

GOD'S PROPHETS AND PROPHECY

A Layman's Study of God's Plan in the World

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INTRODUCTION TO PROPHECY

¹⁹ And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19-21

THE COMING NEW WORLD ORDER

Headlines proclaim the New World Order is coming! World governments, including the United States, must increasingly seek United Nations permission before taking international action. New technology allows the government to track anyone, at any time in the world. The United States is teetering on financial bankruptcy. Islamic extremists have declared war on the United States, killing nearly 3,000 Americans on 9-11. Oil prices are skyrocketing, causing a ripple effect across the American economy. Iran will soon have nuclear weapons and the desire and means to deliver them.

International forces are rapidly dividing the world into ten economic regions. Seven already exist. These are set up to work like the European Union, all administered by what the United Nations calls global governance. International treaties are stripping nations, including the United States, of their sovereignty. A resolution to create a world ethic system or religion, based in pantheism, was barely avoided in 2002. Are we seeing the creation of the ten-nation world confederacy and religion defined in Daniel 7 and Revelation 12-13, 17?

Israel has signed a series of peace agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organization. A guarantee of Israel's security is all that blocks a lasting covenant of peace. Have the first tentative steps been taken that will eventually lead to the covenant made between the Antichrist and Israel in Daniel 9:27? Israel has signed an unprecedented peace agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Though unlikely to be successful, has the first step been taken that leads to the covenant made between the Antichrist and Israel in Daniel 9:27?

America herself is falling headlong into an abyss of depravation. Christianity and Christian principles are increasingly mocked. Homosexuals have rights most other citizens can only dream of. Anyone disagreeing with the homosexual agenda is a bigot and homophobe and must be "reeducated." Abortion hangs like a black pall over American politics and morality. Abortion clinics discard

tens of millions of unborn children like so much rubbish each year. Our public schools have become armed camps and SAT scores continue to plummet. The federal government continues to change public education into indoctrination schools to produce dumbered-down global citizens. Kids are killing kids. Mass murders have become common fare. Scarcely a week going by without another bitter person taking their revenge on innocents who are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Suicide, murder, abortion, drug abuse, crime and other societal ills have increased at an astounding rate over the last 15 years, especially among the youth. News of an incurable disease taking the lives of thousands of people annually has become routine. Predictions of massive starvation are becoming increasingly common. Aside from these political events, volcanic eruptions and devastating earthquakes seem to be increased at an alarming rate.

Is the world going crazy? What's going on? Nothing can explain the world wrenching changes that have occurred since the late 1980s. They are literally astounding. What is happening? God seems to be intervening in world events at an ever accelerating pace. But why?

Are these the last days that are spoken of in the Bible? Will the improbable events that are swirling around us at an ever increasing pace and improbability lead to the rapture of the Church, the return of Christ, and Armageddon? If so when, and what and how will it happen?

For the next several months we will be studying prophesy. It will astonish many of you. But don't expect all of your questions to be answered!

WHY STUDY PROPHECY?

Volumes have been written about the "latter days", "last days", the "Lords Day," and other references to the days just before the return of Christ. Unfortunately, for the

layperson, these studies in eschatology^a often have as many interpretations as there are authors writing about them. Many come from cults who twist scripture to fit their own ends, claiming, for instance, that they are the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation. Others symbolize by allegory what are obviously clear references to future events. By doing so, they attempt to prove that Christ's Kingdom is already here, and that it is up to us to bring peace and prosperity to the world.

Tragically, many of these authors come from evangelical and Pentecostal denominations. Some even claim special 'new' revelation from the Holy Spirit through personal prophesy which they will not permit to be challenged. In doing so, such self-proclaimed prophets put themselves above the Bible (1 Corinthians 4:6; 14:29; 1 John 4:1; and Revelation 22:18-19). Instead they pick and choose only those things they want to accept and believe, often for self-serving reasons. To treat prophecy as allegory or metaphor denies the inerrancy of scripture. Examples abound of such authors writing interpretations that are self-serving.

A cursory, though serious, study of scripture will prove these interpretations to be false, or at least misleading. Yet, even when these obviously false interpretations are put aside, there remains an array of widely divergent interpretations of the same prophecies between serious and respected authors. How can so many biblical scholars seeking God's truth come to so different conclusions? Quite simply, Jesus said, *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the son, but only the Father."* (Matthew 24:36). If neither Jesus nor the angels know the days and hours, why do we think we can know? We can't. Only the Father knows.

