

**BIBLE
PROPHECY**

Insights

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Living for Christ in the End Times



Observations by the Editor

Dark Times

As our cover indicates, the Bible prophesies that the end times will be a time of spiritual darkness (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Society will disintegrate into a cesspool of immorality and violence, resembling the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). People's hearts will be filled with rebellion (2 Timothy 3:2-4). Christians will be persecuted (Luke 21:12-17).

Evil will triumph. People will call evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20). People will have stubborn and rebellious hearts (Jeremiah 5:23). People's faces will be harder than rock as they refuse to repent (Jeremiah 5:3). Evil will be so prevalent and so common that people will not even know how to blush (Jeremiah 6:15).

Can there be any doubt that these terrible days have arrived?

A Book About the Church and Society

At the beginning of this century I wrote a book called *Living for Christ in the End Times*. It was motivated by a deep concern over the apostate condition of the Church and the drift of our society toward paganism. In the ten years since I wrote that book, the condition of both the Church and society has continued to deteriorate. Churches are now openly endorsing homosexuality, same-sex marriage and the concept that there are many roads to God, of which Christianity is only one. Society has become a mirror of Noah's day, when immorality and violence reigned supreme.

A few years ago I wrote a brief summary of my book and published it in our *Lamplighter* magazine. The article came to the attention of one of the major publishers of Christian tracts. The chief editor of this organization contacted me and requested permission to reproduce the article as a tract. I gave him permission to do so.

The tract proved to be incredibly successful. Tens of thousands of copies were distributed worldwide. Recently, the editor contacted me again and said he wanted to reprint the tract once more, but he wanted to change one word in it. That word was Rapture, which appears in the article twice, near the end. He said he



Dr. David R. Reagan

wanted to replace that word with the phrase "the Second Coming." When I asked why, he said he had decided that the Rapture is a myth! He said he had even set up a website devoted to proving that the Rapture is a mistaken concept.

I, of course, refused to agree to the change. The editor then destroyed his remaining copies of the tract. We were immediately inundated with requests for the article from people who had been using the tract as a witnessing tool.

So, I decided that we would reprint the article in our *Bible Prophecy Insights* series. Thus, this publication. I hope it will be a blessing to you. I hope too, that you will decide to get a copy of the book that the article is based on. You will find an advertisement for it on the back cover of this publication.

To secure a special price for volume copies of this publication, please call our office at 800-705-8316.

Other Insights Publications

Other publications in our *Insights* series include the following:

Insights 1 — "What Happens When You Die?" (What the Bible says about death, Hades, Heaven and Hell.)

Insights 2 — "Are You Sweating the End Times?" (An exposition of Psalm 2.)

Insights 3 — "50 Reasons Why We Are Living in the End Times" (A survey of the Signs of the Times that point to the Lord's soon return.)

You can find a complete list of our study materials, including audio and video programs, at our website which is located at www.lamblion.com. ✚

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Insights publications feature popular articles that first appeared in the ministry's bi-monthly magazine called *The Lamplighter*. Copies of the magazine can be found on the ministry's website at lamblion.com.

Living for Christ in the End Times

A Challenge to Prepare for His Soon Return

Observations by
Dr. David R. Reagan

The Bible clearly teaches that society will degenerate in the end times, becoming as evil as it was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39). The Apostle Paul, speaking as a prophet, says that society will descend into a black pit of immorality, violence, and paganism (2 Timothy 3:1-5). He asserts that men will be “lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure.” People will be “boastful, arrogant, and unholy,” and children will be “disobedient to parents.”

Sounds like the evening news, doesn't it? In short, we have arrived.

Signs of Coming Persecution



(Internet)

We should be deeply concerned over these developments, not only because we are witnessing the destruction of our beloved America, but because both Jesus and Paul prophesied that when these things occur, the Church will come under attack and individual Christians will be persecuted.

Jesus said that as lawlessness increases, “most people's love will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). He stated that in this hostile atmosphere, many professing Christians will “fall away” and will proceed to cooperate in the persecution of their former brothers and sisters in Christ (Matthew 24:10). Paul indicates the same thing when he says that people will be “haters of good” and that they will therefore be “brutal” and “reckless,” reviling those who stand for righteousness (2 Timothy 3:2-4).

