



# Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

**Our Times** - *Prophecy in current events*

## **Do We Christians have Doubts about the Coming of the Lord?**

***"Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"* (Luke 24:25).** These very words spoken by the Lord so many years ago actually speak to the attitude among too many Christians today. Here, Jesus is speaking about the spirit or attitude we see so prevalent today as related to the study of Bible Prophecy. This resistance to prophetic studies may even be the result of simple unbelief of the plain words of Scripture which promise the re-establishment and re-gathering of Israel, and the literal return of Jesus Christ and His sitting upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. Will such a thing really happen? As unbelievable as it seems, our God, being the God of the supernatural is not only able to make this scenario come about but has actually foretold its occurrence in fine detail.

But first, it is important for us to understand that Satan seeks to send his best before God sends His best. This is why there will be a predicted counterfeit kingdom to arise before the coming of the Lord back to the earth. Already, this counterfeit kingdom is forming in many ways and on different fronts.

We will look in more detail in a few moments as to the prophesied events of the End Times, but, for now I want to point out that, first of all, we are to look for the return of the Lord in the air to take away His Bride, the Church. Then, with the Holy Spirit as the Restrainer, removed from His ministry of restraining the rise of wickedness on the world scene, there will arise, after the rapture of the Church, the appearing of a counterfeit messiah. The world will wonder at him and admire him. He will be impressive and in many ways irresistible to those who will reject the truth of God's Word and who will reject the gospel of salvation through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

I believe we are seeing many, many indications of preparations in the current promotion of countless confusing man-made doctrines, cults, as well as political movements today. Through Satan's influence, these trends keep people distracted from the true message and warnings of the Word of God and of prophecy. The best way to keep from being so distracted that we lose track of what is really going on in the world is by humbly and prayerfully staying in the Word of God! The Word of God will keep our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and on how He intends to unfold His purpose in the world.

So, regardless of all the confusing things we are seeing and hearing these days, we need to keep the prophetic scenario before our minds and make it a dynamic part of our testimony. Disturbing events like the growing and persistent "Occupy Wall Street" movement, would not be possible, I believe, with a biblically informed public. The preaching of the Word of God has gotten so diluted and weak in churches, ministries, and schools that Christians today are better informed about environmentalism, political action, finance, business success methods, and psychology than they are about the Word of God. Satan delights in keeping people ignorant of the Word of God and of God's prophetic plans.

This is why it was so important for Satan to get the Word of God and prayer out of public schools. This he successfully accomplished in 1963 through the efforts of Madalyn Murray O'Hair (Abington Township School District v. Schempp), along with the help of a liberal United States Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the mainline denominations were busy departing from the faith. They carried this out through a systematic and satanically influenced denial of the Bible through the teachers and writers in many colleges and seminaries they supported. Some denominations have also

focused on social issues and supported such things as the marriage of homosexuals as well as their ordination to the ministry.

With the departure of many branches of Christendom from the Bible, there has arisen widespread skepticism as to the singular truth of the gospel as being the only way, through Jesus Christ, for salvation. As well, the cherished Bible doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ has fallen on very hard times in the churches these days. In fact, in contemporary churches and preaching, it is hardly mentioned at all. Why? I believe it is because Christians are falling more in love with the world than they are with Jesus Himself. Many in the church today, for example, are preaching how to save the environment, rather than how to save souls. And growing numbers are seeking ways to combine Christianity with other religions to form such abominable spiritual monstrosities as Chrislam.

Again, today we see the rise of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement. Many liberal and pro-Socialist groups are behind this effort. This and other movements which seek to foment unrest and confusion will serve to take America further down the road of spiritual, moral, and political decline. It is convicting to realize as Christians that these sorts of movements can only succeed within a culture and among a people who are biblically illiterate. **This is why it is so important that churches and ministries seek to teach God's Word rather than simply trying to get bigger numbers.** Bigger numbers are meaningless if souls are not being won and growing in truth.

A part of America's spiritual decline is seen in the growing foothold that Socialism is gaining in our country. Liberal preachers and socialistic tendencies often go hand in hand. There are many in political office now in America who have Socialistic tendencies. Socialism, and its atheistic twin brother, Communism, views the state as god. Therefore, those who are Socialistic seem always to be anti-conservative, and very often, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic. Socialism utilizes social and cultural unrest to gain control through the fomenting of protests and chaos.

