We are living in very intrigue times. We can not say that we are surely in the last times (or maybe we can?), but we can at least see the signs that precede them. The signs that Jesus was speaking about in the gospels.

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Matthew 24:32-35

We see that He was speaking about the signs trough which we are going to see if the last times are approaching. He never spoke of the exact day or hour and I am also not pointing that. What we will do is just to reflect on certain passages of the Bible, having to do with prophecies and we will compare them with today’s days and ideology in which we are living. We also need to know that the events of the last times don’t occupy a short period of time, but most probably a much longer period of time. God measures and looks at time from a different perspective. For us fifty years are a long period of time, but for Him obviously not. When we see for example that certain event for which is written in the Bible concerning the end times happen, we quickly think that the end is about to come in tomorrow’s day and we even assume and start pointing dates and times and when it doesn’t happen, we get discouraged most of the times and then some people start asking in the same way as people from the old were asking:

“Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” 2 Peter 3:4

It’s not at all the way we think most of the times. We are just being inpatient as this is also a topic that interests most of the people as something interesting, new and intriguing is about to happen. Many people focus more on that event, than on the most important that Jesus wants to teach us, while pointing us to the events of the last times. **And that is to be ready, to be watchful and be saved.**

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42

This was the main thing He was teaching while telling people about the last time events. That was to watch, to be aware of the false teaching in these times, not to be like the Lot’s wife to set our sight in the wrong direction. All of these things are having to do with our condition and life. If we don’t focus on this, then it will be useless to keep on discovering and scrutinizing about the end times as **the main thing is to be ready for them**. How do we get ready? By having a relationship with our Lord.

Speaking about signs however, we can really see that in these past decades that have been so rushed and innovated, there are indeed some signs that point to what could happen in the last times. We see the direction that in general this world has taken. All of this globalization and putting God always on one side is just confirming that these last times are approaching. I am speaking about the very last times as we know that the last times have already began in the moment Jesus died and resurrected for us. Since then the Bible is addressing the times as “the last times” (1 Peter 1:20, 1 John 2:18 ).

“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:20,21

Here in this verse it mentions about “the last times” as something that was occurring since Christ died and resurrected. It says that He was manifested in “these last times”. The Bible calls it the last time because it was the last hope and opportunity for the mankind to repent and find a solution.

Then in the gospels, Jesus speaks about a time of great tribulation and certain signs that are about to happen in the “very last times”.

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Matthew 24:21

He first starts speaking about wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24:4-7). He said that these are the beginning of the sorrows. We see these signs happening right now in front of us in an accelerated way, even though He also said that we mustn’t be terrified when we hear of those things such as wars and commotions as they must come to pass first, but the end won’t come immediately (Luke 21:9)

Now, the question is, was He referring perhaps to the first and second world war or to the wars and commotions happening now? Because we can assume that He was even referring to the past world wars. We won’t know this for sure, we just need to be ready. Then after He continues His speech with certain signs that accompany the great tribulation such as the abomination of desolation mentioned in the book of Daniel as well. Then immediately after the tribulation the sun will be darkened, the stars of heaven will fall (which might be indicating meteorites) and the powers of heaven will be shaken (Matthew 24:29).

I am not saying either that now we are living in those times or that they will come tomorrow as God measures differently the times and what He considers as “soon” or short period of time, for us it might be much longer. Some of the signs have probably already happened, even a time ago. What happens is that when we see a sign or something telling us that we are close, we quickly think that it will come tomorrow and when it doesn’t, we get discouraged and we lose confidence. But it is not in this way. For God a day is like thousand years and thousand years like a day. It means that He looks differently at time. Many people think that those times should come quickly, not considering that if for us fifty or hundred years are a lot, for Him it is not so and He is patient and waits for the persons to repent.