We are watching these prophecies come true today before our very eyes,



both here in America and around the world. As our culture has secularized and paganized, Christianity, the Church, and Christians have come under increasing attack as “intolerant bigots.” The attacks are going to intensify, and it is going to become increasingly difficult for Christians to stand for righteousness. Jobs will be lost. Careers will be destroyed. Christians will even be sent to prison for speaking out against evils like homosexuality because such pronouncements will be labeled as “hate crimes.”

What then are those of us who love Jesus to do as we face a rising wave of ridicule, harassment, and persecution for our faith? How shall we live for Christ in the end times? Let me suggest a few guidelines.

1 Order Your Priorities —



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The starting point is to review your priorities and make certain that God is first in your life. Be honest with your-

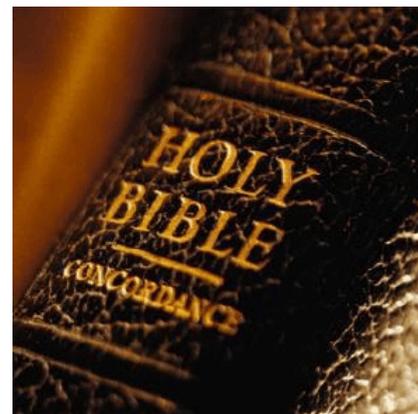
self. Don't play games. Don't kid yourself.

Most Christians have allowed their priorities to get very mixed up. Usually, job or career is number one, family is second, and God is third or even fourth behind an obsession with sports or something similar.

Ask yourself this question: If God were to give you the opportunity to make one request, what would it be? Would you ask for money? Power? Fame? Success?

Solomon asked for wisdom, but David asked for something ten thousand times more profound — he asked for intimacy with God (Psalm 27:4). And, because he put God first, he states in Psalm 27 that he did not fear life (verse 1) or death (verse 13). It is also the reason that he is remembered as “the man after God's own heart” (Acts 13:22).

2 Stand on the Word —



(Internet)

The Bible says that the end times will be an age of deception (Matthew 24:24, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 2 Timothy 4:3-4). In fulfillment of that prophecy, we are today being bombarded with false but alluring religious systems offered by the Christian cults, Eastern religions, and the New Age Movement.

Most professing Christians are sitting ducks for spiritual deception because the average Christian is not certain what he believes. And even

when he is able to articulate a belief, he usually does not know why he believes it. The result is that a Jehovah's Witness can turn the average Christian into a theological pretzel in two minutes flat.

Anyone can be deceived. If you are to guard yourself against deception, you must get into the Word and stay in it on a daily basis. Also, you must test everything by the Word (1 John 4:1). For Catholics this means discarding doctrines like purgatory that have no basis in the Word whatsoever. For Protestants it means being alert to the twisting of scriptures or the manipulation of verses out of context. On every doctrine, the Bible needs to be searched from Genesis to Revelation to see what is said about the particular topic.

3 Believe in the Power of God —



(Internet)

I am convinced that most professing Christians are deists. A deist is a person who believes in an impersonal god who never intervenes in human affairs. According to Deism, we are supposed to cope with our god-given reason, our talents, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. As far as the deist is concerned, at the end of the First Century, God retired, the supernatural ceased, and the age of miracles came to an end.

But the Hebrew Scriptures teach that God never changes (Malachi 3:6). And the New Testament specifically states that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yes and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

There is no way we can cope with the evil of end time society in our own strength. Anyone who tries to do so will be defeated. Our only hope is to turn to a God who is alive and well, who is still

on the throne, who hears prayer and answers prayer, and who still performs miracles.

We must realize that the Bible teaches that we can limit God by our unbelief. This is a great paradox. Think about it — although God is all-powerful (Luke 1:37), we who are powerless in comparison can nonetheless limit His power by our unbelief (Mark 6:1-6). That's because God is a gentleman. He does not force Himself upon us. If we want to try to cope on our own, He will let us. He responds when we reach out to Him in faith (James 1:6).

4 Persist in Prayer —



(ClipArt.com)

One of the greatest blessings God has given believers is supernatural communication. God cares for us personally (1 Peter 5:7), and He desires to communicate with us (James 4:8). Because He loves us, He earnestly desires our fellowship (John 4:23).

The tragedy is that most professing Christians seem to be inclined to turn to prayer as a last resort — only when all else has failed and the situation has become desperate. Some of this reluctance to seek God in prayer is due to pride, and thus the Scriptures continually exhort us to humble ourselves (1 Peter 5:6). Others fail to depend on prayer because of unbelief. They either think God doesn't care, or else they think He is no longer active in history.

