

## **The Final Countdown – Rise of Wickedness**

“An old preacher was dying and had very little time left on earth. So he sent a message for an IRS agent and a local politician, both church members, to come to his home. When they arrived, they were ushered up to his bedroom. As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed. Then the dying preacher grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled and stared at the ceiling.

For a time, no one said anything. Both the IRS agent and politician were touched and flattered that the old preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moment. But they were also puzzled at why he wanted them there. Plus they both remembered his many long, uncomfortable sermons about greed, covetousness and their wicked behavior that made them squirm in their seats. And finally they couldn't take it anymore so the politician asked, ‘Preacher, why did you ask the two of us to come?’

And the old preacher mustered up his last bit of strength and then said weakly, ‘Well, Jesus died between two thieves, and that's how I want to go, too.’”

Now, that preacher wanted to make sure that he had made adequate preparations before leaving this earth, didn't he? That's very important. But unfortunately, most people don't have this attitude. You see, the average person refrains from thinking about what's going to happen to them when they die. And to make matters worse, they keep putting off getting right with God through Jesus Christ. And because of this, they are sadly running the risk of being left behind. They will be catapulted into the seven-year Tribulation that is coming upon the whole world.

And folks, the time of the Tribulation is not a party. It's an outpouring of God's wrath upon a wicked and rebellious planet. In fact, Jesus said in **Matthew 24** that it would be a time of greater horror than anything the world has ever seen or will ever see again. He also said that unless that time of calamity is shortened, the entire human race would be destroyed. But God is not only a God of wrath; He's a God of love as well. And **because He loves you and I**, He has given us many warning signs so that we would know when the Tribulation could be near and that Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming is rapidly approaching. Therefore, to help us make adequate preparations so we won't be left behind, we're going to continue taking a look at **The Final Countdown**.

We already saw how the **#10** sign on **The Final Countdown** was **The Jewish People**. The **#9** sign was **Modern Technology**. The **#8** sign was **Worldwide Upheaval** and last week we saw how the **#7** sign was none other than **The Rise of Falsehood**. There we saw that God lovingly foretold you and I that when we see an **Increase of False Christs** and an **Increase of False Teachers**, that this would be an indicator that we are in the last days.

But that's not the only signs that God has given us. The **#6** sign on **The Final Countdown** is none other than **The Rise of Wickedness**. So just what are these specific prophecies being fulfilled today concerning **The Rise**

**of Wickedness**, revealing that we could be in the last days? Well, I'm glad you asked. Let's take a look. The **1<sup>st</sup> End Time Prophecy** concerning **The Rise of Wickedness** is that **People Would Love Themselves More Than God**.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

According to this passage of Scripture, one of the major characteristics of society in the last days is one that would be filled with unadulterated wickedness. And the root of this wicked behavior stems from **a love of self instead of a love for God**. Now, throughout history we've always had some form of wicked behavior. That's been commonplace. But what's **not common** is how **in the last century alone**, there has been an explosion of **every single one** of these wicked behaviors that Paul listed here. And it's only getting worse. In fact, in all honesty, **we're no longer shocked** at this kind of wickedness because it's now considered the norm. And lest we forget how rotten things are, we're reminded daily of it on every single news station, twenty-four hours a day. And keep in mind that not long ago the top discipline problems in schools **used to be** talking, chewing gum,

making noise, running in halls, getting out of turn in line, and not putting paper in the wastebasket. And to show you the fruits of a society that loves itself more than God and how fast this produces wickedness, let's take a look at the change of behavior in America in **just the last 30 years**.

1. Violent Crimes are up 995%.
2. The inmate population has grown from about 200,000 to about 2 million.
3. Unmarried couples living together are up 725%.
4. Illegitimate births are up 400%.
5. The divorce rate is now 60%.
6. In some parts of California the rate of divorce is one for every marriage.
7. A murder occurs every 23 minutes.
8. A rape occurs every 6 minutes.
9. An aggravated assault occurs every 48 seconds.
10. An abortion takes place every 20 seconds.
11. A burglary occurs every 8 seconds.
12. Sexually transmitted diseases among 10-14 yr. olds are up 385%.
13. Unwed pregnancies among 10-14 yr. olds are up 553%.
14. Teenage suicide is up 200%.
15. The national average of SAT scores has dropped 80 points.
16. Across America, 25% of graduating seniors couldn't read their diploma.
17. Every day 13 youth commit suicide, 16 are murdered, 1,000 become mothers, 100,000 bring guns to school, 2,200 drop out of school, 500 begin using drugs, 1,000 begin drinking alcohol, 3,500 are assaulted, 630 are robbed, and 80 are raped.
18. More people have died in America in the last 30 years from murders and suicides than from all the wars in the history of the United States.