There are two major books dealing more precisely with this topic – the book of Revelation and the book of Daniel. Let’s see a chapter from the book of Daniel.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. And King Nebuchadnezzar sent *word* to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”**

So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, *and* lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down *and* worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “*Is it* true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *that* you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.If that *is the case,* our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king.But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:1-18

We see here a situation that happened in Babylon. That was the greatest empire of that time. We are speaking about around 580 BCE. To be able to know better the meaning of what this book of Daniel wants to tell us, we need to know what Babylon actually represents. The book of Daniel is full of prophesies concerning the last times. Daniel interpreted dreams king Nebuchadnezzar, (the king of Babylon) was having. One of them was about the last times. Daniel himself had visions and dreams about the last times, the coming of the Messiah, that is Jesus Christ, and His return (Daniel chapters 7,8,10,11,12) So we can conclude that this book is definitely having to do with the times to come.

The other prophetic book we find in the Bible is the book of Revelation. Obviously we can find prophetic passages in the gospels as well as in other books in the Bible, but these two specifically, the book of Revelation and the book of Daniel are more centered on this topic. We can see how these two go hand in hand and complete and confirm each other. What is interesting is that in Revelations the name Babylon appears again. (Revelation 14:8, 16:19, 17:5 et al.) And this is obviously after the ceasing of this empire as it was written after that and is concerning for times to come. It means that some place or country in the future will have many similarities with that empire. I personally don’t believe that it will be literally called with that name, but it is just compared for its similarities with it.

“And another angel followed, saying, “**Babylon** is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 14:8

This name was used since the beginning, since the people that were united wanted to build a tower that can reach up to heaven and make a name for themselves.

“And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; **let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11:4

 “Babel” and “Babylon” are written in a similar way in Hebrew and the people from that time started building the tower of Babel (which means confusion, as there their languages were confused) in the same place where the Babylon empire appeared later on. Obviously this didn’t please God and He confused their languages, because they got together to build a name for themselves. He didn’t want them to do that as that was going to drive them further away from Him. It was going to bring them **pride**. Something that God really can not bear. In His nature He can not accept it. So, for their own good, to prevent them from sinning further, He confused their languages (Genesis 11:7,8).

This is something that is very similar to what is happening today. People are getting united, and nothing wrong with it if it was done with the right purpose, but they are doing it in their own name, to bring glory to themselves. This is what is actually happening. The people are putting God more and more aside and each time the idea of getting together, but in the name of the humanity is growing more. Why is this wrong, even if at first sight, it seems good? It is because rejecting God is not good for us. We are meant to be with God. To be together with Him. We are His creation and we are part of Him. We can not exist without Him. What is keeping us now in this world is His mercy, giving us chance to repent and accept Him. Unfortunately for some people, this mercy and opportunity will eventually end up and they will find themselves definitely separated from Him. Then they will see what that really means. We have to profit this time of mercy now, to accept Him. The people however are getting united and putting God aside, not knowing what are they actually doing.

If we see the situation in the empire of Babylon in the time of Daniel, we see that this was an empire having various nations under its rule. Amongst those nations were also God’s people (the nation of Israel). Why do we compare or better said, why does the Bible compare this empire (Babylon) with what will happen in the last times, as it mentions it again in the book of Revelation? We see also that exactly in this empire is where Daniel received the visions and revelations of the prophesies concerning the last times. It is because probably as there were many nations united under one rule, in this case the empire of Babylon, so in the same way, there will be nations in the future also united under one rule. The book of Revelation speaks about a ruler that is figuratively called the beast. It says that all the world marveled and followed the beast (Revelation 13:3,4), so we can assume that it will be a ruler.

In the book of Daniel also speaks about a ruler that will come in the last times and will make war against the saints, will speak against the Most High and will intend to change times and laws (Daniel 7:25). By this we see that is a book from which great part is dealing with the future time prophesies. Prophesies concerning the first coming of Jesus as well as His second coming and the very last times (Daniel 12:4 and Daniel 12:9) So, by this we can conclude that this book is having a prophetic character in many aspects and even in its story in general. That’s why also Babylon is mentioned in the book of Revelation and there will be a lots of similarities in what will happen in the future with what this empire was in the past.

Not by chance God gave these prophetic revelations to Daniel when he was exactly in Babylon. He could’ve given them to any other prophet in any other time, but He chose exactly this time and this place and we know that God never does things by chance, but with a purpose instead. We can see in general how this kingdom of Babylon can be compared to the future one that is about to come.

