

John Newlin Ministries

SIGN OF THE TIMES:

ARE YOU WATCHING THE AMAZING EVENTS OF OUR DAY WITH GREAT DISCERNMENT?

Are you watching events with the gift of discernment? Are you seeking spiritual guidance to all that is happening?

First some background: Ever since Jesus was on earth, just as before he came, God has from time to time called out certain individuals and given them specific assignments, just as he called me from the international business world into the life I now live. And he has from time to time revealed to some insights as to what is happening currently or what is to happen. The gift of prophecy, one of the gifts of the Spirit, is just such a thing, a gift Paul describes as one we should seriously desire. You might remember Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, among other things, would show things to come. Whenever you hear a prophecy, your role of course is to discern how that fits with Scripture and you can then accept or reject it. Keep all this in mind as we continue.

The retirement of a pope is a shocking thing. It almost never happens. But it is now happening, and the process of selecting a replacement is beginning. What is so significant about this is the long existence of prophecies (and speculation?) from others about the next pope and our times.

Perhaps most famous in this line of prophecies are those by someone known as Malachy, a priest way back in the 1100's who during a visit to the Vatican prophesied each of the 111 Popes that would come into office from then right up to the current one. His list and comments were kept in the Vatican until the 1500's when they were brought to light. (It is questionable whether he or someone else prophesied the 112th pope, but either way this remarkable list has been around for centuries.)

The list is amazing. For each future pope, Malachy had a term of description. To see how amazing the list is, consider the popular recent Pope John Paul II. Malachy described him as a labor of the sun. Research has now revealed that Pope John Paul II was born during a solar eclipse and was buried during a solar eclipse! And so on with the descriptions of the other popes on the list.

But this is the key point for us. The 111th pope is the one who is retiring. Now it appears comes perhaps the last pope - the last to serve before the return of Jesus.

The Catholic Church is an important institution, despite all the criticism that Protestants and others including Catholics might send its way. You must realize that. Yes, in my call I focus on the importance of each person keeping their eyes on Jesus, that it is all about you and the Lord,

your relationship with him. That is all true. And often you see me bemoaning the “religious spirit” that so has harmed and continues to harm many organized churches. This refers to the error of organizations focusing on their own man-made doctrine and buildings and choir robes and such over the importance of what I just said. True faith is all about Jesus, not about denominations or buildings! There were none in Jesus’ day. The Catholic Church certainly has had its share of such errors, but so has the Methodist, and the Presbyterian, and the Episcopalian, the Lutheran, and so on. These are all organizations run by people, and what would you expect? People are fallible.

At the same time the Catholic Church has been around from the early beginnings of Christianity, and there have been many truly wonderful believers in the Catholic Church. I have known wonderful spirit filled Catholics of today. I very much admired the former Pope John Paul II. If you ever take the time to investigate the history of the popes, you will see much spiritual activity happening in several of their lives not reported in the popular press.

I would love to explore the inner writings and papers of the Vatican, to see all that the popes and others have heard from God over the years. You can search for some of that on the Internet, but rest assured you will not find all! But what you can find is astounding.

Several of the popes had visions or otherwise gave prophecies of dire things to come that appear to describe the last of the last days before Jesus’ return, which are now coming upon us. Several recent popes are in this group.

So here we are, and it is thought possibly the next pope may be the last one. One of the prophecies about him is that he will be leaving Rome while still pope. Why? Where is he going? And there are inevitable questions considering the times – are we witnessing the groundwork being laid toward the development of that false universal church that is anticipated in the last days? We don’t know that yet, but it is a good question.

So whatever you do, watch the events and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in all understanding. Ask for wisdom in all this, as James advises you to do. Ask God to show you great and hidden things you do not know.

We are living in wondrous times. We are in the days of the return of the Lord. We are living in times that will only get more and more difficult. We believers no doubt are blessed but the times themselves will be difficult. Most people just don’t know any of this. They are oblivious. That includes all the unbelievers of the world as well as many who attend churches but just do not know. They go little further than just attending.

Over in Hebrews 5:12-14 and 6:1-3, the writer says it is time for believers to go beyond elementary practices of belief and move on to become mature believers. The things cited there as elementary are repentance, faith, instruction in baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. I say to you that I doubt many today have a firm understanding

of these things described as elementary! You can easily see how lost the world is, how the evil one has truly run amok the last century or so, and how quickly things are moving.

In all that is and will be happening, do not let yourself drift into fear and confusion. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Always you can go to your Bible and read the words in red, the words he actually said, if you want a solid base, if you want to be reassured. The Lord is not going to lose any believer. Continue to be alert to the Lord's warning about watching that you not be deceived. Ask him to help you discern the events around you. And always remember, it is God who is your source, not the government. You will continue no doubt to hear much to the contrary.

The Bible gives much advice as to how a believer is to protect himself. What must happen must happen. But you should rejoice. You know the King. You as a true believer in Jesus are a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

Just one final comment that cannot be ignored: I hope you saw the dramatic picture of the giant lightning bolt striking the top of Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican just hours after the announcement of the Pope's retirement. It was all over the Internet and still is. Even those secular news organizations *USA TODAY* and *NBC* covered it. I think we are supposed to pay attention to what is happening in this retirement, don't you?

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Keep Your Eyes on Jesus!

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