Now I don't know about you guys, but **in the last 30 years alone**, it sure sounds like there's been a massive **Rise of Wickedness**, hasn't there? Just like the Bible said. When? In the last days.

But the question is, “How could there be such an explosion of wickedness in such a short amount of time, especially in America with our Godly heritage? How could a Christian nation turn from loving God to loving themselves?” Great question, I’m glad you asked. And the **1<sup>st</sup> reason** why people have turned from loving God to loving themselves, causing this **Rise of Wickedness**, is because of the promotion of a **Wicked Worldview**. That’s right, I’m talking about **humanism**. Little do people know that the teachings of humanism have actually aided in this **massive rise of wicked behavior**. For those of you who may not know, humanism is the worldview where **man is the center of all things, not God**. And as you can tell, it is diametrically opposed to Christianity. But don’t just take my word for it. Let’s look at a few of their own statements of belief from the Humanist Manifesto I and II:

1. Faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith.
2. We find insufficient evidence for the belief in the existence of a supernatural. We begin with humans not God.
3. We do not accept as true the literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments.
4. We include a recognition of an individual’s right to die with dignity, euthanasia, suicide, birth control and abortion.
5. We believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. Divorce should be recognized. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not themselves be considered evil.

6. We oppose any tyranny over the mind of man to shackle free thought. In the past such tyrannies have been directed by churches and states attempting to enforce the edicts of religious bigots.
7. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.
8. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

Now, does this attitude sound familiar today? Of course it does. You see, it was humanists that forced the Bible, prayer, and the Ten Commandments out of the schools under the premise that religion and education do not mix. Yet, what most people don't realize is that **the Supreme Court considered humanism a religion** back in the early 1960's. And can you guess just whose "religious" teachings are filling the schools without even being questioned? That's right, humanism! I believe that's called having your cake and eating it too! And today, faithful and godly teachers not only have to contend with wicked behavior in the classroom, but also with the wicked goals of humanists who have a **different agenda** for teaching children. Listen to their own words:

- "(Our) great object was to get rid of Christianity, and to convert our churches into halls of science. The plan was not to make open attacks on religion...but to establish a system of state schools, from which all religion was to be excluded...and to which all parents were to be compelled by law to send their children. For this purpose, a secret society was formed and the whole country was to be organized." **Orestes Brownson (1803-1876)**

- “What the church has been for medieval man, the public school must become for democratic and rational man. God would be replaced by the concept of the public good.” **Horace Mann (1796-1858)**
- “There is no God and there is no soul. Hence, there is no need for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is also dead and buried. There is no room for fixed, natural law or moral absolutes.” **John Dewey (1859-1952), the “Father of Progressive Education;” co-author of the first Humanist Manifesto and honorary NEA president.**
- “Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American school is a school of humanism. What can a theistic Sunday School’s meeting for an hour once a week and teaching only a fraction of the children do to stem the tide of the five-day program of humanistic teaching?” **Charles F. Potter, Humanism: A New Religion (1930)**
- “I think that the most important factor moving us toward a secular society has been the educational factor. Our schools may not teach Johnny to read properly, but the fact that Johnny is in school until he is sixteen tends to lead toward the elimination of religious superstition.” **Paul Blanshard, “Three Cheers for Our Secular State,” The Humanist, March/April 1976**
- “We must ask how we can kill the God of Christianity. We need only to insure that our schools teach only secular knowledge. If we could achieve this, God would indeed be shortly due for a funeral service.” **G. Richard Bozarth, “On Keeping God Alive,” American Atheist, November 1977**
- “I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of educational level – preschool, day care or a large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new – the rotting corpse of

Christianity...and the new faith of humanism.” **John J. Dunphy, “A New Religion for a New Age,” The Humanist, January/February 1983**

- “Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with certain allegiances toward our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural Being, toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It is up to you teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the international children of the future.” **Harvard Professor of Education and Psychiatry, 1984**

You see, the average person thinks that the teachings of humanism and the **triumph of the human spirit** is the antidote needed to cure the wickedness of the world. Yet, in reality they are actually following the teachings of the king of wickedness, satan.