However when we see the story in Daniel 3 when king Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden statue and all the people of all the nations and languages were compelled to bow down and worship that statue, we see a similarity with what is going on in the book of Revelation 13 when every one will be compelled to bear the mark of the beast and worship the beast. That is something that will not please God and He will be opposed to. We see how these two situations, the one in Daniel 3 and the one in Revelation 13 are very similar to each other and just confirm the character of how things will happen. We see that in the book of Revelation, the name of Babylon is also mentioned.

We see a place as the Babylonian empire, which contained many different nations and cultures in one. We see it in Daniel 3:4,5 where we see all of these different peoples and nations compelled to bow down to the statue of gold. Something similar to what the world is looking like today or it will become. Many different nations gathered together as one, but not in the right cause though. This is what we hear that the world aims at today.

Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; Daniel 3:4,5

 There will be a time where it won’t be important who you are or where are you from or which religion are you following, as long as you do what you have to and you go with the flow. There is this freedom that is often spoken of today. The freedom and the right of being whoever or whatever you desire to be. We are speaking about these human rights that stay above everything in today’s society and rule our governments and decisions they take. Nothing wrong if the human kind and human nature wasn’t fallen, but nevertheless it is. I mean that our human nature is governed by sin and therefore is leading us to self-destruct ourselves. Why? Because we lack God in our life and when we lack Him, we are governed by our instincts and passions which are lead by sin.

We can’t therefore conclude that the human rights are something good that we need to be lead of, as we often see how they constantly change as we can’t find peace in our heart and we want more of everything. There are good human rights obviously and people that fight for freedom. I am speaking for those principles that exalt this ultimate freedom that basically allows us to do pretty much everything and it hides itself behind “human rights”. Human rights are supposed to be good for the man. One human right is the one that allows people to know about their creator and be reconciled with Him. Why? Because this is in their favor.

Nevertheless there will be times (and already are) when these rights and freedom of expressing ourselves (but in a sinful way) will be extremely exalted, but all of this will be with a price. And that will be a submission to what is ungodly and the obligation of doing things that are against God’s principles. I have to be clear that a believer will submit to the authorities and I am not saying that we mustn’t submit to them, but it will be a time when what is been said, will be against God’s principles. Clearly against them and those with discernment will know that. Same as those people from Babylon were compelled to bow down and worship somebody and something that wasn’t God. (Daniel 3:4,5,6)

Going back to the situation in the Babylonian empire, we see that in that time it wasn’t a matter if you were Jew or Assyrian or something else. We see that Daniel’s friends got thrown in the fire, not because of their religion or because they were called Jews, but because they actually listened to what God says. They obeyed God and did His will by not bowing to the statue king Nebuchadnezzar had erected. This is what makes the difference in us as believers, not that we are called with such a name only, but because we actually obey and listen to what God says.

There will not be probably an issue in the future if you are called a Christian, but if you actually obey and do God’s will and follow His principles. Many people will probably be deceived by this matter, as many think that to be called just a Christian or a believer is enough. They will probably think that since the authority (the system) allows them to be called Christians, everything is fine then. Since the beginning we see that God’s people got in trouble not because they were called with that name only, but because they followed and obeyed God. And even if after they were persecuted for that name only, for being called Christians, it was because someone before that, was following God’s will and principles under that name and made a difference. We know that with time the name “Christian”, that means a follower of Christ and was given for the first time in Antioch to the believers there (Acts 11:26), has kind of lost its true significance, as after all the persecution of believers is over and many people in todays days are called Christians because of the geographical area where they live or because they might like some of the ideas the Christianity represents.

With time the meaning of the name “Christian” has faded away and no wonder if the persecution in the future will not be implied over the name of the denomination, but if you are actually following really Christ’s ways, and if you follow Him really, you would know that there will be things that you will not do, because they are sinful and because they don’t form part of your nature anymore. With all of this unity and freedom, many of the religions will be promoted and there will be kind of freedom belief and surely Christianity will be amongst them. The problem will be with those who will truly follow the principles of God and will not obey the system submitted to the beast. Those Christians will be true believers. Same as now – there are many different people going to church and belonging to the Christian religion, but how many of them truly believe?