So, if specific days are not to be known by man, why even bother to study prophesy?

Actually, many Pastors and laymen incorrectly take this position, but this is as wrong as over-emphasizing prophecy. Quite simply, if God put them in His Word, then they are meant to be studied by us. We are told *"to not treat prophecies with contempt"*, but instead *"to pay attention to prophecy, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns..."* (1 Thessalonians 5:20; 2 Peter 1:19). No prophesy of scripture comes by man's ideas or interpretation, but rather by God through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). Furthermore, **all** scripture is important to having a full knowledge of God and Christ, and to fully understand His great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:3-4).

God, therefore, intended for His people to have and study His prophecies. Such studies should not take priority over the preaching of the Gospel and engrafting God's

love into our hearts. Yet, God spoke these prophecies through man for a very good reason – so that we might know the "seasons", be warned (Matthew 24:32-33), and to spur us on to good deeds (Hebrews 10:24). A proper understanding of the "Last Days" will instill within any Christian the horror of the terrible judgements that will befall to those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This realization should spur each Christian to share the Hope of the Gospel with those who are lost.

Are We in the Last Days?

In answer to the question asked on the first page: "are these events the prelude to the last days?", the answer seems to be an overwhelming, **YES!** To the questions "when will the rapture of the church (the gathering of the saints to Christ in the clouds) occur, or when will the Tribulation begin, the answer is an under-whelming, **we don't know**. They could occur next month, or they may not occur for many years. Certainly current events are bringing the last days closer to us – we can tell that by the "seasons".

Since the crucifixion of Christ, there have been those who have claimed that the second coming of Christ would occur in their lifetime. Obviously these proclamations have been wrong – Christ has not returned! Yet one day those proclamations will come true. Christ said he would return.

What about our generation? Is Christ's return imminent? There is a rapidly growing number of prophecy scholars who are sounding the alarm that we are witnessing the end times. Are they as wrong as their predecessors? While there is always a chance that they could once again be wrong, the overwhelming prophetic evidence suggests that the end times are upon us.

Jesus gave us a sign to tell us when the "season" of the last days were upon us: *"For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, pestilence and earthquakes in various places,... and fearful events and great signs from heaven. All these are the beginning of birth pains."* (Matthew 24:5-8; Luke 21:8-11). Just as birth pains increase in frequency before birth occurs, false messiahs, wars and rumors of war, earthquakes and disease, and signs in the heavens have been occurring in increasing frequency.

Gurus and others claiming to be the world's messiah are a dime a dozen. Scholars are providing increasing evidence that the New Age Movement is becoming a dominant force within the United States and other non-communist countries. This pantheistic religion (god is everything, everything is god) is providing the needed leadership in everything from the environmental movement to women's liberation and abortion. Satanism is becoming common place everywhere in America. News reports of animal, even human sacrifice are

^a That branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or mankind. In Christianity it focuses on the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment.

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beginning to show the magnitude and depth of the occult in our society. It has been estimated that one out of five missing children wind up as a sacrifice on Satan's altar! Wars, civil wars, threats of war are a continuously increasing fare assaulting us each day in the news. Over 25 and 50 million people were killed in World War's I and II alone!

Although it seems like there are more earthquakes today than before, there were actually far more great earthquakes in the first half of the twentieth century than the last half. the frequency of destructive earthquakes having a Richter scale of over 7.0 has remained static for the past 60 years. AIDs runs rampant in certain high risk groups, with resulting mortality increasing each year. Entire generations have been

nearly eliminated by this disease in certain cities and regions in Africa, and now in Southeast Asia. Cholera outbreaks in various parts of the world greet us in the morning news. Solar flare (sun spot) activity in 1998 set new records in intensity, accompanied by incredible displays of Aurelia Borealis down as far as mid-Mexico. Devastating famines in Africa in 1991-1992 and 2002-2003 were barely averted. This famine could have killed as many as 25 to 30 million people through starvation and pestilence.

What about other prophecies? Have those prophecies given by Christ and other prophets leading up to the Tribulation been fulfilled? Let's take a look at a few of these prophecies.