**Genesis 3:4-5** “‘You won’t die!’ the serpent hissed. ‘God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil.’”

Hmmm. You mean the teaching of man, being the center of all things, determining his own destiny, in fact, being his own god, started with satan? So is it any wonder that there has been such a massive **Rise of Wickedness** just like the Bible said? When? In the last days.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> reason** why people have turned from loving God to loving themselves, causing this **Rise of Wickedness**, is because of the promotion of a **Wicked Worship**. That’s right, I’m talking about the **self-love, self-esteem movement**. Little do people know that the teachings of the self-love,



self-esteem movement have actually aided in the **massive rise of wicked behavior**. And for those of you who may not know it, the self-love, self-esteem movement has its roots in the beliefs of such men as Sigmund Freud, who frequently used cocaine, and Carl Jung, who not only had conversations with a box, but even had visions of God supposedly parting the clouds and relieving Himself on a Church building. And these are the “founding fathers” of modern secular psychology? But there are two other psychologists who built on the ideas of Freud and Jung. Those men are Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. They are the ones who are primarily responsible for this **explosion of self-worship**. They have convinced us that not only are we to love ourselves, but we **must do so at all costs**, even if it means ignoring sinful behavior, refraining from discipline, blaming others, and avoiding personal responsibility. Why? Well, they say if we force people to deal with their own wicked behavior then they will damage their self-esteem, which will ruin all hopes of having a fulfilling life.

You might think that nobody in their right mind would fall for this nonsense. Or would they? You see, it's **because of this self-worship** that parents in Connecticut have taken their son's school to court. Why? Because he was caught destroying school property and was expelled by the school. But the parents say that their son now has “**feelings of unworthiness**” and

his “**self-worth**” has been damaged, so they’re suing. Oh, but that’s not all; in Maine, signs saying “Happy Holidays” and the singing of Christmas carols are being now being banned **for fear of making somebody feel excluded**. In fact, in Manhattan, **Mother’s Day** is now being eliminated because some kids may not have a mother and this **could damage their self-esteem**. But apparently so do kickball and dodgeball and similar games. Why? Because they promote competitiveness and make some kids feel excluded and that’s no longer tolerated.

And folks, what’s even crazier than this is that some people have actually **twisted the Scripture** to try to make the Bible say that we should love ourselves. Here’s one of their favorite passages to try to do this:

**Matthew 22:37-39** “Jesus replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Well, there it is plain as day, love yourself right? Wrong! Notice there are **two commandments** given by Jesus, **not three**. One, to love God and two to love your neighbor. Yet some add in a third commandment to love yourself and say that unless you love yourself first, you won’t have the ability to love God or your neighbor. Now that’s some **serious twisting of the Scripture**, don’t you think? Besides, keep in mind that it was **loving self**

**more than God** that caused the **fall of man!** But I guess we should call that a “good thing” now. Yeah, right.

Oh, but the self-love, self-esteem proponents not only twist Scripture, they also **turn a blind eye** to obvious passages in the Bible that teach **not to love yourself**, and instead deal honestly with our sin:

**Ezekiel 20:43** “There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done.”

**Romans 7:18, 24** “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

**Ezekiel 36:31-32** “Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O House of Israel!”

**Job 42:6** “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

**2 Corinthians 5:15** “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

**Luke 6:32-33,35** “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.”

**1 Corinthians 13:4** “Love is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.”

**Matthew 16:24** “Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.”

As you can see, the Bible plainly says **to be honest and deal with our sinful behavior**. We are not to excuse it or blame others. And we certainly are not supposed to sue others who **rightfully** discipline us for bad behavior. Besides, **our value** does not come from **self-inflated statements of love**, but from being forgiven, accepted, and loved by God through Jesus Christ; and that's **eternal value!**

Oh, but these self-love, self-esteem proponents not only twist Scripture and turn a blind eye to the Bible, they also **turn a deaf ear to the facts**. For instance, researchers decided to test the effectiveness of self-esteem teaching in schools by measuring how high the students thought of themselves academically. As it turned out, **the more highly they thought of themselves** and their supposed abilities, **the less ability they had**. A case in point was how kids in Washington D.C. ranked number one in the country for self-esteem. Yet they came in **second to last** in academic performance. One researcher simply stated, “Years of self-love propaganda succeeded only in producing self-deluded kids.”

You see, the average person thinks that the teachings of the self-love, self-esteem movement are the antidote needed to cure the wickedness of our world. Yet, in reality, they are actually following the teachings of the king of wickedness, satan.

