



PROPHECY IS LIKE A LAMP SHINING IN A DARK PLACE. 2 PETER 1:19

Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

March/April
2022

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FROM THE EDITOR

TIM MOORE

Director & Sr. Evangelist
Lamb & Lion Ministries

What is the most important appointment on your personal calendar? A doctor visit? A child's or grandchild's birthday? A car repair?

We've all realized at the end of a busy day that the urgent often pushes aside the truly important. Sure, pressing tasks were accomplished, but what really mattered got postponed for another less busy day. The frustrating thing is that less busy day can be elusive.

Harry Chapin captured this truth in his song, "Cat's in the Cradle." If we don't prioritize time with our children while they are young, they grow up to be just like us—too busy to make time for us.

As Christians, we've each been given talents and gifts to use to God's glory, and tasks to accomplish. The command to share the Gospel and make disciples is both important and urgent.

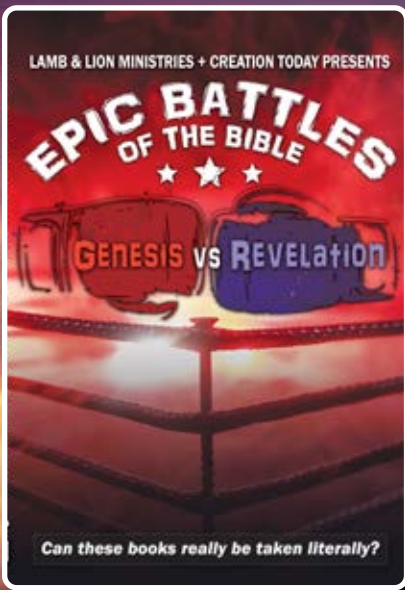
Micah was a prophet to Israel and Judah in a time of relative peace and great prosperity. He recognized that in the midst of material wealth there was growing spiritual poverty. And, he foretold a coming disaster for both nations. You might think Micah would have organized a grassroots movement to make the Jewish nations great again. Instead, his message cut to what was most important—the individual heart. He said, "[God] has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

We'll address the distinction between doing and being later in this magazine. Micah also prophetically testified to the anticipation that inspired his faith and encouraged him throughout his life: "But for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation" (Micah 7:7).

Jesus is coming soon. The promise of that hope is both urgent and important. Soon, all the busy-ness that fills our lives will cease. When the trumpet sounds, we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. In the twinkling of an eye we'll be transformed and given glorified, immortal bodies.

We pray that this edition of the *Lamplighter* will stoke your excitement about both the importance and the urgency of our next appointment on the prophetic calendar—the Rapture of the Church. Because when we are gathered together with our Lord, then we really will have a good time—then, and forevermore. ♦

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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Hosted by Tim Moore
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The Time is Near

TIM MOORE



Storms and natural cataclysms are multiplying. Rumors of war are increasing—in Europe, in the Middle East and the Far East. Christianity is declining in the West and expanding in formerly hostile nations. Israel is increasingly threatened and isolated.

For anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, the signs of the times are crying out that the end is near. We highlight some of those multiplying signs on page 30, but the cacophony is growing day by day.

It would be easy to become preoccupied with the signs themselves. Some watch the political trends and want to respond politically. Others perceive the inherent threats in emerging technologies and want to unplug from the world. While the Lord motivates different individuals to serve in different capacities (applying their gifts to be salt and light in different spheres), suffice it to say that a balanced approach is probably wise. Even as we discern meaning from the signs, the question remains: Am I consuming the news or is the news consuming me?

THE URGENCY OF OUR CORE MESSAGE

The primary mission of Lamb & Lion Ministries is to proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ. That has been our guiding purpose for 42 years. If anything, the timely importance of our core message has only grown more urgent.

We believe that Jesus is at the gates of heaven, waiting for His Father to say, "Go, and get Your Bride." When that happens, a trumpet will sound and He will burst forth to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be caught up to meet Him in the air. Our mortal bodies will instantly be changed into glorified, imperishable bodies just like Jesus had after His resurrection. And we will return to heaven with our Bridegroom to enjoy the marriage feast of the Lamb.

It's one thing to intellectually accept the truth of those promises. But it's another thing to have the anticipation of their fulfillment overflow our heart and mind and spirit.

A LINEAGE OF FAITHFUL EXPECTATION

The signs themselves are important, but only as they advise us of what lies ahead. So, we don't want to fixate on the signs themselves instead of focusing on the event—or the Person—they point to. Alternatively, we can get so caught up in the rut of daily living that we don't even recognize the multiplying signs.

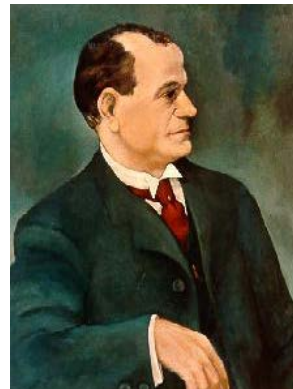
I think there is value in looking back in time to understand how previous generations of Christians perceived the signs pointing to Jesus' return. We know that almost 2,000 years ago, the writers of the New Testament shared the expectation that Jesus could come back very soon. Their anticipation did not distract them from the commission to preach the Gospel, or to spread it to tribes and nations far from Israel. As a matter of fact, their urgent hope actually served to motivate their dedicated service. That is why Paul traveled throughout Asia Minor and desired to go to Rome. It is why doubting Thomas went east to India to proclaim the Good News there.

Followers of Christ who obtained and read the Scriptures for themselves throughout the Dark Ages (when private Bible ownership was banned and translation

was deemed a capital offense) realized that the promise of Jesus' return is intrinsically linked to the Gospel message. Anyone who believes the Bible's consistent testimony—"reading and heeding" in the words of Revelation—understands that He is coming soon.

Over the past few years, I've begun collecting books and tracts from the turn of the last century. Just over 100 years ago, faithful Christians were excited about what they understood would come to pass relatively soon in human history. Prior to World War I and II, Christian authors sensed that prophetic signs were multiplying.

At the turn of the past century, many Christian writers testified to a growing anticipation of God's age-old promises being fulfilled. Several expressed a belief that God would somehow motivate the Jewish people to return to their ancient homeland. Although the Jews were dispersed around the world and integrated in places like France, Germany, Poland, and Russia, they foresaw a time when the Jewish Diaspora would clamor to go home—because that is what Ezekiel foretold. Their faith was not dampened by the implausibility of resurrecting a Jewish state in the middle of a hostile Muslim world—or the possession of the Holy Land by a Turkish-based caliphate. They simply accepted the Word of the Lord and looked for the ultimate fulfillment of all its promises.



William E. Biederwolf

In his booklet, *The Coming Dictator and Is Jesus Coming Back?* (published in 1934), William Edward Biederwolf described the coming antichrist and his anticipation of Jesus' soon return. He cited Henry Alford, renowned Greek scholar at Cambridge University and Dean of Canterbury, who wrote, "The majority both in number and in learning and research adopt the pre-millennial advent, following, as it seems to me, the plain and undeniable sense of the sacred text of the Bible itself."

R.I. Humberd was another prolific writer who discerned that he was living on the cusp of prophetic events long anticipated by faithful Christians. His 1934 booklet, *God's Man and Satan's Man in Final Conflict*,



Russell I. Humberd

contains this word of testimony: "If we are living in the latter times (and I am convinced that we are) then soon we can expect the Jews to return to [the Promised Land] and 'dwell safely all of them.'"

Humberd went on to offer another insight: "Kings may argue, write letters and send notes, but the last thing they do, before the battle, is to recall their ambassadors. For many centuries, God has had His ambassadors on Earth, calling men to 'Be ye reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20). But just before the strife come out into the open, God will call His ambassadors home."

What a wonderful illustration! We are certainly called to serve as ambassadors—what are still called ministers in diplomatic parlance—here in the world. But our soon-returning King will come to bring us home before His wrath is poured out on the earth. Until then, we should be about His business day by day.

The past few years demonstrate that the threat of a coming dictator Bidderwolf foresaw in 1934 is looming again. Without chasing down the rabbit trail of Covid protocols and heavy-handed government control, the undeniable reality is that many would trade their liberties for the perceived security offered by a central authority. Be that political or scientific or medical, we've learned that benevolence in such exalted authorities is rare, and short-lived even when it can be found.

There is nothing new under the sun.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Discerning Christians recognized a hundred years ago that the world was on the cusp of calamitous events with prophetic significance; Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, David Reagan, and others emphasized the signs of the times pointing to the coming of the Lord beginning in the 1970s and 80s. Christians for 2000 years have anticipated the Rapture of the Church—someday. What has changed?

What has changed is the culmination of signs.