We have to say also that as the enemy is been always crafty, he will find a way in which to blind and deceive people. I mean that in those times he will make a persecution against the people who really follow God and many will probably bear the name of Christians, but will not be persecuted, because they will not do the will of God (that will be the problem) and will follow the beast. They will even think that all is fine with them in front of God, as they will be still called Christians anyway. And many people will be deceived by that in those days.

But for us, it mustn’t be in this way, as we are called to follow His footprints and way and not only to bear His name on the outwards. The enemy (the devil) is getting more crafty than usual and he knows how best to deceive people. There are many Christian denominations today and we can not say that all of them really follow Christ’s way. The enemy has found a new way in which to blind us. The word of God says also that there will be many false Christs in the last times and they will probably come partially with the truth to deceive people.

There were other Jews in that time (we are talking about the Babylonian empire now) that followed that same religion, but only those who actually did what God said by not bowing down to the golden statue, made the difference and only they were persecuted. This is what the scripture also confirms, that in the last times people will be enforced to put a mark on themselves and the real believers, those who were bought by the blood of the Lamb, will not put it on. There will be probably persons in that time that will be called believers, will be called Christians, but yet, will not do what God commands.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Matthew 7:21,22

I am not exalting here the works that someone can do. Obviously we are saved by faith, but if that faith is in us, it will cause us to follow and obey God’s will.

Here we see what really matters, and that is to do God’s will. When someone is a real believer, he will do that, because it is in him, because God lives in him. It wasn’t any problem where were you from in the Babylonian empire, to which nation did you belong, but if you obeyed what you were told to do. “There is not a problem what do you want to be, you are free to choose, or what do you want to believe, just do what we tell you to do and in the moment we tell you”.

Christians obviously obey the law, but when they will tell them to do something that is clearly against God’s will, they won’t do it. They will be recognized by this. Many people will probably be deceived in the last times because they will be given the freedom to be called Christians or whatever else, but when they will be told to do something according to the laws and the system they will have to do it. I just think that it will be in this way.

Christians will not be persecuted just because of the name they bear, but because of doing God’s will. With all of this I am not trying to suggest what the exact cause for the believers not to obey the system will be or what the mark of the beast will be. I am just trying to point the reason behind it. It will have to do with worship, as in both cases, in the book of Daniel and the book of revelation, is having to do with bowing down and worshiping something else and not God. That’s why they refused to do it.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.If that *is the case,* our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king.But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:16-18

They were firm in their decision as they clearly knew the One they were serving to. Nevertheless when they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, they encountered Jesus there and got delivered. But this wasn’t the matter as they told him that even if they were not going to be delivered, they were still going to be firm in their decision not to bow down to any other god, but God whom they served. Some people will be persecuted to death in the last times. Not all of them will end up in this way probably, but all of them will go trough fire which represents trials. Even today when we choose not to bow down to the world, it happens that we go through fiery trials. Moments like this also strengthen our faith. This is where we also meet Jesus.

We also see that today’s world is being orientated in a socialistic movement. Probably not the socialism as we knew it from the pasta, but we can clearly see this idea advancing in our society. As we see that this movement is supporting all of these ideas – unity amongst all, a system that can control all under one rule. There are also some good sides of the socialism (or communism) such as that this political idea doesn’t support racism and is for equality. This is been a topic that is been quite sensitive in these last years, because of the faults commited in the past. I am not against communism and I am not supporting any other political idea. I am just saying that this idea with the wrong spirit behind it and with the intention to take God out of the scene, can be the perfect environment to bring this new world order. In itself, the idea of communism is actually good, because it speaks about unity and equality, something that we see often spoken of in the book of Acts (Acts 2:46,47 Acts 4:34,35). Very good idea with good principles. The only problem is that God is excluded from this idea. If He was in, this was going to be the best and the most practical way. And here is where the deceit comes in. When apparently there is a good idea, good principles, but without God. This is how the enemy works. He imitates, he represents apparently good ideas that come from God’s principles and ways, but without God himself. There is a humanism instead of God’s love for example or human wisdom instead of God’s wisdom. All of these are ideas that apparently seem good but exclude God, who is obviously the most important and who makes all of these ideas possible in a practical way. There are many good ideas and principles that humanity has set up in front of them, but they don’t manage really to perform them. This is because the real problem that causes them to fail, lies in their heart. The human heart is the issue. The heart without God. Many times we hear speaking of peace, of unity, of love, etc., but how many of these things really happen? This is not because the intention was bad, but because the One who can make it possible is been excluded.