The method of cultivating jealousies and of class warfare has always been Satan's method to cause doubt and denial as to God's truth, and to elevate the rebellious masses through the fomenting of jealousy and animosity toward those who have something more than others have. This is why it is important that the stabilizing power of the Word of God permeate the everyday culture of America. This does not mean that the entire United States will become saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Eventually, the apostasy predicted to occur in the Church will get the better of all nations as a whole, especially after the rapture, but until that time, we Christians are instructed by our Lord to, "occupy until I come" (Luke 19:13). Christians are called to occupy the United States and the world with God's true Word until the Lord comes.

The Lord has instructed and empowered us to fulfill His will by knowing the unfolding of His plan and purpose for the world, through His Son, Jesus Christ. By understanding the Lord's prophetic program of our times we will be better equipped to fulfill the Great Commission to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). What is the prophetic scenario that is foretold for the world that we live in today?

**1. The Rapture of the Church.** This is the glorious promise for the believer today. The Lord said that I will establish my Church (Matthew 16:18). He would build His Church upon the solid rock of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. The Church had its birth at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers after the glorious and victorious ascension of Christ to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:8-11). There He would abide in His Father's house preparing a place for us until He would come again in the clouds to receive us up by rapture to heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 there is a crystal clear description of the event of the rapture of the Church. The word "rapture" is descriptive of a sudden "catching away." The Church consists of you and I who have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. This makes us one with Him and so we are the ones that the Lord will return for to take with Himself back to heaven. The rapture of the Church will occur before the return of the Lord to the earth. When Jesus Christ returns to the earth he will establish His one thousand year rule from Jerusalem in the future. More about this in a few moments.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 we see four distinct things that will happen during the rapture event:

**A. The Lord will descend from heaven in the clouds.**

**B. The dead in Christ will arise.**

**C. We who are alive and remain will be caught away with them in the clouds.**

**D. We, the Church, will be forever with the Lord.**

Yet, it is so important for us to understand that this does not picture believers simply going to heaven to stay there away from the earth. The Scripture says that we will forever be with the Lord. But, remember that the Lord will come back to the earth and will set His feet again upon the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4f). This means that when Jesus returns to the earth, we, the Church will return with Him (Rev. 19:14). A good way to remember the two phases of the Lord's return is: **The Lord first comes for His saints, then the Lord comes with His saints.**

**2. The Great Tribulation.** This will involve the rise of the Antichrist who will attempt at that time, over a seven year period, to establish his own counterfeit kingdom on the earth, before the advent of the true Kingdom which Jesus will set up when He returns. Daniel predicts such a counterfeit king who will arise in the future: **"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up" (Daniel 11:23).**

As the outcome of the troubled Greek economy today unfolds we might see the potential for great troubles not only in the European economy but also in the economy of the United States. Further, Israel is coming under greater and



Israeli Air Force on drill in Italy  
amid Iran attack rumors

greater attack through missile launches from the Gaza. Today, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu makes clear that the Iranian threat to Israel's existence will be answered decisively, and likely militarily, with a test firing of a long range ballistic missile called the Jericho. Israel's Air Force has also been carrying out intensive fighter plane training operations that resemble the real thing; a large scale attack on specific targets extending to a distance up to 800 kilometers. Rumors of wars are certainly on the increase in the Middle East which will potentially impact the entire globe.

The unrest of our times is predicted in the Scriptures. And you may be encouraged to know that your Sovereign Lord is unfolding things exactly on time to bring about an expected and victorious new beginning on the earth through the return and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth. But, first, the Great Tribulation period which current world unrest and climactic upheavals seem to be indicating.



Israel's test launch of the long range and nuclear capable Jericho ballistic missile

During the Great Tribulation time, the Church will be with the Lord in heaven enjoying fellowship with Christ; and there, as the Bride of Christ, we will participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). I believe that we will be able to witness the unfolding of the Tribulation period and the unleashing of the judgments from the Lord in heaven upon the earth during this time.