Today all the various signs are increasing in frequency

and intensity. That is measurably true in the realm of natural signs. Storms and other natural disasters are happening more often—and with greater impact to human life. Societies are disintegrating before our eyes—with the formerly Christian West rushing toward Post-Christian secular humanism. Spiritual signs—both positive and negative—are multiplying. The nations of the world are tracking toward the anti-Israel alignment foretold in Bible prophecy. Technology has advanced to the point that the dire and fantastic dystopian warnings offered in Revelation are feasible today.

And, overriding all of that, the presence of Israel on the world stage—and the growing isolation and animosity it is experiencing from the community of nations—fulfills Jesus' prophecy of the cursed fig tree.



HE IS NEAR, RIGHT AT THE DOOR

Some consider Jesus driving the moneychangers from the Temple to be the most dramatic incident for our meek and humble Lord. But the incident that seems far more uncharacteristic is Jesus' cursing of a fig tree that was not bearing fruit (Matthew 21:18-19a and Mark 11:12-14). Mark makes a point of recording that it was not the season for figs. Surely Jesus knew that. Why expect a tree to bear fruit out of season? And why curse it for simply existing according to its own nature? Even the disciples seemed surprised to see the tree wither so dramatically (Matthew 21:19b-22 and Mark 11:20-22).

Jesus was clearly making a point to His disciples. In that moment He emphasized the sovereignty of God and the power of prayer. Later, however, He offered them—and us—insight regarding the end times. During an extended description of His promised second com-



...in just the past 75 years, Israel has become tender and put forth new leaves. Summer is coming and a bountiful harvest of fruit is promised.

ing, Jesus said, “Now learn the parable from the fig tree; when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door” (Matthew 24:32-33).

Israel is that fig tree, as demonstrated repeatedly in Bible prophecy (Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 8:13, Jeremiah 24, and Micah 4:4). It was cursed, cast aside, and exiled for an extended period because it did not bear much fruit—even though the time for it to bear much fruit had not yet come. But in just the past 75 years, Israel has become tender and put forth new leaves. Summer is coming and a bountiful harvest of fruit is promised.

The point for us is that this overriding sign—the re-establishment of Israel, its re-possession of its ancient capital of Jerusalem, the growing animosity of the world that will lead to outright hostility against Israel (driving it to the end of itself and into the arms of God)—tells us that He is near, right at the door.

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

In the beginning, God’s first creative utterance was, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). His light pierced the darkness and was good.

John opened his Gospel account by pointing back to the beginning. He wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). We know that Jesus is the Word, the manifest Person of God. John tells us that “in Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4-5).

The world 2,000 years ago was a dark place. The Canon of Scripture as we know it had closed out with Mal-

achi, the prophet who ended his book with the ominous words, “and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:6). That phrase ended a prophetic passage of hope. God promised to send “Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Malachi 4:5), but the Jewish people living under Roman oppression surely felt like their land had been smitten with a curse.



In the midst of that dark hour, Simeon and Anna were living expectantly. They were looking for the Lord’s Messiah—and realized a great blessing when they were able to meet and hold Jesus as a baby. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would “not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26).

Similarly, while Jesus lay in the grave, the disciples were not full of hope. They were dejected and dismayed. Their world had been shattered and they were not sure how to proceed. But when Jesus rose again, their eyes were open and they understood His victory over darkness and death. Once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were inspired to lives of dedicated service—full of expectation, even then, that Jesus would come again. Our upcoming celebration of Resurrection Day reminds us of that victory and points to the promise of our own resurrection at the Rapture of the Church.

We live in another era when darkness has descended upon the earth. Oppression is rising and hope is waning. But Christians are not subject to darkness or consigned to hopelessness. We already know the Blessed Hope; we already have the Light of life (John 8:12). Paul is so bold as to say, “You, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day [of the Lord] would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5a). His clear message is that we should discern the signs of the times pointing to Jesus’ soon return.

Paul urged the Church in Rome—and by extension every follower of Jesus Christ—to “do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near.”



Romans 13:11-14

WHY THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES?

Sometimes we talk about “what” of the signs of the times without considering the “why”. In other words, why did God tell us there would be signs to look for pointing to Jesus’ second coming? I think there are three reasons:

1. He does not allow us to know the day or the hour, but He wants us to recognize the season of His return.

Jesus roundly chastised the people of His day for failing to recognize the signs of the times (Matthew 16:2-3); He offered numerous signs that point us toward the season of His return.

2. While we labor diligently for the Master while He is away (Matthew 25:14-23), realizing that He is returning soon should motivate us to redouble our efforts—sharing the gospel and urging lost people to flee from the wrath to come.

Paul urged the Church in Rome—and by extension every follower of Jesus Christ—to “do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near” (Romans 13:11-14).

3. He does not want the lost to slip into eternal oblivion without a heightened awareness of the cataclysm that awaits them.

God sends warnings before His wrath is poured out—as He did in Noah’s day, to Sodom and Gomorrah, and to Nineveh; in the end times a Gospel angel will fly above the earth crying out, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come” (Revelation 14:7).

HEAVENLY MINDED AND EARTHLY GOOD

Right now, even those without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit can discern that something is terribly amiss in the world. Their hearts are like plowed ground, ready to receive seed. Our own discernment of the Signs of the Times should not inspire anxiety and frustration and fear, but rather motivate us to plant and water and fertilize and prune—making disciples of all the nations.

We should praise the Lord that He calls us each to serve in a way, a place, and a time where our gifts and talents can bring Him glory.

But in a broader sense our recognition of the Signs of the Times should motivate us all to realize that time is growing short. If the King really is coming—soon, and very soon—then our lives should be oriented around that glorious truth. ♦





NATHAN E. JONES

WHY DO I BELIEVE IN A PRE-TRIB RAPTURE?



Have you ever noticed how many teachings there are out there concerning the Rapture of the Church?

Sure, the Bible makes it crystal clear that one day Jesus will return and gather up all those who are saved and take them

to Heaven to live with Him forever. But, the when and the where and how's of it all... so many different and even conflicting views. Which are facts and which are merely opinions?

During these times of confusion and indecision, sometimes you just have to get away, take a walk, and spend some time thinking it through.

For me, after long study, I have come to believe in what is called the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view. This "gathering up" of Christians will occur before God's judgment falls upon the world in a seven-year time period foretold by Daniel and known as the Tribulation.

But, why exactly do I believe in a Pre-Trib Rapture? I have my reasons, ten to be exact. All are founded on

the conviction that the Bible is the very Word of God, that it should always be interpreted literally, and that it is firmly rooted in Jesus' ironclad promise that He will indeed return. All preclude a spiritualized interpretation of the Scriptures. Doing so merely results in imaginative nonsense. Let's walk through these reasons and see if they help provide clarity.

1. The Rapture and Second Coming are different events.

Some claim that the Rapture and Second Coming are the exact same event occurring at the very end of the Tribulation — the Post-Tribulation Rapture view. And yet, read all the verses which cover Christ's return and you'll encounter two very different scenarios. These verses actually describe Christ's return happening in two stages — the Rapture (Jn. 14:1-14; I Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18) and later the Second Coming (Zech. 14:1-21; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-27; Rev. 19) — separated by a period of time.

2. The Rapture can occur at any time without warning.

Jesus stated in Matthew 24 to "keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come," indicating Jesus will arrive at a time when nobody is expecting. Not expecting? How can that be when the Second Coming is preceded by exactly seven years (to the day)

of events—such as the rise of the Antichrist, plagues, wars, and earthquakes which destroy most of the world? The Rapture happens imminently and without warning, while the Second Coming has to be preceded by many years' worth of signs. The two then cannot possibly be the same event.

3. The Rapture removes the Restrainer.

Second Thessalonians teaches that God's restraining influence will be taken away when the Antichrist rises to power. Christ restrains the evil of this world today through the Church. Therefore, the Church will need to be removed — raptured — before the Antichrist's seven-year reign can even begin.

4. The Tribulation is for Israel's redemption.

Jeremiah 30 describes the Tribulation as the "time of Jacob's trouble." Revelation 12 portrays Israel fleeing from the Antichrist's persecutions. And, the Battle of Armageddon pits all the nations of the world against Israel. Israel is repeatedly the focal point of the Tribulation and the center of God's work of redemption, not the Church.

5. The Church is missing on Earth during the Tribulation.



Like the Flood, the Tribulation stands apart as God's second great judgment upon a rebellious world. It's the very wrath of God. True, believers have endured suffering throughout history,

but never actually from God's wrath. Revelation 3 confirms that Christians are promised never to have to endure the Tribulation, proven in the fact that there's no mention whatsoever of the Church throughout Revelation chapters 6-18 which describe the events of the Tribulation.

6. The Church is busy in Heaven during the Tribulation.

While the earth faces God's judgments, the Bible reveals the Church will be quite busy up in Heaven en-

gaged in three events: a judgment for rewards, a celebratory Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and preparing to return to earth with Jesus. None of these three have anything to do with living in a world that's being destroyed.