Table 1 – Prophecies to be Fulfilled Before the Tribulation and Christ's Return

Prophecy	Status	Comments
<p>Matthew 24:4-5 ⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (All scripture in <i>The King James Version</i>)</p>	<p>False Christs Fulfilled</p>	<p>Never in history have so many men claimed to be "The Christ." Jesus warned in Matt 24:23-25 that this will actually get worse during the Tribulation as these false Christs will do miracles that would "deceive even the elect" if they were not forewarned.</p>
<p>Matthew 24:6-8, Luke 21:10 ⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.</p>	<p>Birth Pangs Fulfilled</p>	<p>Throughout the ages there have been wars and rumors of wars as nations rise against nations. Yet, this generation has lived in terror of nuclear war. In spite of medical advancements and enough food for every person, corrupt governments and greed continue to result in famine and pestilence. AIDS now ravages humanity.</p>
<p>Luke 21:24 ²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.</p>	<p>Times of the Gentiles Over Fulfilled</p>	<p>Jerusalem and the Temple were captured and destroyed by the Roman General Titus in 70 AD, as was prophesied by Jesus in Matt 24:2 and Lk 21:6. The Jews were sent into captivity allowing the Arabs to settle Jerusalem and what had been Israel. The next 1900 years are known as the "times of the Gentiles", which ended when Jerusalem was restored to the Jews in June, 1967.</p>
<p>1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.</p>	<p>The Rapture Not Yet Fulfilled</p>	<p>Being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air is known as the Rapture of the Church. While there is much disagreement amongst scholars about when it will occur, or even <i>if</i> it will occur, the strongest evidence tends to support a pre-tribulation rapture. If it does occur before the tribulation starts, no scripture allows Christians today to treat it as an "escape" clause. Instead, Christians are to fight the growing evil and spread the gospel of Christ so that as many people as possible might escape the coming wrath.</p>

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<p>Ezekiel 36:17-24 ¹⁷ Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. ¹⁸ Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: ¹⁹ And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.... ²⁴ For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.</p>	<p align="center">The Dispersal and Return of the Jews Fulfilled</p>	<p>The prophecies made by Jesus about the Jew's dispersal among the nations and eventual return were prophesied in detail in Ezekiel 36 and 37. It is clear that the key event that had to have occurred before Christ returns is the return of the Jews to Israel after a nearly 2000 year exile. The Jews formed the nation of Israel against overwhelming odds on May 14, 1948. No other peoples in history have maintained their national heritage for more than about 200 years – yet the Jews did it for nearly 2000 years, and returned to recreate the nation of Israel, just as God had promised! Quite literally, Jesus could not have returned until that happened.</p>
<p>2 Timothy 3:1-8 ¹This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.</p>	<p align="center">False Religion Partial Fulfilment</p>	<p>While elements of this prophecy have prevailed throughout the centuries, and individual nations have exhibited most of these characteristics at once, never has there been a time when <i>all of the world</i> exhibits them to the degree that is now occurring – especially within the world leadership and elite. Examples are too numerous to list in this condensed discussion. The key is found in verse 5, where it is clear that a false religion exists that exhibits spirituality, but totally denies the sovereignty of God and Christ. Called New Age, it is based in Theosophy and is almost universally practiced by the world leaders and elite. It is being instituted through environmentalism – using false eco-catastrophes. It is sweeping the Western World and already prevails in Europe. It dominated the Clinton administration and today in many federal agencies. It is the official religion of the United Nations. The Earth Charter (http://www.earthcharter.org/) nearly became the official world ethic/religion in 2002 at the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development. If the U.S. had not blocked it, the Earth Charter would codify this religion, opening the door to the ratification of the Covenant on the Environment and Development. The world religion would become international law. It is steeped in mysticism and Gnosticism where “secret” knowledge denies the one true God and Christ. The roots of this religion can be traced back through Rome, Egypt, Babylon and Aryan Atlantis (Nazism was based on it). The reference to Jannes and Jambres is no accident – they are Pharaoh’s magicians who opposed Moses.</p>
<p>Daniel 12:4 ⁴ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.</p>	<p align="center">Advanced Technology Fulfilled</p>	<p>Never before in the history of mankind has this prophecy been fulfilled as today. Modern transportation, computers and other technology allows us to literally run to and fro around the world, while incredible amounts of knowledge and information is but a pushbutton away.</p>

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Key Prophecies Fulfilled During the Tribulation that are Occurring Today