But the Bible says “we do not have because we do not ask” (James 4:2).

How many blessings of God have you left on the table because you tried to handle your problems yourself? The Bible also says that “the prayers of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16). Do you interpret this to mean that the power of your prayers depends on your righteousness? That is not what it means. If you are truly born again, then you are a righteous person because you are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus (Isaiah 61:10).

5 Rely on the Holy Spirit —



(Internet)

Most professing Christians seem to be afraid of the Holy Spirit. This is usually due to a lack of knowledge concerning the Spirit. For example, there is a tendency to write off the Holy Spirit as some sort of impersonal force — like “The Force” in Star Wars.

We need to understand that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is the supernatural presence of God in the world today. He performs a dual role. For the unbeliever, He is God's Evangelist. He is the one who works on human hearts to draw them to the Cross in repentance. No one is saved apart from the testimony of the Spirit (John 6:44 & 65).

With regard to the believer, the Holy Spirit is God's indwelling presence to provide us with power and guidance. He is our Enabler. He is also God's Potter, for one of His basic responsibilities is to daily shape believers more fully into the image of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

One of the ironies of the Christian life is that we cannot serve God in our own power. Rather, the only way we can effectively serve the Lord is by relying on the power of His Holy Spirit who resides within us. It is possible to quench and grieve the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19 and Ephesians 4:30).

The Word calls on us to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). This can happen only if we are willing to release the Spirit to become the Lord of our lives. Most of us are content to let the Spirit be resident in our lives. He does not want to be simply a resident; He desires to be president.

Is that the case in your life? Is the Holy Spirit on the throne of your life? Or is He being treated as an unwelcome guest? There is no way you will be able to withstand the pressures of end time society without relying daily on the power of God's Spirit.

6 Practice Tough Faith —



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Faith comes easy when everything is going smoothly. When there is good health and prosperity, it is easy to praise the Lord. The test of faith comes when all the circumstances of life turn sour.

God has not promised believers a rose garden. We live in a fallen world. The rain falls on the just and the unjust. The wicked prosper. Justice seldom prevails.

It is easy for the righteous to grow discouraged. This calls for the practice of tough faith — the kind of faith that is not dependent on circumstances. It's the kind of faith that hangs in there when the going gets tough because of a confident belief that "all things work together for good for those who love the Lord" (Romans 8:28).

God never promises that believers will be immune to suffering. What He does promise is that He will be there to walk through the trials with us. He promises to be beside us when we "pass through the waters" and "walk through the fire" (Isaiah 43:2). And He states that He will be there when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4).

What is the quality of your faith? When life turns sour, do you turn to God, or do you question Him or even curse Him? One of the keys to hanging tough is to learn the promises of God's Word (like Philippians 4:6-7, 11-13, and 19) and start claiming them in prayer when confronted with the challenges of life.

7 Keep an Eternal Perspective —



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We are to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:11 & 16). That's a difficult principle to follow. It constitutes a daily struggle.

It is so easy to get our eyes off the Lord and focus instead upon the world in which we live. The daily demands are so pressing. And one of the greatest of those demands is that we conform to the world — to the world's language, dress, entertainment, and values.

That's why we are constantly exhorted in Scripture to consider ourselves as "aliens, exiles, and strangers" who are just passing through this world (Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11). We are told to "set our minds on things above, not on the things that are on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). And we are warned to never fall in love with the world or grow comfortable with it (Romans 12:2 and 1 John 2:15-16). In fact, Jesus said we are to "hate our life in this world" (John 12:25), and His brother, James, said "friendship with the world is hostility toward God" (James 4:4).

What does it mean to hate the world? It means we are to hate the evil world system that prevails in society. We are to hate a system that glorifies violence and immorality and which depreciates the value of life.

As C. S. Lewis once put it, "We are to live like commandos behind the enemy lines, preparing the way for the coming of the Commander-in-Chief." In other words, we are to live yearning for the day when Jesus will burst from the heavens to bring peace, righteousness, and justice to the earth.

8 Look for Jesus —



(ClipArt.com)

This brings us to the final guideline I would like to emphasize regarding how to live for Jesus in the end times. The Bible tells us point blank that we are to live "looking for Jesus" (Titus 2:13).

Most Christians are so caught up in the world that they live thinking about anything but the return of Jesus. This is a sad state of affairs because Jesus' return is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). And His return is imminent.