7. The Millennial Kingdom needs to be repopulated.



If all the Tribulation believers are raptured up to Heaven at the Second Coming and given glorified bodies, bodies which like the angels cannot reproduce (Mat. 22:30; Mk. 12:25), then who is left to repopulate the earth during the

Millennial Kingdom? The Rapture cannot possibly happen Post-Tribulation then, for no more children would be born.

8. God's wrath lasts the entire seven years.

Some claim God's wrath is poured out over just a few of the seven years of the Tribulation, so the Rapture must occur three and a half or even five-plus years into the Tribulation. But, these Mid-Trib and Pre-Wrath Rapture views tend to forget that Jesus Christ Himself breaks the seals which launch all 21 of Revelation's judgments. The final Seven Bowl Judgments are said to finish the wrath of God, not begin His wrath. Because all these judgments are initiated by Jesus Himself, God's wrath lasts the entire seven years, wrath the Church is promised not to have to endure.

9. Faithful examples removed from God's wrath.

Enoch was raptured before the Flood. Noah and his family were removed from the floodwaters. Lot and his family were sent away from Sodom and Gomorrah before God incinerated those wicked cities. Rahab and her family were set apart when Joshua's army invaded Jericho. Again and again, the biblical examples show God removes believers from His wrath, instead of making them suffer through His wrath.

10. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is not new.



John Darby

Some will argue that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is just “too new to be true,” crediting it to John Darby some 200 years ago. But, is that assessment historically accurate? Not at all! The Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is a reawakening of the long-ignored teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

First Things First

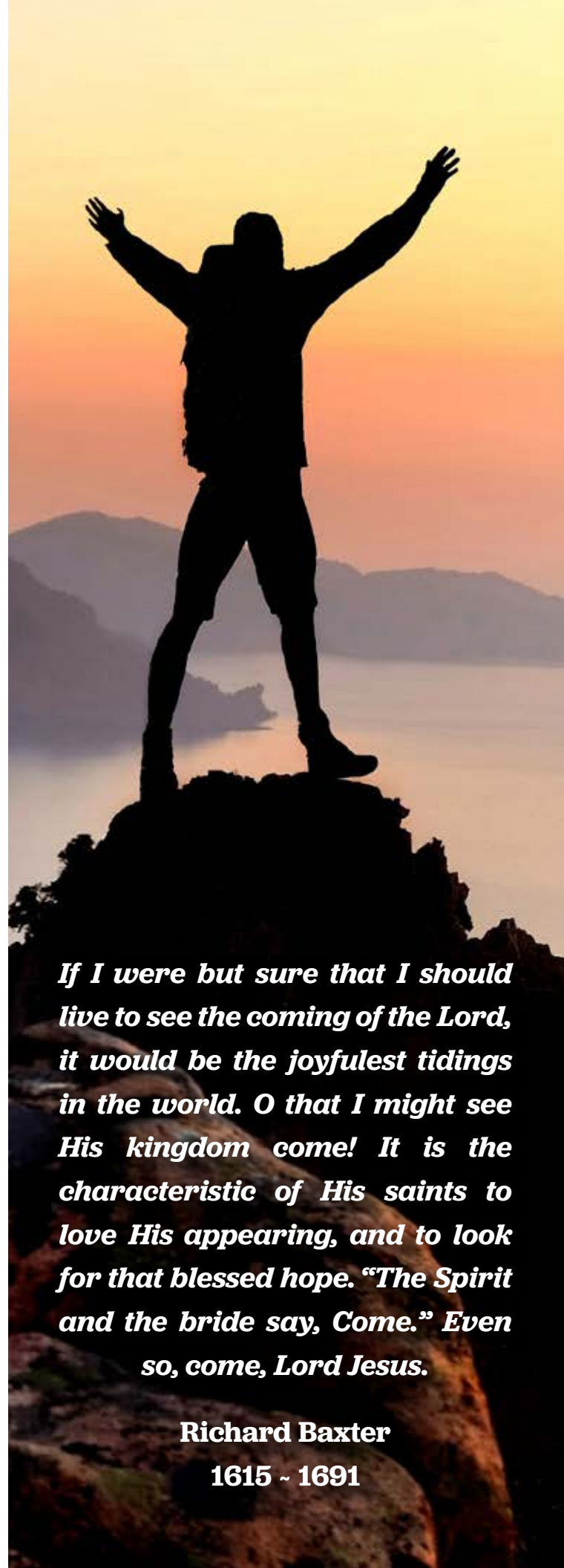
Feeling better? More clear? Hopefully, our “walk” has confirmed or challenged some of your beliefs in the Rapture. What is far more important than our understanding of end-times views is our salvation status. Only faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood will one day lead us upwards to be with our Lord and Savior forever and ever.



Have you grabbed hold of that salvation? Will you then be part of the Rapture? Or, have you rejected Jesus and so will be left behind to endure the Tribulation? Jesus leaves that choice up to you. ♦

Editor's Comments: Nathan Jones serves at Lamb & Lion Ministries as Internet Evangelist and co-host on *Christ in Prophecy*, the Ministry's weekly television program. He has authored two best-selling books, *12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets* and *The Mighty Angels of Revelation*. Nathan is an outstanding speaker and is available to speak at Bible conferences and church events.

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If I were but sure that I should live to see the coming of the Lord, it would be the joyfulest tidings in the world. O that I might see His kingdom come! It is the characteristic of His saints to love His appearing, and to look for that blessed hope. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

**Richard Baxter
1615 ~ 1691**

I'M READY TO GO HOME NOW

BOB RUSSELL



The late Lynn Anderson was a popular Church of Christ preacher and author. In his book, *Longing for a Homeland*, he related an occasion when his four-year-old granddaughter had to stay at her Uncle Wes and Aunt Michelle's house for nearly two weeks while her parents went on a short-

term mission trip. Of course, that is a long time for a little pre-school girl to be separated from her parents. Nevertheless, Ana fared pretty well, aided by a photograph of her parents that she could look at any time she wanted. And she often did.

Toward the end of her two-week stay, Uncle Wes corrected Ana for some minor mischief. Her lower lip poked out, and she ran up to her room. Concerned that maybe he had been a little too harsh, Wes slipped up the stairs and peeked in on her. Little Ana was sitting in the middle of the bed, holding a picture of her mommy and daddy tightly in both hands, and sad tears sliding down both cheeks. He could tell she was fighting back sobs. She finally noticed her uncle peeking through the door. "Uncle Wes," she announced, "I think I want to go home now."

When this world wounds you, don't you sometimes muse, "Lord, I think I want to come home now"? When

you look at cherished photographs of loved ones who are now with the Lord, do you find yourself missing them to the point you say, "Lord, I'm about ready to come home now"?

When you hear another evangelical leader has fallen morally or doctrinally, or you see Christians viciously attacking each other on social media, aren't you inclined to pray, "Lord, I've had enough dissension. I think I'm about ready to come home now"?

When you witness all the heartache from tornadoes, disease, and poverty, don't you sometimes pray, "Lord, this would be a good time to bring us all home"?

When you listen to the negative news and hear the continuous hostile accusations of one political party against another, do you sometimes groan, "There's no hope for this country; I think it's about time to go home now"?

When you sense your own body wasting away, and every step hurts, do you ever think, "Lord, I'm ready for that day when You shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears, no more death"?

Please don't misunderstand what I am saying. I do not have a death wish, although I do have a death strategy. And I do not have a premonition of my own passing, although I realize my salvation is nearer than when I first believed. And I am not depressed; actually, I am about as joyful as I have ever been.

But I am also realistic. This world is a mess. Our country is a mess. Many Christian families and churches are struggling. And it's getting worse, not better. That's not pessimism. That's facing facts. The Bible predicts evildoers and "imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13).



A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer wrote, "The fall of man has created a perpetual crisis. It will last until sin has been put down and Christ reigns over a redeemed and restored world. Until that time, the earth remains a disaster area, and its inhabitants live in a state of

extraordinary emergency." Then Tozer added, "Statesman and economists talk hopefully of 'a return to normal conditions.' But conditions have not been normal since 'the woman saw that the tree was good for food... and took of the fruit thereof and did eat' (Genesis 3:6)."

The truth is that Christians are not supposed to get too comfortable in this world. The Bible says that Abraham lived "like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents....For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:9-10). The Apostle Paul reminded us, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there" (Philippians 3:20).

Maybe God is using the prolonged pandemic, the political rancor, and the global chaos to remind us, "This world is not our home; we're just passing through." Author Larry Moody wrote, "We are not in the land of the living going to the land of the dying. We are in the land of the dying going to the land of the living."

Simon Peter thought like that. He wrote, God has "given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you..." (1 Peter 1:3-4).

The Apostle Paul thought like that. He had experienced more than his fair share of suffering and perse-

**For our citizenship
is in heaven, from
which we also
eagerly wait for a
Savior, the Lord
Jesus Christ...**

Philippians 3:20

cution. Toward the end of his life, he wrote, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8 KJV).

