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew—first of all, the false christs who will come, then the wars, famines, earthquakes, persecutions—it is difficult to judge, because all these things have been happening for almost two thousand years now. It's true that they are now on a bigger scale than ever before, but it is also true that they can be much worse yet. These signs are the beginning of signs, and are not yet so severe that we can say we are right in the very last days.

One sign, however, is very interesting and very indicative of our times, that that is that Christ is now depicted on the stage. In previous times it was never allowed that Christ should be depicted on the stage, because an actor gives his own human interpretation, and Christ is God. In Orthodoxy there is perhaps no particular canon about this, but the whole Orthodox Christian outlook is against it; and nay Protestant or Catholic until the last few years would have been horrified at the idea of some actor playing the part of Christ. Now this has become common, and not only in religious contexts, but in contexts which are far from religious. Godspell, Jesus Christ Superstar, and so forth: all these are actually blasphemous parodies which present Christ in secular form for people to see.⁹ This is very symptomatic of our times because it presents even to unbelieving people an image of Christ so that when Antichrist comes they will say, "Aha, I saw on the stage something like that. Yes, that must be it."