I am not saying either that other political ideas or movements include God or glorify Him. They don’t do that as man by himself in his natural state is a sinner and is separated from God and unfortunately man is the one who stands behind politics. That’s why these ideas which are man made, don’t glorify God, no matter what. Yes some of them might be better than others, but in general our hope must be placed in Jesus and not in any man.

In these times though, people are desperately looking for answers. They are in a need of a leader. Someone that can give them the answers and the solutions they need. People in their nature don’t want to believe in something they can not see as the man from Galilee who lived 2000 thousand years ago and still lives today, but faith is needed to see Him. They would like rather a leader they can see and touch.

“But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.” 1 Samuel 8:6,7

Here we see how the nation of Israel wanted to have their own king same as the other nations were having. What we see from this passage is that they were rejecting God with having this kind of petition. They preferred to have a man over them rather than God. This is because men in general don’t want to be submitted to someone whom they don’t see. It is difficult for us in general and to our human nature to believe. We would like always to see and touch. That’s why especially in these times to come, it will be much easier for persons to submit and believe the promises of a man whom they see. This will be the antichrist who will come apparently with answers and solutions for the people. We see how is the heart of men in general from this passage in 1 Samuel. As they were before, to want a king and a ruler that they can see and touch, instead of God to whom they have to believe, so they are now. Jesus came also as a man, but His purpose wasn’t actually to establish His kingdom at that moment with Him as a man, but He rather came with the main purpose to sacrifice Himself for us, for our salvation. After that He ascended and sent His Holy Spirit. His kingdom wasn’t meant to be established in that way and in that time. His kingdom will be eternal and it won’t be in this world, but in the one to come.

This leader (the antichrist) will apparently fill this void they are having, will give them some answers, but not in essentiality. He will not be able to truly fill this void they are having. This will be the beast, the so called antichrist. He will come and will attract many persons to him and will deceive them as he will give them answers and solutions for this life only and not for eternity, that only Christ can give.

There is another interesting fact that we can notice in the idea of socialism and communism. This is that beside putting God aside and persecuting the real faith in Him, they were also exalting their leaders as gods. Almost in every important institution they were having a picture of their leader and quoting phrases about those people as they were much more than ordinary persons. All of these makes me to think that in one or another form the communism will be back, even though in another form, because it perfectly supports the ideas this world is pursuing now. The idea of unity, of having one world system, social justice and one leader uniting the people.

I am saying again that there is nothing wrong in some of these ideas, if God wasn’t excluded from there. I am speaking about the real God and His principles, because at the end there will be probably allowed some kind of liberty in the worship, same as in the Babylonian empire there were many nations gathered together and many of them were allowed to have their own faith and worship, but were also compelled to participate in certain beliefs such as having the king from that time as deity. This was and is against God’s standards, because it is not good to have other gods beside Him and also because that ruler will bring and promote sin and everything that is against God’s precepts and whoever is worshiping him will approve those things and will probably have to partaker of them.

We don’t know yet when all of these things will happen. As I said before, this is just a thought of what might happen at the end. A thought that is made up of what we see in the scripture and what we see happening now in this world. We don’t know if the things will happen exactly in this way, but one thing is sure and that is that God is faithful to His word and He will fulfill what he said He will do. It is a matter of time. Time that is not seen in the same way as we think of it. Even if some of these things occur, it doesn’t maybe mean that the end will come quickly. We don’t know for sure, as He said that no one knows that hour. All of these things are just like an alarm that should always remind us of what Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew 24:42 – “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

We have to always do this no matter in what time we live. And this is done by prayer, by seeking His presence and by being as lights in this world, giving a daily example of how a believer should live, and by living for the others.