My sister Rosanne thought like that as she aged. Rosanne battled Parkinson's for nearly a decade. Toward the end, that nasty affliction impacted both her balance and her memory. I visited her after she had fallen again and become bedfast. She smiled faintly and whispered, "I'm ready to go to heaven." I was touched by her courage but considered her remarks premature. However, she died a few days later. Someone might say she didn't fight very hard to continue to live, and I think that's true. She had someplace better to go — why fight against it?

The Apostle John thought like that. Toward the end of the book of Revelation, he wrote about the glories of heaven and concluded his book, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20 KJV).

Amen and amen! ♦

Editor's Comments: *Bob Russell was the beloved senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY, for over 40 years. A gifted writer, he continues to preach at churches and conferences throughout the US. His ministry now focuses on mentoring younger ministers. Bob offered invaluable counsel during Lamb & Lion's recent leadership transition.*

YOU DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE KAIROS WILL COME

MICHAEL BRANCH



When considering our Lord's return, we often think in terms of the Greek word "chronos"- linear time measured by a clock on our wall. We believe that as the minutes, hours, and days pass, eventually He will return. This is a helpful il-

lustration; however, it does not convey the urgency and element of surprise Scripture speaks of concerning the event that culminates at the end of time itself.

It is understandable that we revert to this sort of thinking, because to us, minutes, hours, and days convey linear chronological order. This is how we live and conduct the events of our lives. However, concerning His return, prophecy is seldom dealing with linear time as we know it. Rather, prophecy deals in terms of the Greek word "kairos"- His appointed time, or season. In this case, there is no other prophetic event that must take place prior to the return of Christ, making it the next earth-shaking event in God's plan.

Instead of thinking of hands ticking on a clock, I find it more helpful to see His coming in light of that classic children's toy- loved by some and hated by others- the "Jack in the Box." You turn the handle on the side and a whimsical tune plays. As you crank you know exactly what is about to happen: a joyful clown is soon to emerge from inside the box. As you proceed there

is no way to know exactly when the clown will appear but you know it is coming. The more the song plays, the greater the odds that the clown will spring more quickly!

When it comes to the return of the King, we live our lives with that same urgency. His Church has been cranking the handle through time, and as we do, a graceful tune has played over and over for centuries. The first-century Church cranked the handle with their eyes on the skies as they considered the words of Mark 13:33: "See to it, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time (kairos) will come."

The Apostles turned the handle in anticipation as well. Those men were inspired by the Spirit to write the infallible words to God's people, admonishing them to live patiently and to conduct themselves in holy living, because Christ's return was "at hand." In 1 Peter 4:7- "The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound thinking and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." In other words, keep cranking the handle, do what He has called you to do, and do so in urgent anticipation.

It is confusing for some who choose to look at biblical words and phrases concerning time through man's "chronos" lens. Words like- near, quickly, shortly, soon, and at-hand could cause one to think that Jesus was wrong and that His coming should have been thousands of years ago. In that context, how quickly one can become a scoffer of divine truth and ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:4). Many today do not heed the admonition of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, where he writes, "that you not be quickly shaken in your mind or be alarmed whether by a spirit, or a word, or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come."

Today, many well-meaning theologians convince believers that the day has come and gone, that the promise of His coming was fulfilled in the past, and that followers of Christ have no future hope of His actual return. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life." Therefore the Church

WAITING FOR JESUS

must understand that as we live for Christ and desire His promised coming, it brings life and blessing.

Instead of viewing prophecy through man's "chronos" lens, we should look through God's "Kairos" lens. By His own design, He has chosen to communicate to us in such a way that we can be certain of His coming, but at the same time, unsure of the exact day and hour.

In 2 Peter 3:1-16, Peter covers what our attitude should be concerning the certainty of this impending reality. The knowledge of Christ's imminent return is a gift spurring the church on to endure persecution, to expose false teachers, to preach the Gospel, and live holy lives. A proper understanding of imminency encourages every single believer to keep cranking, to live every day in eager anticipation of the glorious return of Jesus- when hope springs eternal, and His kingdom reigns forever. ♦

Editor's Note: *Michael Branch is a pastor in Glenpool, OK, who has planted churches in Texas, Wyoming, and Colorado. He consistently proclaims the full counsel of the Word of God.*



I am waiting. Jesus is waiting.
The angels are at a high point of anticipation.
The sun, moon, and stars
and all created beings wait.
Our loved ones who are already
in the presence of the Lord
are asking "How long?"
And the Father says, "Not yet."

My faith grows stronger, but the doubt of the
unbeliever increases, and he asks,
"Where is the promise
of His coming?"

Darkness seems to prevail over the earth.
Earthquakes, famine and wars
are in the daily news.
The days of Noah and the days of Lot
have returned.
We have seen the sign of the fig tree
abounding with leaves.
And yet the Ancient of Days says,
"Not yet. I am waiting for one more."

Through the darkness of the earth
there is seen a light
and the promise of the dawn.
And I, too, am willing to wait
for just one more to come to
the Morning Star.

I am waiting—and I keep looking up,
for I have heard the shuffling
of the hooves of a mighty steed.



We are always delighted to hear from our supporters! John Barnhill and his wife Janis are from Texas and wrote in to share the above free-verse poem, written by John after a near-death experience.

WHY I PREACH BIBLE PROPHECY

STEVE HEASTER



*Nathan Jones with
Pastor Steve Heaster*

I recall reading a story one time of an old Indian making his first sojourn from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. He was in such awe of its expanse and splendor that he filled a quart jar and said he would take it back to show his people the Pacific Ocean.

Attempting to write about why I preach prophecy makes me feel like that Indian. Prophecy, and the reasons for believers to study it, are endless. One hardly knows where to start on such a vast subject.

It is a sad commentary on the Church today that so few pastors and Bible teachers devote time to a subject that makes up almost one third of the Holy Scriptures. Maybe some are overwhelmed by the subject. Others have become jaded by those who have abused prophecy by setting dates and times when Scripture clearly tells us that no man knows those things. No doubt some are made uncomfortable by the subject because they fear it.

Whatever the reasons, one thing is certain, we are called to preach the "full counsel of God," and that clearly includes teaching the prophetic Scriptures. Here are just a few of the many reasons I preach Bible prophecy.

BEARS WITNESS TO JESUS CHRIST

One reason to preach Bible prophecy is found in Revelation 19:10 which reads: "Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brothers and sisters who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" Clearly, the design of prophecy is to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

The fulfillment of prophecy is the final validation that the Word of God is sure, and that it is THE WORD OF GOD! No other book can make this claim and stand. When one comes to the spiritual understanding that the Bible is not a history book, but is rather His-Story, which is the story of the living God and His Christ, one may then fully understand the importance of prophecy.



BRINGS SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

Another reason for preaching Bible prophecy is because it brings spiritual understanding to the times in which we live. We live in tumultuous times. People are searching for answers to the trials of the day. For the most part, humanity is trying to understand our times with reason and logic. The great difficulty with that approach is, much of what we witness has no discernable reason and little if any logic most of the time.

As an illustration, consider the latest views on gender. In 2 Thessalonians 2:11, the Apostle Paul writes of a future time when, "For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false..." Today we have people of science acknowledging that there are multiple genders. Suddenly, we now have supposedly intelligent individuals affirming this lie. So, how do we understand this? The only thing that can possibly explain this comes from Paul's prophecy of a coming spirit of strong delusion.

Bible prophecy gives a spiritual insight into our times, be it politically, economically, culturally, and above all, spiritually. Truly, Bible prophecy shines God's light onto the world's spiritual darkness.

MOTIVATES TO EVANGELISM

Bible prophecy spurs the Church to urgently fulfill its mission to reach as many people as we can with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible prophesies that as end-time events unfold, and as we discern those events coming to pass, we should be motivated to redeem the time.

I often hear people use the phrase, "if the Lord taries," as though we may have all the time in the world. Permit me to share a Biblical truth with you. Hebrews 10:37 reveals, "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay." This verse clearly teaches that when God has saved all of humanity that is to be saved, nothing will delay the Lord's return. The Lord's return is always imminent, and sharing the Bible's prophetic warnings should be a priority of the Church.

PROVIDES A SENSE OF PEACE

Finally, I preach Bible prophecy because it brings a peace that transcends the trials and tribulations of this earth. It also removes fear of the unknown. At least 27 times in the New Testament, we are instructed to "fear not." God desires that we know in general terms what lies ahead. As Amos 3:7-8 says: "Certainly the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret plan to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can do anything but prophesy?"

Bible prophecy and its frequent fulfillment teaches that the world is not spinning wildly out of control. Rather, the Living God's plan is unfolding precisely as He ordained it to do. As Isaiah 44:6-8 declares:

"This is what the LORD says, He who is the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of armies:
'I am the first and I am the last,
And there is no God besides Me.
Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it;
And, let him confront Me
Beginning with My establishing of the ancient nation.
Then let them declare to them the things that are coming
And the events that are going to take place.
Do not tremble and do not be afraid;
Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it?
And you are My witnesses.
Is there any God besides Me,
Or is there any other Rock?
I know of none!"