Prophecy	Status	Comments
<p>Daniel 7:7-8, 24</p> <p>⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns....²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom...</p> <p>Revelation 13:1, 17:12</p> <p>¹ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy....¹² The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom...</p>	<p>One World Government & Ten Nation Confederacy</p> <p>Being fulfilled</p>	<p>These prophecies and many others (see Dan. 2:40-46, Rev. 17 and 18 foretell of a One World Government made up of ten kingdoms. The United Nations, through the power of the world's banking families and systems, along with many international corporations, is planning a change in the UN Charter that would make it a world government, independent from and with absolute authority over the nations of the world. (See http://www.cgg.ch, http://www.un.org/reform). These documents show that they planned to have the one-world government in place by the early 2000s, but God prevented it (See Psalms 2:1-9). It was interrupted by 9-11. UN and Club of Rome documents reveal that the world is being partitioned into ten economic/trade zones, which so far include the European Union (EU), NAFTA, Alliance for Small Island States (ASLS), Pan-Arab Agreement, the African Union and the Southeastern Asian Alliance. The UN is actively expanding the number of these economic kingdoms.</p>
<p>Revelation 17:3-6</p> <p>³ So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵ And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.</p>	<p>Harlot Church</p> <p>Being Fulfilled</p>	<p>Sponsored by the global elitist banking, corporate and foundation systems, the world religion (see above) is being advanced through environmentalism, and with the ratification of the Earth Charter (see above) the New Age World Religion will be firmly in place. According to the Commission on Global Governance's report (http://www.cgg.ch), no one will be permitted to have a leadership position in the New World Order unless they pledge to uphold this new "ethics system" (Earth Charter). Biblical Christianity is <i>hated</i> by those promoting this new religion. Dan 7:21, 25; Rev. 17:6; 6:9-11; 7:14 clearly show that this religion will justify the slaughter of millions of Christians. UN documents and treaties demonize Christianity as being responsible for the world's ecological crisis and the dominance of women by men. The EU is presently being heavily lobbied to consider Biblical Christianity as a cult.</p>
<p>Matthew 24:15</p> <p>¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)</p>	<p>Temple Rebuilt</p> <p>Initial Steps Taken</p>	<p>The holy place is the Temple. For this to occur, the Temple must be rebuilt. The site of the Temple is now occupied by the Islamic Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest temples of Islam. To tear it down would cause a holy war of unprecedented savagery. Yet, God says it will be rebuilt. While rumors abound that the stones for the Temple have already been cut, it is a fact that temple priests are being trained to perform temple duties and temple instruments crafted.</p>

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<p>Revelation 13:16-18</p> <p>¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.</p>	<p>Mark of the Beast</p> <p>Already Possible</p>	<p>Until the 1970s, prophecy scholars could only speculate how this prophecy would be fulfilled. Not only is this technology now possible, it is here. Computer chip transponders half the size of a medicine Tylenol capsule can be tracked by satellites and are commercially available for cars and pets to trace if they are stolen. By the end of 2008 they are required to be implanted in all livestock. Further miniaturization will permit them to be grafted under the skin and used not only for tracking, but also as an ID for buying and selling. It is interesting (not necessarily significant) that every UPC label is based on the number 666 and the numeric equivalent of www (for World Wide Web) is 666!</p>
<p>Daniel 9:27</p> <p>²⁷ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.</p> <p><i>The King James Version</i></p>	<p>The Start of the Tribulation</p> <p>Soon?</p>	<p>Dan. 9:26 stunningly predicted the actual date of Christ's crucifixion. Verse 27 states that the tribulation will start when "he" the beast or Antichrist will sign a peace covenant with Israel, <i>guaranteeing Israel's security</i>. He will be a part of the new world government, but probably will not be well known at this point. It appears inevitable that someone within the emerging world order will soon be making a peace treaty with Israel. It should be noted that in 1998 Clinton tried to force Israel to accept his peace proposals, but Netanyahu refused because there were no guarantees for Israel's security! This represents the very first time Israel's security has become an issue in any of the peace negotiations. Security has become the centerpiece of President Bush's Roadmap to Peace and the ongoing 2007-2008 negotiations.</p>

While it seems that we are in the "season of Christ's return," we still do not know when the rapture of the church (the gathering of the saints to Christ in the clouds) will occur, or when the Tribulation will begin. They could occur next month, or they may not occur for many years. Certainly current events are bringing the last days closer to us – we can tell that by the "seasons".