Another problem is that most Christians know so little about Bible prophecy that they cannot get excited about the Lord's return. How can you get excited about an event you know nothing about? Ignorance produces apathy.

And apathy about the Lord's return has tragic consequences. It robs us of an eternal perspective, and it destroys any sense of urgency about reaching lost souls. It also undermines a powerful motivator for holy living.

You see, when a person comes to truly believe that Jesus is returning and may return any moment, that person will be motivated to holiness and evangelism. Regarding holiness, the Apostle John put it this way: "We know that when He appears [the Rapture], we shall be like Him [glorified] . . . And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him, purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

Regarding evangelism, Peter writes that the only reason Jesus has not yet returned is because "God does not wish that any should perish, but that all might come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

A Spiritual Mirror



(i-Stockphoto)

Paul provides us with a spiritual mirror for end time conduct. He says we are to "deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (Titus 2:12-13).

When you look into this mirror, what do you see?

- Are you walking in the center of God's will?
- Have you ordered your priorities to put God first?
- Are you standing on the Word of God, testing everything by it?
- Do you believe in a personal, caring and all-powerful God who hears prayers and answers prayers, and who still performs miracles?

- Are you relying daily on the power of the Holy Spirit?
- Are you practicing tough faith, refusing to allow the calamities of life to overwhelm you?
- Are you keeping an eternal perspective, refusing to get comfortable with this world?
- Are you daily looking for Jesus?
- Is the Rapture in your heart?
- Is "Maranatha!" on your lips? ✚



A painting of the Rapture by Cathy Cotter-Smith. Cathy is a professor of Art at Collin College in Plano, Texas. Her husband, Jack Smith, serves on the Lamb & Lion Board of Trustees. Cathy's paintings of scenes in Israel were featured in the Lamb & Lion calendar for 2008.

Are You Standing for Righteousness?

Dr. David R. Reagan

[Note: This essay is taken from Dr. Reagan's book, *Living for Christ in the End Times*, pages 174-175.]

In these end times, God is calling us to take a stand for righteousness in the midst of a society that has become so evil that it has forgotten how to blush (Jeremiah 6:15).

There are three things that each of us need to do in order to stand for righteousness.

A Call to Action

First, you need to pray for God to lay an issue on your heart. You cannot actively oppose all the evil, for it is too great. You must focus your time and energy. Think of it this way: If you pour water on the ground, it runs every which way; but if you pour it into a channel that runs it over a water wheel, you can generate electricity.

So, pray for God to burden your heart with one particular issue. You may wake up in the night weeping for those in bondage to homosexuality. Or, while praying, you may begin to feel a great sense of compassion for women who are contemplating an abortion.

Once God gives you the burden, then change your prayer and start asking what He wants you to do about it. Remember, God does not call everyone to do the same thing.

Take the issue of abortion, for example. He might call one person to be a front line soldier who sits in the doorway of a clinic and risks arrest. He may call another to stand across the street and pray or serve as a sidewalk counselor. He might motivate another to write letters to newspapers and politicians. Others He might call to serve as financial contributors. He might even call you to adopt a baby that someone wants to abort.

Finally, after the Lord has identified your issue and told you what to do, then follow that popular slogan that says, "Just do it!" He will give you the gifts you need to do the job, and He will give you the opportunities. Remember, He is actively searching the earth for people



who have given their hearts to Him so that He might strongly support them (2 Chronicles 16:9). Donald K. Campbell, author of *Judges: Leaders in Crisis Times*, wrote, "The requirement for usefulness is not ability, but availability and trust in God's enabling power."

Here's how Paul put it: "I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service" (1 Timothy 1:12).

A Monk Who Challenged an Empire



In the Fourth Century there was a monk by the name of Telemachus. He lived alone as a hermit in the desert seeking God. One day he became convinced that he was selfish rather than selfless, and he decided that he would spend the rest of his life serving people, enabling God to touch them through him.

He headed for Rome. He arrived when the Romans were celebrating a

military victory over the Goths. Prisoners of war were being marched through the streets. He heard there was going to be a great victory celebration at the Coliseum, and he decided to go.

He was astonished to find 50,000 people cheering as the prisoners of war fought each other to the death in gladiator games. (Keep in mind that Rome had become officially Christian by this time.) Telemachus could not endure what he was witnessing. He was morally outraged, and he decided to take action.