In the end, while these are only a few reasons to preach Bible prophecy, they are clearly reasons taken straight out of the Scriptures. Now, even more than before, I feel very much like that Indian.

The Word of God is so expansive that communicating its depth and breadth is like capturing the Pacific in a jar. But as pastors, we are called to preach the full counsel of God. Anything less is to disobey the Lord we serve. ♦

Editor's Comments: *Steve Heaster has served as the pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Three Springs, PA, since 1985. He is an ardent student and teacher of Bible prophecy.*

IS THE **PRE-TRIB RAPTURE** **TOO NEW TO BE TRUE?**

DR. DAVID R. REAGAN



A common rebuttal to the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is that it is “too new to be true.” This argument is based on the assumption that the doctrine was not developed until the early 1800s by a man named John Nelson Darby who was a leader among the Plymouth Brethren in England.

This assumption is not correct, but even if it were true, it would not invalidate the concept. The only true test of any theological doctrine is whether or not it lines up with the Scriptures. Furthermore, there are some very valid reasons why the concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture developed late in the history of the Church.

SOCIETAL REASONS FOR DELAY

For one thing, in the early 5th Century, the Catholic Church adopted Augustine’s Amillennial interpretation of end time prophecy as the Church’s official end-time viewpoint.¹ That meant that for the next thousand years, if anyone had the audacity to challenge that viewpoint, they risked being burned at the stake, together with their writings. So, we really have no idea how many people during that time may have come up with the idea of a Rapture separate and apart from the Second Coming and happening before the Tribulation.

Further, the Catholic Church kept the Bible from the masses. The church argued that only those ordained by the church had the right to interpret the Scriptures.

Also, Bibles had to be produced by hand, and were too expensive for the average person to purchase. And even if they had been available, the average person during the Middle Ages could neither read nor write (only 5% of the European population had any formal education by 1330).² So, all they knew about the Bible was what the church shared with them, which was mainly the story of Jesus.

Serious public study of the Bible had to await several developments:

- 1) The invention of the printing press in 1440, which made it financially feasible to get printed Bibles.
- 2) The Reformation in 1517, which broke the domination of the Catholic Church.
- 3) The translation of the Bible into the common languages of Europe — like English by William Tyndale and German by Martin Luther.
- 4) The spread of literacy.

And speaking of the Reformation, when Luther had his confrontation with a Vatican representative at the Diet of Worms in 1521, he was told that his concept of “salvation by grace through faith” was “too new to be true” because it could not be found in the writings of popes, priests or Church Fathers.³ Luther responded by asserting that his doctrine could be found in the writings of a far more important person — namely, the Apostle Paul!⁴



A BIBLICAL REASON FOR DELAY

But there is another and more important reason for the delay in the development of the Pre-Trib Rapture concept, and it is a biblical one. The Lord told both Jeremiah and Daniel that many end time prophecies would not be understood until the time came for them to be fulfilled (Jeremiah 23:20, Jeremiah 30:24 and Daniel 12:8-9).

Here's how the Lord expressed this truth to Daniel:

As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (12:8-9).

Again, the chronological development of a biblical doctrine is not the true test of its validity. One of the earliest doctrines developed among the Church Fathers was the concept of salvation by baptism, or "water regeneration." The fact that it was an early doctrine did not make it true.

Nor would the recent development of the Pre-Trib doctrine invalidate it. As prophecy scholar Dr. Andy Woods has put it, "Consistency with the Scriptures determines an idea's truthfulness, and not when the idea originated."⁵

Recent historical events, like the re-establishment of Israel, and modern day technological developments,

like the invention of nuclear power, are helping us to understand Bible prophecies that have never been understood before.

But the most important key has been the revival of literal interpretation. This natural way of interpreting the Scriptures characterized the early Church Fathers, but it was abandoned when Amillennialism became the end-time viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church. From about 450 AD to the Reformation in the 1700s, Bible prophecy was spiritualized and interpreted allegorically. Many new discoveries have been made in Bible prophecy since the 1700s, simply because people started accepting the prophecies to mean what they say.

So, we are not talking about novel new truths. We are talking instead about the discovery of truths that were always in the Scriptures, but which were muddled by spiritualization or which awaited historical developments or technological discoveries.

THE ORIGIN OF PRE-TRIB VIEWPOINT

Premillennialism was the dominant view among the early Church Fathers, and although the vast majority of them did not have any concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture, they did have a very strong belief in imminence — meaning they believed that the Lord could return any moment.

For example, Paul exhorted the Christians in Corinth to be "awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus

Christ . . ." (1 Corinthians 1:7). James, the brother of Jesus, warned the Jerusalem church to ". . . be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near . . . behold, the Judge is standing right at the door" (James 5:8-9). Peter urged his readers to ". . . prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). And even Jesus Himself cautioned that He might return at any moment. Consider His statement recorded in Matthew 24:36 and 42 — "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone . . . Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

Expressions of imminency abound in the writings and sermons of Church Fathers like Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, both of whom lived in the First Century. Statements about the Lord's imminent return can also be found in early publications like *The Didache* (60-100 AD), *The Epistle of Barnabas* (130-131 AD), and *The Shepherd of Hermas* (110 AD). This latter publication actually contains a pre-tribulational concept of escaping the Great Tribulation: "If then you prepare yourselves, and repent with all your heart, and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it, if your heart be pure and spotless . . ."⁶

So, the early Church Fathers, based on the Scriptures, had a strong sense of imminency, but they evidently had not thought through the consequences because nearly all of them believed the Rapture would be combined at the end of the Tribulation with the Second Coming. But how could that be? After all, when you combine the Rapture with the Second Coming as all one event, then the Lord's return is not imminent. Rather, it must await developments like the revelation of the Antichrist, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple and the completion of the Tribulation.

Premillennialism was the dominant view among the early Church Fathers, and although the vast majority of them did not have any concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture, they did have a very strong belief in imminence — meaning they believed that the Lord could return any moment.

A RECENT DISCOVERY

A prophecy researcher, Lee Brainard, has recently discovered ten references to a Pre-Trib Rapture in the writings of Ephraim the Syrian (306-373).⁷ Ephraim is especially revered in Syriac Christianity and is counted as a Venerable Father (i.e., a sainted monk) in the Eastern Orthodox Church. So popular were his works, that, for centuries after his death,

Christian authors wrote hundreds of pseudo-works in his name. He has been called the most significant of all of the fathers of the Syriac-speaking church tradition.⁸ Here are some of the quotes from his sermons:

- "Blessed is he who unceasingly remembers the fear of Gehenna and hastens to sincerely repent . . . for he shall be delivered from the great tribulation."⁹
- "For the elect shall be gathered prior to the tribulation so they will not see the confusion and the great tribulation coming upon the unrighteous world."¹⁰
- "Watch always, praying continually, that you may be worthy to escape the tribulation."¹¹
- "Count us worthy, Lord, of the rapture of the righteous, when they meet You the Master in the clouds, that we might not be tried in the bitter and inexorable judgment."¹²

Brainard has also found a previously unknown quote in the writings of Irenaeus (130-202 AD). He was tutored by Polycarp (69-155 AD) who, in turn was a student of the Apostle John. Irenaeus wrote:¹³

When in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be." For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.

These quotations leave no doubt that there was a definite concept in the early Church of an imminent re-

Is the Rapture Real?

- Where can the Rapture be found in the Bible?
- What is the meaning of the Rapture?
- When is the Rapture most likely to take place?
- Who will be included in the Rapture?
- Are there signs that will signal the Rapture?
- What relevance does the Rapture have to my life?

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turn of Jesus before the Tribulation. But with the adoption of Augustine's Amillennial view by the Roman Catholic Church in the mid-5th Century, the literal interpretation of prophecy was cast aside, and the concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture fell into obscurity.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRE-TRIB VIEWPOINT

The quotes above make it clear that the Pre-Trib Rapture concept is not a "Johnny-come-lately idea." The concept began to gain momentum in the aftermath of the Reformation, when people got copies of the Bible in their own languages and started once again interpreting the Bible literally. This resulted in the revival of Historical Premillennialism, together with the concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture.