The Problem With Dating and Prophetic Interpretation

Unfortunately, there are those today that are making specific predictions of what and how things are going to happen according to prophecy. Some even go so far as to provide dates, even though the Bible specifically forbids it.

The most common predictions concern the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39; where God graphically describes drawing Russia into battle, along with most Arab nations, against Israel. Perhaps so. Certainly the popular fundamental and evangelical thought today is that Russia and its Arab allies will invade Israel **before** the Tribulation

begins. But there is also overwhelming prophetic evidence that this invasion may occur just before the **middle** of the tribulation, rather than before the tribulation. If so, it would likely be the event that reveals Jesus Christ as the Messiah to the Jews, if Ezekiel 39:22 is taken literally!

There is room for legitimate disagreement over **when** this prophesy will be fulfilled. But when an author becomes dogmatic about timing, the result can potentially cause discouragement when his prediction doesn't happen. So don't be discouraged if this prophesy is not fulfilled in the immediate future. One thing we do know; this prophesy will be fulfilled not long after the Jews return to their homeland (Israel)! (Ezekiel 36:8-9) Since Israel became a nation in 1949, the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39 cannot be too far into the future! Therefore, neither can the Tribulation!

It is necessary to identify possible events that **could** fulfill prophecy. Unfortunately, there is a overwhelming temptation by many students of prophecy to predict detailed scenarios from current events based on some favorite prophesy, without considering other relevant prophecies. Therein lays the difficulty of interpreting

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prophecy. Even when other prophecies are considered, there are just too many avenues events can take and still fulfill a specific prophecy.

The point is, God rarely does things the way men think He should. Whenever man attempts to predict specific events leading to the fulfillment of prophecy, he is invariably wrong!

What Should We Expect?

It is clear from scripture that a more or less unified world system of government/economy and religion will develop either before, or at, the time the Tribulation begins. The first step towards this unity was taken in 1991.

Although most people have missed it entirely, for the first time since perhaps Nimrod, most of the world was unified in something! Iraq and Desert Storm provided the catalyst for that unity. It was a weak and short-lived unity, and was lost entirely in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but don't be surprised if it reveals to the world what Nimrod knew when he built the Tower of Babel – **Unity is a very powerful force.** The success against Iraq in 1991 showed the the world **that united, nations can "enforce" peace on any war-minded or aggressor nation!** The 2003 war with Iraq and the subsequent insurgency has shown that without unity, a quagmire can result. When people are unified they can do almost anything.

President Bush Senior's "New World Order" may be the first evidence needed to show the world it needs to have a one-world government and/or economy in order to survive. During an address to the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly in 1997, President Clinton made the following remarkable statement:

The forces of global integration are a great tide, inexorably wearing away the established order of things.... People...are susceptible to misguided protectionism, to the poisoned appeals of extreme nationalism, and ethnic, racial, and religious hatred. New global environmental challenges require us to find ways to work together.... [W]e need a new strategy of security. Over the past five years, nations have begun to put that strategy in place through a new network of institutions and arrangements.... Through this web of institutions and arrangements, nations are now setting the international ground rules for the 21st century, laying a foundation for security and prosperity for those who live within them, while isolating those who challenge them from the outside.¹

This new world order has yet to take shape, but it shouldn't be surprising that it is evolving into regional coalition of nations promising (and enforcing) peace and economic prosperity for the world. The European Union and NAFTA are examples of this. NAFTA is set to evolve into the North American Community by 2010. North and South

America are working to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The Palestine issue will somehow be resolved. After all, the world is desperate for such promises!

Christians have long said that they would oppose any effort to bring the United States into a world government. Yet, that is exactly what the FTAA, GATT, the International Criminal Court and other 'web' of international institutions are designed to do. Liberal Supreme Court Justices had said since the late 1990s that U.S. law must conform to international law. They have been doing just that in many Supreme Court decisions, including the shocking *Kelo v. New London* decision on eminent domain in June of 2005.

Most Americans know about *Kelo v. New London*. This outrageous decision allows government to use the awesome power of eminent domain for *any* purpose they want, with or without just compensation. American citizens no longer have God-given unalienable right to own and use their property without government interference. This will have a staggering impact on our freedoms and ability to create wealth, as will be discussed in a future lesson.