He rushed down the steps, vaulted the retaining wall, and stepped between two gladiators, signaling for them to stop their combat. The crowd was enraged. They began to chant for the life of the monk. Finally, the commander of the games gave in to the blood lust of the crowd and gave the signal for Telemachus to be slaughtered.

Suddenly, a hush fell over the crowd as people began to realize that they had encouraged the killing of a holy man — a minister of Christ. The games ended, and they were never resumed. Edward Gibbon, in his book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, wrote, "His death was more useful to Mankind than his life."

Never underestimate what one person can accomplish when that person is called and empowered by God. ✚

The Message in Book Form

The message of this publication is contained in detail in Dr. Reagan's hard hitting book about Christian living in the end times.

This is Dr. Reagan's most unique book since it does not focus primarily on Bible prophecy. As the title indicates, the book tells how a person can live a victorious Christian life in the end times while walking the tightrope between worldly pressures and the imminency of the Lord's return.

The book is divided into three parts.

The first part, entitled "The Descent into Paganism," presents the challenge of societal decay and the increasing apostasy in the Church.

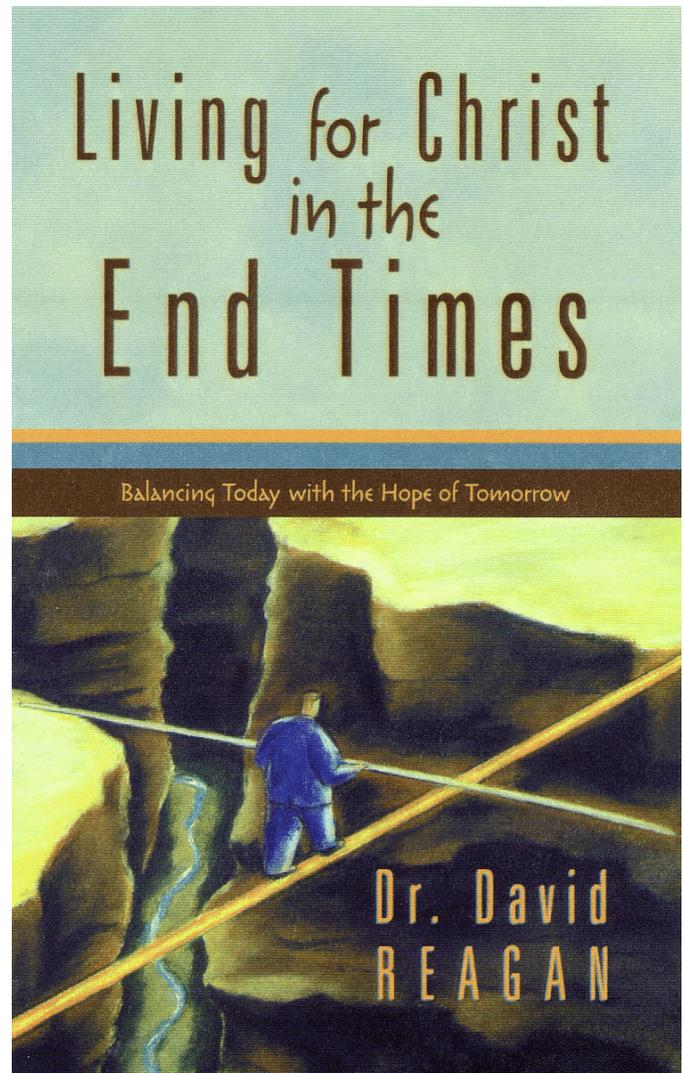
The second section, entitled "The Christian Response to a Pagan World," contains ten chapters about practical Christian living in the midst of a deteriorating society.

The concluding part of the book, entitled "The Victory over Paganism," tells how the return of Jesus will result in an enduring triumph over the evil world system that exists today.

The book contains in-depth, but easy to understand discussions of what it means to stand on the Word of God, believe in the power of God, rely on the Holy Spirit, practice tough faith, order your priorities, keep an eternal perspective, stand for righteousness, persist in prayer, surrender in worship, and cling to hope.

The last section on hope presents an overview of end time events prophesied in the Bible.

Dr. Reagan utilizes an anecdotal style that appeals to the general reader.



263 pages. The book sells for \$15 plus the cost of mailing.

To order the book, call 1-800-705-8316. Place your call between 8am and 5pm, Central time, Monday through Friday.

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