**Isaiah 14:13-14** “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”

Hmmm. You mean the teaching of man loving and exalting himself above all, even God Himself, started with satan? So is it any wonder that there has been such a massive **Rise of Wickedness**, just like the Bible said? When? In the last days.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> reason** why people have turned from loving God to loving themselves, causing this **Rise of Wickedness**, is because of the promotion of a **Wicked Witchcraft**. That’s right, I’m talking about **wicca**. Little do people know that the teachings of wicca have aided in a **massive rise of wicked behavior**. And for those of you who may not now know, wicca is the modern term for old-fashioned witchcraft. Now, call it what you will; their teachings and practices are not only demonic, but they have **already infiltrated our thinking**.

For instance, witchcraft believes that the entire earth is a living, breathing organism and is the manifestation of the mother goddess. Kind of sounds like environmentalism, doesn’t it? Witchcraft says that the mother or female goddess is to be worshipped above all, not a male god. Kind of sounds like feminism, doesn’t it? They also say that truth is what is true for you. There are no absolutes. Kind of sounds like relativism, doesn’t it?

Witchcraft says that in order to contact these gods and goddesses for personal power you need to practice astrology, divination, incantations, psychic power, and speaking with the dead.<sup>14,15</sup> This kind of sounds like several TV programs **today**, such as “Psychic Hotline” or “Crossing Over” with John Edwards, who supposedly can contact your deceased loved one.

Now, as you guys can see, our society has **already been infiltrated** by the teachings of witchcraft. And thanks to movies and shows like “Charmed” and books like the Harry Potter series, witchcraft has a whole new look; **even for kids**. In fact, it’s not only appealing to kids, environmentalists, and feminists but now even to psychologists, who are starting to use witchcraft’s occult techniques to treat their patients. In fact, because wicca is now recognized as an “official” religion, the United States Army has allowed approximately one hundred witches to have their own covens at Fort Hood in Texas.

Then, as if that wasn’t bad enough, one of the male deities that is worshipped by those in wicca is the “horned god” called Pan. In the ancient cult of Pan, the rites of passage included the use of drugs to entice the “spirits” to come. If someone was possessed by Pan, from which we get the word “panic,” it often resulted in an obsession with sex and the need for

immediate gratification. And little do people know that Pan is the universal symbol for satan and the antichrist!

Because of this slick new campaign presented by witchcraft, wicca is now considered by some to be the **fastest growing religion in the U.S.** and the second most popular religion among teens. And what most people don't realize is that the Bible foretold a time when witchcraft and their demonic practices of sorcery would one day become **commonplace worldwide.**

**Revelation 9:20-21** “But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to turn from their evil deeds. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood – idols that neither see nor hear nor walk! And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their immorality or their thefts.”

What? People practicing witchcraft worldwide? Could that really happen? It's already happening before our eyes, just like the Bible said. When? In the last days.

And believe it or not, even with all this amazing evidence pointing to the signs of Christ's soon return, some people still refuse to listen to any kind of godly message, like this lady:

“Two Church members were going door to door sharing God's message of love to be saved and knocked on the door of a woman who was not happy to see them. She told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want to hear their message, and slammed the door in their faces.

To her surprise, however, the door did not close and, in fact, bounced back open. So she tried again, really put her back into it, and slammed the door again with the same result, the door bounced back open.

Convinced that these rude young people were sticking their foot in the door, she reared back to give it a slam that would teach them a lesson, when one of them said, ‘Ma’am, before you do that again, you might want to move your cat.’”

Now, that lady caused a lot of unnecessary pain by refusing to listen to God’s message, didn’t she? But believe it or not, she’s not alone. The Bible said that in the last days, many people also refuse to listen to God’s message to be saved before it’s too late.

**2 Corinthians 6:2** “For God says, ‘At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.’ Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation.”

People of God, I hope you’re not one of those who are refusing to listen to God’s message to be saved. Now is the time. Today is the day of salvation. Why? Because you might wake up one day and discover that **you’ve been left behind**. And do you know what? God doesn’t want you left behind. Because He loves you and I, He has given us the warning sign of **The Rise of Wickedness** to show us that the Tribulation could be near and that Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming is rapidly approaching. Jesus Himself said this:

**Luke 21:28** “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Like it or not folks, we are headed for **The Final Countdown**. We don’t know the day or the hour. Only God knows. The point is, if you’re a Christian and you’re not going to shoot at the enemy satan, so to speak, then



will you at least carry bullets for those who will? Let's roll! Folks, it's high time we Christians speak up and declare the good news of salvation to those who are dying all around us. But please, if you're not a Christian, give your life to Jesus today, because tomorrow may be too late! Just like the Bible said!

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To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”

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