The incomparable tragedy of 9-11 in 2001 knowingly or unknowingly provided the catalyst to dilute the civil rights of Americans even more. The Patriot Act (revised in 2006) and the Homeland Security Act allows the government to spy or arrest any American for anything under the guise of preventing terrorism. In spite of the media hoopla over phone calls to suspected Al Qaeda operatives originating or entering the United States, it is unlikely the Bush administration is guilty of wholesale abuse of the loopholes in the new laws. But it is just a matter of time before wholesale abuse occurs. The world, including the United States, is rapidly coming under the control of an unaccountable group of international elites.

The emergence of a "one-world church or religion" that encompasses all religions "in peace and harmony" may already be emerging in the new age movement. Matthew 24:4-5, 10-12, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 and Revelation 17:1-6, as well as others, promise that this "harlot" church will be full of deceit and many will be let astray before, and during the first three and a half years of the Tribulation. It nearly happened in 2002 when the world's leaders came within hours of accepting the 'Earth Charter' during the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Earth Charter is the:

"articulation of a spiritual vision that reflects *universal* spiritual values;... a people's charter that serves as a *universal* code of conduct for ordinary citizens, educators, business executives, scientists, *religious leaders*, non-governmental organizations, and national councils of sustainable development; and a declaration of principles that can serve as a 'soft law' document when endorsed by the UN General Assembly."² (Italics added for emphasis)

The Earth Charter Initiative goes on to say that "a *radical*

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change in humanity's attitudes and values is essential to achieve social, economic, and ecological well-being in the twenty-first century."³ (*Italics added*) This radical change would require making the protection of earth the central organizing principle of every religion, economic decision and social construct of every nation and person in the world. If



Figure 1. The Ark of Hope houses the Earth Charter. The Ark is an imitation of the Ark of the Covenant, but is covered with occult symbology. It was brought to the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002 for acceptance as the world's ethic belief's and religion.

this author and dozens of others had not convinced the U.S. Delegation to the WSSD to derail the acceptance of the Earth Charter, it would have passed.

The acceptance of the Earth Charter by the United Nations would have opened the door to ratify a brand new treaty called the Covenant on the Environment and Development.⁴ That treaty would make the Earth Charter legally binding on every man, woman and child in the world; giving birth to the harlot church.

Finally, we can expect additional wars (to bring peace, of course!), false messiahs earthquakes, famines and disease. How soon will these occur? Perhaps as early as tomorrow, or perhaps (though unlikely) over the next 20 years or more. We don't know the days nor hours; but we do know we are now in the "season".

The truth provided by some authors can hit home with deep conviction. Most prophecies deal with God's chosen people, **the Jews**; including those in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Thessalonians, and Revelation. This is obvious in Dan 9:27, and between verses 5 and 6 in Revelation 12, where nearly 2,000 years of church history appears to be totally ignored – **as if it never occurred!**

Even more telling is the entire book of Revelation. The first three chapters of Revelation John's prophecy focuses on the Church. From that point on, the Church is never mentioned again throughout the rest of Revelation – **just as if it disappears!** That could only happen if the Church is raptured **before** the seven year Tribulation (as Rev 3:10 clearly implies), and the balance of the Revelation prophecies focus on the Jews and new converts to Christianity in the

world **during** the Tribulation. Is this a correct interpretation? If so, many interpretations claiming that the Christian Church is involved in this or that tribulation prophecy cannot be correct.

That conviction has the impact of fog lifting. Suddenly, prophecies which were perplexing snapped into focus. Yet, these sharply focused prophetic events had no pattern to them. Some were obviously sequential, others seemed random. In fact, many, if not most prophecies given by the Prophets are deliberately disordered by God in scripture! God did this for the same reason Christ spoke in parables; to provide wisdom for those that would search His word for the truth through prayer, but do it in a way that cannot be understood by men of the world.

A prophecy may have a double meaning, jump hundreds or thousands of years in the same sentence, or go from a distant future event to a mid-distant event and back to the distant event, all within the same paragraph. One of the greatest examples of a break in mid-sentence occurs when Jesus read from Isaiah 61 and proclaimed the fulfillment of verse 1 and **the first half** of 2 (Luke 4:18-19). But He stopped in the middle of verse two. The balance of verse 2 and 3 is yet to be fulfilled!