What a dramatic and victorious unfolding of events it will be. And we will have a ringside seat! We will witness the people of God on earth, among whom will be the 144,000 Jews and the two witnesses (Rev. 7&11) who will stand against the evil Antichrist and False Prophet. During this time, Russia, and Israel's many enemies will attempt to destroy the Jews in the battle of Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38-39). Also, among many other important events, there will be the gathering of the nations in the valley of Megiddo, also called, the Battle of Armageddon. Then, just in time, the Lord Jesus Christ will return with His Church to the earth and will overcome all of Israel's enemies (Revelation 19; Zechariah 14).

**3. The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Earth.** Jesus Christ will return to Jerusalem. At that time, He will destroy all of Israel's enemies (Zech. 14), and will bind Satan in chains in the bottomless pit for one thousand years (Revelation 20:3). The Lord also will cast the Antichrist and the False Prophet into the lake of fire for ever (Revelation 20:10). What a glorious time it will be when Jesus Christ reigns from Jerusalem and we with Him for a thousand years. Then, there will be world-wide peace, as well as only one faith: That of faith in and worship of the Triune God through the Lord Jesus Christ Who will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

There is much more in God's prophetic plan to learn! We should be aware of what God has in mind for the future of the world. And it is our privilege and responsibility as His stewards to make these wonderful truths known in our witnessing to the lost. Remember, Jesus said, "***occupy till I come***" (***Luke 19:13***).

As Christians, we need to tell the world that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God Who came into the world to save sinners (John 3:16), and that He died upon the cross to pay for the sins of the world. He was buried and rose again the third day, to give us new life, and He has ascended to heaven to prepare a place for you and for me in His Father's House (1 Corinthians 15:4; John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; Luke 22:69). He is coming again for us, His saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Then, seven years later, He will return with us, His saints to rule on the earth for a thousand years (Daniel 9: 24-27; Revelation 19:7-9,14). While the wicked attempt to assert their rebellion, it is wonderful to know, that the living God will have the victory! You can have victory today, if you trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and as you look for His coming!

## **Upward Call - How to walk in view of Prophecy**

### **Is Your Walk Consistent With Your Talk?**

The walk of the believer today should be like Paul's who said in Philippians 3:14, "***I press toward the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.***" Peter, in 2 Peter 3:11 said, "***Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness..***" Therefore, the study of the End Times should motivate us to live as holy and separated saints who draw people to Jesus Christ because we are different from the world and not because we are like the world. A.W. Tozer put it beautifully in the following words which are certainly prophetic for the Church today:

"In the early days, when Christianity exercised a dominant influence over American thinking, men and women conceived the world to be a battleground. Our fathers believed in sin and the devil and hell as constituting one force, and they believed in God and righteousness and heaven as the other. By their very nature, these forces were opposed to each other forever in deep, grave, irreconcilable hostility. Humans, our fathers held, had to choose sides--they could not be neutral. For them it must be life or death, heaven or hell, and if they chose to come out on God's side they could expect open war with God's enemies. The fight would be real and deadly and would last as long as life continued here below..."

How different today. The fact remains the same, but the interpretation has changed completely. People think of the world, not as a battleground, but as a playground. We are not here to fight; we are here to frolic. We are not in a foreign land; we are at home. We are not getting ready to live, but we are already living, and the best we can do is rid ourselves of our inhibitions and our frustrations and live this life to the full." (*Tozer on Christian Leadership*, reading for November 2, Wing Spread Publishers.)

Does this sound familiar? This reminds me how the trends of the times today are best expressed in a recent best-selling book entitled: *Your Best Life Now*. Yet, we are called to be citizens ***of heaven*** and to live our lives on earth as ***ambassadors for Christ***. When the Lord calls us up at the rapture, He will have desired us to live daily as strangers on the earth, pointing the lost to Christ and living filled with His Holy Spirit, convicted by His Word to the honor and glory of the Father. Is this how you are living today? You can be, as you trust in Him to empower you to live for Him, and witness for Christ, until He comes!

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*(Note: If you would like to interact with Dr. Downing concerning this newsletter, views, etc. you can "blog" with him at [prophecyinperspective.com](http://prophecyinperspective.com). If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter at no charge, please send your email address to: [sgdowning@bellsouth.net](mailto:sgdowning@bellsouth.net). Also, you can purchase his latest book, "Good News From a Far Country", a study in the book of Daniel [\$15] by contacting him.)*