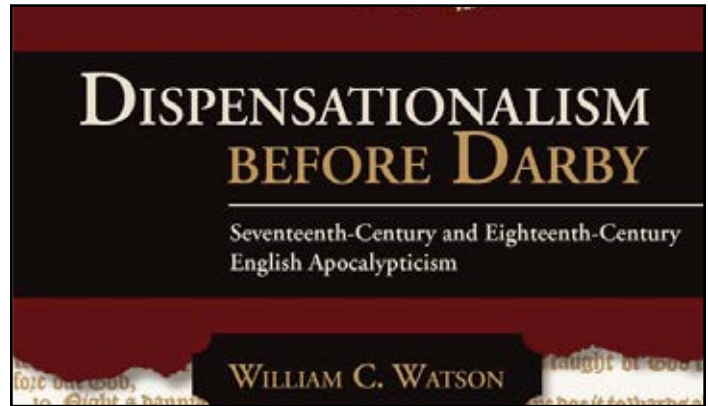
Increase Mather

For example, the Puritan leader, Increase Mather (1639-1723), attempted to prove in his writings "that the saints would be caught up into the air beforehand, thereby escaping the final conflagration."¹⁴ Likewise, Peter Jurieu, in his book, *Approaching Deliverance of the Church* (1687) taught that Christ will come in

the air to rapture the Saints and return to Heaven before the battle of Armageddon.¹⁵

In the 1740s, a Baptist pastor in England named Morgan Edwards began to espouse a Rapture 3½ years before the beginning of the Millennium. Although his concept was really a mid-Trib Rapture, it clearly shows that there were people at that time who taught a Rapture separate and apart from the Second Coming.¹⁶

Recent historical research revealed in a book titled *Dispensationalism Before Darby* (2015) proves beyond doubt that the idea of a Pre-Trib Rapture had been around a long time before John Darby systematized it and began to popularize it in the early 1800s.¹⁷ The book's author, Dr. William Watson (died in 2020), was a professor of History at Colorado Christian University. He



used more than 350 primary sources from the 17th and 18th Centuries in compiling his new book.

He pointed out that most of the sources that he quotes in the book have not been previously cited in the debate about the origin of the Pre-Trib Rapture — "most likely because they have not been read for centuries."¹⁸ Concerning the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, he concluded that "very little of what John Nelson Darby taught in the mid-nineteenth century was new."¹⁹

His research clearly shows that by the end of the 17th Century, the idea of a Rapture that is separate and apart from the Second Coming had become a commonplace concept. He named seven authors who held a "pre-conflagration" view of a rapture that would take the saints out of the world before it was consumed by fire. He identified six other authors who were "clearly Pre-Trib." And he named four who were not Pre-Trib but who refer in their writings to the existence of others who were.²⁰ He noted that the use of the word, Rapture, was also widespread, with some even referring to those who would be "left behind."

This interpretation of a Rapture, separate and apart from the Second Coming, continued to be espoused by Bible prophecy experts throughout the 18th Century. Their timing of the Rapture varied, but by the end of the 18th century, "more than a generation before Darby, belief in a Rapture of the Church before the great tribulation was commonplace in Britain."²¹ In fact, Dr. Watson demonstrated that "the belief was held not only by Baptists... but also by leading Anglicans...²² and even by Scottish Presbyterians..."²³

Without all of Dr. Watson's detailed evidence, secular historian Dr. Paul Boyer had already come to this conclusion in his book, *When Time Shall Be No More; Prophecy*

Belief in Modern American Culture, which was published by Harvard University Press, in 1994. He wrote:²⁴

In a sense, Darby's system contained nothing new. His focus on the future fulfillment of prophecy followed the eschatology of the early Christians. Premillennialism had been an option for Protestant evangelicals since Joseph Mede's day (1586-1639), while rudimentary forms of "Dispensationalism" go back at least as far as Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202).

Even Rapture doctrine . . . can be found in the writings of early interpreters, including Increase Mather (1639-1723). But Darby wove these diverse strands into a tight and cohesive system that he buttressed at every point by copious biblical proof texts, then tirelessly promoted through his writings and preaching tours.

The point is that the concept of a Pre-Trib Rapture did not simply drop from the sky into John Darby's lap in the 1830s. It was a concept that had been held by some of the early Church Fathers, and following the Reformation, it slowly developed over several hundred years in the writings of Bible prophecy scholars from a variety of Christian traditions.

The Pre-Trib Rapture doctrine quickly spread around the world through publications like William Blackstone's *Jesus is Coming* (1878), *The Scofield Study Bible* (1909), Hal Lindsey's book *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) and Tim LaHaye's *Left Behind* series of books (16 volumes from 1995 to 2007).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Actually, the historic development of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine is irrelevant. The only thing that is important is whether or not the doctrine is scriptural. Is it based on the Scriptures? The answer is "Yes!" ♦

Editor's Comments: *Dr. David Reagan is the Founder of Lamb & Lion Ministries, serving as Director and Sr. Evangelist for over 40 years until stepping down in 2021 and handing the Ministry's leadership over to Tim Moore. Dr. Reagan occasionally speaks at his home church in McKinney, TX, and continues to write books and magazine articles for Lamb & Lion.*

**References within this article can be found at LambLion.com.*



Near the Cross

***Jesus, keep me near the cross,
there a precious fountain;
Free to all, a healing stream,
flows from Calv'ry's mountain.***

***Near the cross I'll watch and wait,
Hoping trusting ever,
Till I reach the golden strand
Just beyond the river.***

***Refrain:
In the cross, in the cross
Be my glory ever,
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.***



Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) was one of America's most prolific and beloved hymnists—authoring more than 8,000 songs. She was also a dedicated teacher and poet and mission worker.

Many people do not realize that Fanny Crosby was blind from childhood. She did not consider her disability to be a handicap. She testified, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him... If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me." She also said, "when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."

Fanny Crosby's love for Jesus Christ allowed her to see clearly the promises of God and look forward to being forever with her Lord.

Lift Up Your Eyes

Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens... Isaiah 40:26 (NIV)

Since the late 1950s, mankind has reached for the heavens. Fulfilling an ancient aspiration, we left the ground in lighter-than-air balloons beginning in the 1800s, then achieved manned flight early in the 20th Century. A little over five decades later we were hurling objects—and men—into space itself.

In the 1960s the United States committed itself to achieving President Kennedy's impossible goal of landing men on the moon and returning them safely to earth. Today, our daily lives are intertwined with satellite technology silently orbiting above our heads. But man's conquest of space offers a telling warning to those with discernment.

Over the years, 6,110 rockets have launched into space carrying over 12,000 satellites. Collectively they have strewn the heavens with a debris field that is multiplying at an alarming rate. Almost 30,000 pieces of space trash larger than 4 inches are tracked by the American Space Force, but it is estimated that there are 1 million objects larger than .4 inches and over 330 million larger than .04 inches. Traveling at 24,000 mph, even the smallest of

those pieces of debris could destroy a satellite or kill a crew if they impacted a spaceship.

How did the space near to Earth become so littered? Some objects were intentionally cast off during successful missions. Some were lost by accident—as when one astronaut's glove drifted away from him during a spacewalk. Many were the result of over 630 known catastrophic breakups, explosions, and collisions (some intentionally caused by hostile government action).

During crisis moments, pilots refer to what they call a "big sky." The idea is that the odds of hitting something are relatively small given the expanse of the atmosphere around us. But such a cavalier attitude ignores the risk of meeting another aircraft or object—especially in congested areas.

Many people live their lives with such an attitude toward sin. What are the odds, they think, of something catastrophic happening? Like the debris orbiting the earth, many of our sins are out of sight and out of mind. But seen or unseen, recognized or ignored, our sins orbit us unceasingly—until they hit with devastating consequences. Fill a world with sinful men and women and destructive collisions are inevitable.

TIM MOORE



Like the debris orbiting the earth, many of our sins are out of sight, out of mind. But seen or unseen, recognized or ignored, our sins orbit us unceasingly—until they hit with devastating consequences.

Mankind's collective sinfulness has increased so dramatically that it's hard to imagine how much longer our holy God can tolerate the wickedness on the earth. He has already demonstrated His willingness to deal with sin—and His intention to do so again, and with finality.

What is He waiting for? With sin multiplying around us, why doesn't He just zap evildoers and impose His perfect will?

Peter recognized that God's apparent slowness in exerting His judgment is a reflection of His patience, since He does "not [wish] for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). But, at the same time God has declared that there will come a time when His patience runs out. When that happens, sinful men and women will cry out for the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16).

As God told Habakkuk, "the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay" (Habakkuk 2:3). The destruction that swept over Israel in Habakkuk's day will pale in comparison to the wrath of God that is poured out in the Tribulation.

Eventually the present heavens and earth itself will be consumed with fire on the day of judgment and de-

struction of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7). Unless they are covered by the blood of Christ, our sins—silent and unseen though they might be—guarantee our eventual destruction. Like the millions of bits of debris streaking through space, they will lead to the sudden and catastrophic destruction of all who reject God's love and forgiveness. Thanks be to God, we have another option as individuals.

Literal rocket scientists recognize the impossibility of sweeping the heavens to remove the space trash that has accumulated over just the past 50 years. Similarly, none of us is capable of eradicating our build-up of sin—or mitigating the consequence it merits: death. But there is no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus Christ; all their sins are swept away.