DANIEL – THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING END-TIME PROPHECY

Where an author starts with prophetic interpretation will, to a large degree, determine how certain prophecies are interpreted. For instance, if an expositor starts with Revelation and relates all other prophecy to this book, the possible variations to interpretation is endless. Such an approach will lead to a confusing array of possibilities about whom, what, where and when certain things will happen.

On the other hand, if the Book of Daniel is used as the foundation for prophetic interpretation, many possible interpretations of other prophecies, including Revelation, are eliminated. But why Daniel? Why not start with Revelation, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel? Daniel certainly had supernatural wisdom and understanding of visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17), and certainly demonstrated his faithfulness and humility to God on numerous occasions. But so did the other prophets.

For whatever reason, Daniel was highly esteemed by God (Dan 9:23), and was chosen to *give him insight with understanding....of the vision* (Dan 9:22-23). Again in Daniel 10:14 he was told by an angel *"I have come explain to you what will happen to your people (the Jews) in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."* As Daniel concluded his prophetic life he was told to *"close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end."* (Dan 12:4). When Daniel persisted, he was again told *"Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end."* Daniel was given

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incredible insight into future and end-time events.

The book of Daniel appears to hold the key to understanding all other end-time prophesy. It is believed by many prophetic scholars that this astonishing book literally provides a template upon which to structure other prophecy. In providing a kind of roadmap, it potentially eliminates considerable confusion. The fact that many of the prophecies in Daniel's four visions have already been fulfilled with incredible historical accuracy only adds credibility to this approach to prophetic interpretation.

Therefore, this book will approach prophetic interpretation using a Daniel template with the full understanding that such an approach could still lead to incorrect interpretations. Yet to approach this subject from any other direction leads to a hopeless morass of contradictions and confusion. And God is not the author of confusion.

Prophetic Order from Chaos

Even with the understanding that Daniel is God's roadmap to understanding end-time prophesy still leaves many possible ways to interpret prophesy. This problem is one of the biggest sources of interpretation differences between bible scholars. Seeing as how I must make the same decisions, it is only fair that I explain how I decided between one possible interpretation verses another. Again came a conviction that **Daniel's "Seventy Weeks of Years" (Daniel 9:20-27) is God's "Rosette Stone" within the Daniel template, against which all prophesy must fit.** Viewing prophesy by using Daniel's Rosette Stone begins to bring order out of confusion.

Using this approach, prophesy has definite order. Certain events will happen, and many are spelled out in clarity. Russia's invasion of Israel is one example – it will happen! These prophetic events have order, one follows the other – in some cases one builds into another. Although most prophetic events can be relatively clear, prophetic information leading from one to another is not! Perhaps the easiest analogy to use for comparison is a mountain range, whose valleys are blanketed with thick



Figure 2. Trying to put prophetic events together is like seeing mountain peaks (the prophecies) in clouds and not knowing exactly the path that goes between them

haze or clouds, but whose peaks are clearly visible to the viewer. The peaks are prophetic events. They have a definite order and are clearly seen. (Figure 2)

The Book of Daniel provides the template necessary to see how these peaks are oriented relative to one another along the prophetic "mountain range." The valleys are the vague, or missing, information between the prophetic events. A clear understanding is impossible. Hence, we can know the seasons because we can see the "peaks" as they occur, but just as there can be multiple routes to get from one mountain peak to another, so are there many routes current events can take to get to the next prophetic event.

Anyone who tries to force a certain route (i.e. predict how events will exactly unfold to fulfill a prophecy) will invariably be wrong. Yet every expositor dealing with end-time prophesy must judge whether current events are leading to prophetic fulfillment. The key is not to be dogmatic about how a certain prophesy will be fulfilled.

ASSUMPTIONS

Many hundreds of hours have been spent putting this study together. Many references have been studied that provide a cross-section of interpretations for various prophecies. As with any expositor, assumptions were made in writing this study that ultimately provides the framework for conclusions drawn and information discussed.

In this study each interpretation was tested against the Daniel Template. Did the author place his interpretation in context with the Jews? How does that interpretation fit with other prophetic events. My guide is: 1) to always take the simplest interpretation first using as literal an interpretation as possible, 2) not to symbolize or spiritualize what is clearly an earthly event, 3) not to humanize what are clearly descriptions of demons, etc. and finally, 4) to seek the solution that does not violate or negate other well defined prophetic events.

The result, I hope, is the sequence of prophetic fulfillment having the fewest unresolved conflicts. There are many interpretations that legitimately could be explained a different way, and I am the first to admit my way could be (and in at least some cases probably am) incorrect. Participants in the study are encouraged to discuss alternative interpretations.

Translating prophecies literally demands that the study takes what is known as a premillennial approach to prophecy. **Premillennialism**⁵ is the belief that Christ will literally reign on the earth for 1,000 years at his second coming. The doctrine is called premillennialism because it views the current age as prior to Christ's kingdom. It is distinct from the other forms of Christian eschatology such as amillennialism or postmillennialism, which view the millennial rule as either figurative and non-temporal, or as occurring prior to the second coming. Premillennialism is

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largely based upon a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 in the New Testament which describes Christ coming to the earth and *subsequent* reign at the end of an apocalyptic period of tribulation. It views this future age as a time of fulfillment for the prophetic hope of Gods people as given in the Old Testament.

Premillennialism dominated early church beliefs. It was then called "chiliasm" or "millenarianism" and was supplanted by amillennialism and postmillennialism in the third and fourth centuries. It reemerged in the eighteenth century when many leaders in the protestant movement once again began to literally interpreted Bible prophecy. Because this study also makes a literal interpretation of prophecy, it takes a premillennial approach.

Many Bible believing scholars do not accept the premillennial approach to eschatology. Instead, they approach prophecy from what is called an amillennial or postmillennial interpretation. Both deny a future, literal thousand year reign of Jesus Christ. Specifically, the **amillennial**⁶ view holds that the number of years in Revelation 20 is a symbolic number, not a literal description. Therefore, the millennium has already begun and is identical with the church age in which we now exist. While Christ's reign is spiritual in nature during the millennium, at the end of the church age, Christ will return in final judgment and establish permanent physical reign.

Amillennialism did not exist during the first-century church, but mention of the idea first appeared in the second century. It was systematized by Augustine in the fourth century, and this systematization carried amillennialism over as the dominant eschatology of the Medieval and Reformation periods. It was also the dominant belief of the protestant reformers. Premillennialism once again started to gain dominance when many of the church leaders began to interpret the Bible literally in the 18th century.

Postmillennialism⁷ interprets chapter 20 of Revelation as showing that Christ's second coming *follows* the millennium. The millennium can be either figurative (i.e. of any length) or literal, but is what they call the Golden Age or prosperity of Christian prosperity and dominance. Postmillennialism also believes that the forces of Satan will gradually be defeated by the expansion of the Kingdom of God until the second coming of Christ. Many postmillennialists hold some form of **preterism**, which is the believe that most, or all, of the Old and New Testament end-time prophecies have been fulfilled.

All of these isms can be confusing, but can represent battle lines in the minds of many Bible believing Christians. Therefore, it is in the best interest of all who participate not to become dogmatic, but rather offer alternative explanations for discussion purposes. Some questions will never be resolved until we have the advantage of 20/20 hindsight. As noted before, however, the interpretation chosen should have the least amount of conflict with other, more clearly defined prophetic events. Like all men, my understanding is limited, and therefore subject to error. I claim no direct revelation from God.

Our approach is to build a framework for progressively understanding prophecy. We will do this by using Daniel's Seventy Weeks as a template, starting with Daniel, then progressing to Matthew, Ezekiel, Zechariah, etc. leaving Revelation to last. Each book reveals a bit more about the same time period, so the reader can cookie-cut through the various charts to see what the various books have to say about a specific time period within the Daniel Template. By the time we get to Revelation – which most lay-people find extremely confusing – enough of the foundation will have been laid to put events described in Revelation into proper order.

Positions of prophetic events in the charts are only relative, and intended to provide the approximate time and sequence of occurrence. The student is cautioned that although these are based on assumptions that make the most sense, they should only be used as guides to understanding, rather than absolutes.

Scriptural quotes are from the New International version, unless otherwise noted. Many in the Christian world condemn the New International version because it was allegedly written by questionable authors and sharply disagrees with the King James version in several critical verses. These people claim the only trustworthy version is the King James. This author has studied this issue and found the same problem exists with the King James version. Additionally, the King James version was written when many of the oldest scriptural remnants had not yet been discovered, hence it uses later remnants that disagree with the oldest ones. In many places it also improperly translates the original Hebrew or Aramaic text. There is no perfect English translation, so it is best if a question arises to review several translations or go to the original Hebrew or Aramaic text.

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