In the final verse of Isaiah 40, the prophet offered encouragement to "those who wait upon the LORD" (v. 31). Even as we wait for His return, we're promised new

strength, to mount up with wings like eagles, to run and not get tired, and to walk and not grow weary. And that's not just pie in the sky. ♦

ministry mailbox

TIM MOORE

“Where can the Church be found in the book of Revelation?” (Jean S.)

Jean asks a very good question because it relates to our expectation of the imminent Rapture of the Church—meaning all who are saved and collectively called the Bride of Christ. I offer three clues regarding the absence of the Church during the Tribulation.

First, the book opens stating that it is the “Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants” (1:1). In verse 4 John addresses seven churches in Asia, and of course chapters 2 and 3 consist of Jesus’ dictated letters.

Jesus’ messages to those individual churches echo down the centuries to us today. The churches themselves are representative of different types of churches and offer a prophetic overview of the Church age as it has progressed over the past 2000 years.

Then, at the beginning of chapter 4, the scene shifts. John, who was on the island of Patmos, heard a voice that called (or raptured) him up to heaven. He was “immediately” transported in the Spirit to the throne room of God. The next 14 chapters describe the Tribulation period in great detail, but there is no mention of the Church—by name or by description.

Why is the Church absent throughout John’s record of God’s wrath being poured out upon the earth? Because God has promised the Church that she will be delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:4; Rev. 3:10).

Some have mischaracterized the 21 judgments unleashed by God on the earth during the Tribulation as the wrath of Satan, but this is not biblical. Paul revealed that “the wrath of God will fall upon the sons of disobe-

dience”—meaning those who have rejected Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:6). Our beloved Bridegroom has no intention of beating up His Bride just before gathering her to His father’s house. Instead, “having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:9).

A second clue pointing to the absence of the Church during the Tribulation is found in the wording of the messages to the 7 churches. To every one Jesus says, “He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Later, when John is describing the dragon on the earth (False Prophet) and the beast from the sea (Antichrist), he merely says, “If anyone has an ear, let him hear” (13:9). That warning is not offered to the Church because it will not be present.

Revelation clearly communicates that God’s wrath will be poured out on a rebellious and unrepentant world. Those who have rejected Christ will recognize that fact, for John records that they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (6:15-16).

The third clue is the reappearance of the Church in Revelation 19—when John records the marriage of the Lamb and His Bride. Following the marriage supper of the Lamb, the Bride of Christ will then follow Jesus as He returns—this time in glory—to defeat Satan and reign upon the earth.

The bottom line is that the Church—including all of us who are collectively called the Bride of Christ—does not need to fear God’s wrath. Soon and very soon, the Heavenly Father will tell our Bridegroom, “Go, and get your Bride!” ♦

Got questions? Send an email to webminister@lamblion.com or contact us through our website at LambLion.com.

Todd Hampson



They say a watched pot never boils. Well, I've been watching, and it seems like things are beginning to heat up! **It appears we are in an era when the water is not only heating up, but the bubbles are beginning to**

form more rapidly than any other time in history.

Consider this sampling of earlier signs of the times and how spread out they were.

- In 1897, Theodor Herzl chaired the first Zionist Congress with the goal of creating a home for the Jewish people. That was (arguably) the first concrete step toward setting the stage for prophesied end-time events.
- In 1946, Winston Churchill called for a United States of Europe.
- In 1948, Israel became a nation.
- In 1967, Israel miraculously won the Six-Day War and gained control of Jerusalem.
- In 1968, the Club of Rome was founded.
- In 1991, the Gulf War turned the world's attention once again to the Middle East.
- In 1993, the European Union was created.
- In 2001, the terrorist attacks on the symbols of the

BOILING POINT!



US military and the US economy took place.

- In 2011, the "Arab Spring" led to civil war in Syria (creating the Ezekiel 38 playground for Russia, Turkey, and Iran).

Take a moment to ponder the prophetic implications of these key events and how spread out they were. (I wish I had the time and space in this article to unpack how each event connects directly with key end-time Bible prophecies.) It was about the time of the last event on the list (civil war in Syria) that I began carefully studying eschatology and the signs of the times—and felt called to do so.

The 2011-2012 time frame was prophetically significant on many levels. It seemed we had entered a new era where end-time signs were noticeably increasing. In addition to the events listed, there were scores of other significant events, including extreme weather, the weakening of America, and the coarsening of society. **It was as if the pot was beginning to bubble—but those of us who were watching the signs could still keep track of each bubble and take the time to analyze it in light of Scripture.**

Enter 2020. The events of 2020, including the Covid-19 man-made (excuse me, I mean "gain-of-function") virus was released—as were lawlessness, violence, deception, deep political corruption, and other moral evils on a broader scale than we had ever seen or been made aware of. And this time, these signs were happening globally! **It was as if we entered a "medium-boil" phase.** Whereas those of us paying attention to signs that lined up with end-time conditions used to be able to identify just about every significant prophetic stage-setting event fairly easily—now I literally cannot keep up!

I liken it to battlefield tactics. As long as it is possible, a soldier on the field carefully notes each detail that will help him understand the coming battle. The more intel, the better. But once the battle begins to get thick, the soldier's attention has to turn to more pressing matters. The soldier must decide on what is priority in order to complete the mission. This means that the soldier must decide what to focus on, even though he knows there are more key details he could assess at any given moment. **The pot is beginning**

to boil, and I can't keep track of all of the bubbles!

Below are listed a few noteworthy occurrences that have very recently come to light. I have only looked into them on a cursory level at this point, and haven't had time to fully research. Some of these include: record-breaking wildfires, heatwaves, flooding, mass animal deaths, droughts, famine, and major riots (in South Africa and Cuba, to name two). Inflation is rising, the American workforce can't keep up with the demand because people are being paid to stay home. Fully-vaccinated people are still being infected with the Covid-19 virus. A woman was caught on video at a school function stating that those opposed to critical race theory should die—and the crowd applauded. The San Francisco Gay Men's Choir put out a creepy music video informing anyone who believes in traditional marriage that they are "coming for your children." A Brazilian tattoo artist turned himself into a demonic-looking Orc (from the Lord of the Rings) by tattooing his eyeballs, removing his nose, and implanting horns. Television shows celebrating witchcraft and the occult are proliferating. So many in the world are ready to welcome and embrace all things demonic and evil.

But wait, there's more... A company in Ireland funded the creation of a colossal, moving, speaking statue known as "The Giant" in 21 cities. There were 693 mass shootings in 2021, leaving 703 people dead and 2,842 injured. The "vaccines" have caused the death of thousands (according to official/verifiable records), and various whistleblowers are claiming these numbers are much lower than the reality. Russia and China are flexing their military muscles regularly. Iran is close to having nuclear weapon capability at the same time, Israel is facing major internal challenges. Macron (surely having consulted with other European leaders who will follow suit) announced a "vaccine pass" to be implemented in order to take part in normal activities. On top of all of this, apostasy in the church is growing steadily through "wokeness," teachings by people claiming to be apostles—which is a Scriptural impossibility since they did not witness the events of Christ's ministry in the first century (See Acts 1:21-22, and Ephesians 2:20), and other mind-bending heresies that gut the

truth of Scripture and the fundamentals of the true Christian faith.

I could go on and on. This is just the tip of the iceberg! Ten years ago, globalism was a conspiracy theory; the conditions needed for the Ezekiel 38 war seemed impossible, technology had not yet reached the mark-of-the-beast level, and America was sick but still fighting. In 2021, all of that changed. And now we are trending toward a rapid boil and could be there at any moment! Liquids boil at different temperatures depending on the molecular structure of the liquid and the amount of air pressure (due to altitude) that is pressing down on the liquid. **The air pressure restrains the boil until such a time when the pressure of the boil is greater than the air pressure restraining it.**

The Lord could cause the heat to be turned down, and the water could cool a bit, but it doesn't seem that is the case, and I don't read anything like that in Scripture. Jesus said He would come "quickly," which means rapidly or when things are revved up. End-time birth pains (whether Braxton Hicks or the real thing) won't stop once they have begun. We are heading full speed into everything the Bible prophesies about the future tribulation period—and our generation is seeing it all unfold!

By the way, if you are taking note of end-time signs and conditions, you are in good company. The Old Testament prophets and even the angels longed to understand the timeframe we are currently in. In 1 Peter 1:10-12 we read, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah (First Coming) and the glories that would follow (Second Coming/Millennial Kingdom). It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

Notice the key details in the verses above. The

prophets longed to understand the “time and circumstances” related to the First and Second Coming! In the midst of the struggle to live in our day, we need to remember how blessed we are to see these things! Thankfully God’s people will be removed (via the Rapture) prior to God’s judgment of the world (as has been the clear pattern of His activity in times past and His stated intentions at the end of the age), but that doesn’t mean we won’t live in dangerous times prior to the Rapture. In fact, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 tells us as much. We are not left uninformed.

My friends, it seems the air pressure is about to be lifted, and the rapid boil is soon to begin. When the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit-indwelt Church is removed via the Rapture—the preserving pressure of the salt and light will allow the world to move immediately into a rapid boil. I dare not set dates or even years, but unless the Lord intervenes in a major way (and He could, He’s done it before), it seems to me that we are nearing the time of the Rapture.

I know several generations of believers in different eras of church history have thought the same, but never in the history of the world have there been so many signs and conditions in place as there are right now. We have a front row seat to prophecy and end-time conditions. Let’s rise to the occasion, wake the Bride, and reach the lost! And let’s keep in mind only God knows the day or hour, so we must keep courageously planning as we continue to watch for His return.

If you are reading this article and have never accepted the gift of salvation offered and paid for by Jesus Christ—please do so now! Noah seemed crazy until the rain started. **But soon, the world was covered by violent water like a massive boiling pot.** Please don’t ignore the conditions that are screaming at us that the Lord is real, that time is short, that judgment is coming, and that Jesus paid it all. It doesn’t matter what your past is or how hard you have run from God. Today is the day of salvation. Jesus paid it all. Please come to Him now! You, too, can have hope, clarity, and joy in the midst of these increasingly disruptive world conditions. He promises to never leave us.

Matthew 28:20—“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

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

The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Revelation

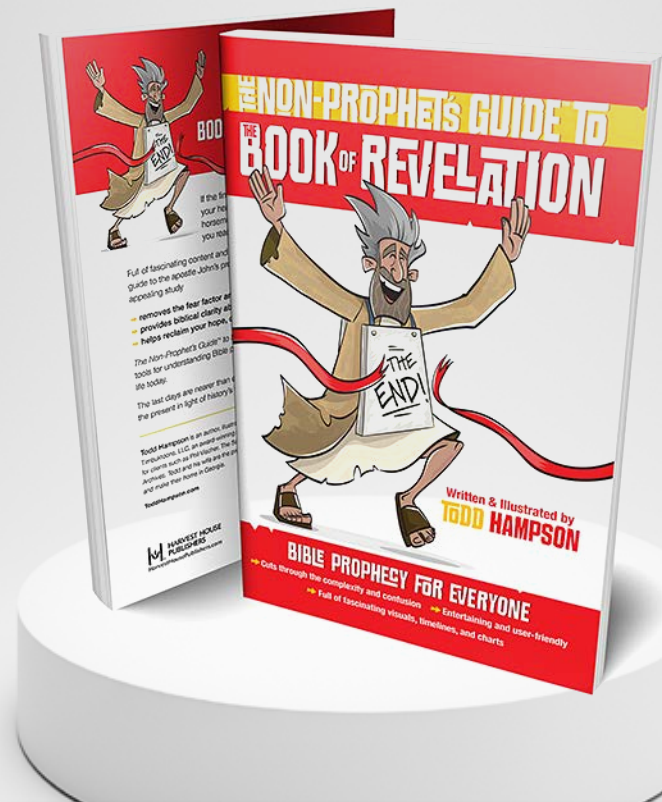
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SIGNS ARE MULTIPLYING EVERYWHERE

NATURE



An undersea volcano in the South Pacific threatens the island nation of Tonga.

Cumbre Vieja erupts for the first time in 50 years in the Canary Islands (off the coast of Spain). Models indicate that

the resulting tsunami could cause a 30-80 foot wall of water to strike the east coast of the U.S.

SOCIETY



The U.S. is embracing the gender confusion inundating our society; beginning in October 2021, the Biden administration began offering US passports with a "X" gender marker.

Following in the footsteps of the UK and Canada, West Lafayette, Indiana (the home of Purdue University) considered banning conversations that would discourage gender conversion. The city council's proposed ordinance—which certainly ignores the First Amendment—is specifically designed to muzzle Christian pastors, counselors, and parents.

SPIRITUAL



Habit patterns of church attendance were challenged during the Covid lockdowns of 2020 and 2021; as of early 2022, the Barna Group estimated a 30-50% drop in average attendance due to the pandemic (a dramatic acceleration in pre-Covid decline). Barna also anticipates the threatened closure of tens of thousands of churches across the U.S.

On a more hopeful note, researchers show a marked increase in support for unborn life in younger generations. With the Supreme Court poised to rule on state laws challenging the precedent of Roe v. Wade, the trend toward more pro-Life young people is one hopeful sign.

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WORLD POLITICS

At this writing, in spite of Western hand-wringing, Russia is poised to absorb another former Soviet satellite state. Finding an appropriate balance between entanglement in foreign struggles and appeasing an expansive tyrant (a la Chamberlain with Hitler), President Biden has sent very mixed signals—a tone that has not gone unnoticed by China or North Korea or Iran.



As documented in Lamb & Lion Ministries' "Great Reset" Streaming Conference (see page 31 for the DVD), cultural "elites" are clamoring to consolidate power under a single

government entity or leader. Even here at home, the expansion of executive authority under President Biden and attempts to federalize what have traditionally been state roles demonstrates an effort to unify control in Washington.

TECHNOLOGY



The U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command is conducting research based on data collected from a ring worn by volunteer subjects. The Oura Ring

collects biometric data and feeds it into a central processor for analysis.

Medical science has met science fiction. Doctors have now implanted an actual pig heart into a human patient; it has also been announced that researchers have successfully merged human and animal traits in genetically-altered embryos called Chimeras.

ISRAEL



Recognizing the existential threat a nuclear-armed Iran would represent, the Israeli Government has been preparing its citizens for a potential conflict with the

Persian state. Israel's world class Air Force can strike deep and hard, but the anticipated blowback will put

***So you too, when you see
these things happening,
recognize that He is near,
right at the door.***

Mark 13:29



many Israelis at risk.

The radical hatred of radicalized Islamic extremists toward Israel and Jews in general was displayed when an extremist who was also a British citizen entered a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, (just west of DFW) and held Jewish worshippers hostage. His single demand was the release of a radical Muslim woman (Aafia Siddiqui, also known as "Lady al-Qaeda") held in federal prison for helping develop biological weapons to use against America. Sadly, the FBI initially denied any possibility of anti-Semitism in the target of choice. ♦

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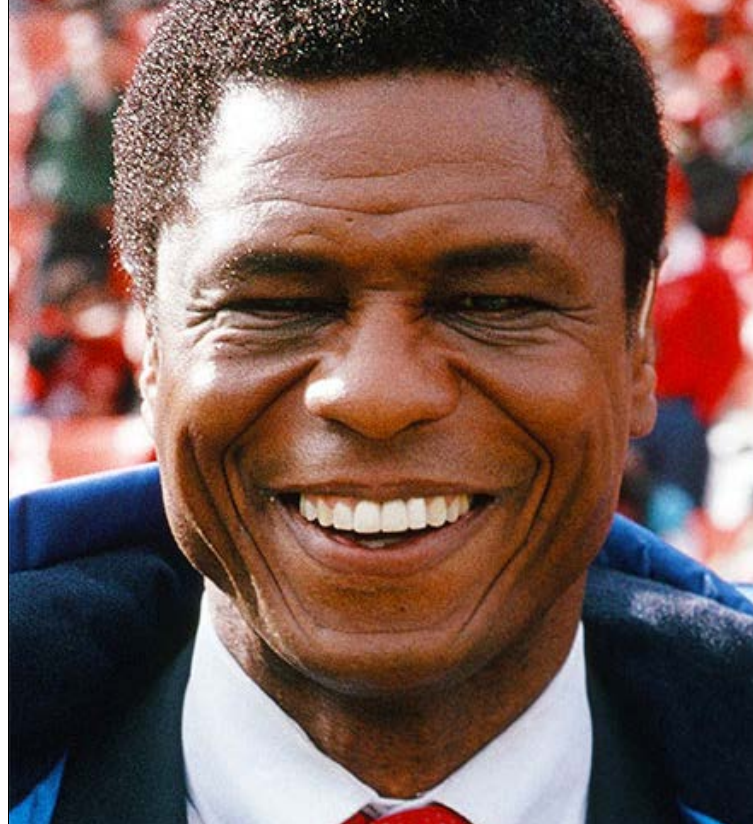
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Life Lessons from a Christian Exemplar

Irv Cross passed away February 28, 2021. He was an NFL cornerback, but became even more well-known as a CBS sports analyst alongside Brent Musburger and Phyllis George. Musburger said of Cross, "I don't know that I could give you one person who was nicer than Irv Cross. He was a constant gentleman." His faith was also evident throughout his life—even when he began to decline physically and looked forward to meeting his Savior.

Cross counted the cross—and Jesus Christ—as more precious to him than anything in this life. In his autobiography he wrote, "There hasn't been one problem I've ever had that wasn't addressed in the Bible. To me, to solve any issue, you turn to Jesus Christ. I don't know of any issue of any kind on this planet that can't be solved that way."

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