

# Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

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

### **Deliverance and Destruction from Heaven**

As the Magi watched the heavens, so we today should do the same. By this I mean that "the heavens declare the glory of God." Prophecy tells us that there will be "signs in the heavens" as we approach the time of the advent of the Lord. As this was true the first time Jesus came, so it is true today as we continue to witness different indications from the heavens that something significant is about to happen.

The Bible predicted that God would use signs and things in the heavens to deliver His people from destruction. For example, the prophet Isaiah described how God would miraculously deliver Israel from their enemies through something flying through the sky over the land of Israel. Isaiah stated: "***As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.***"(Isaiah 31:5)

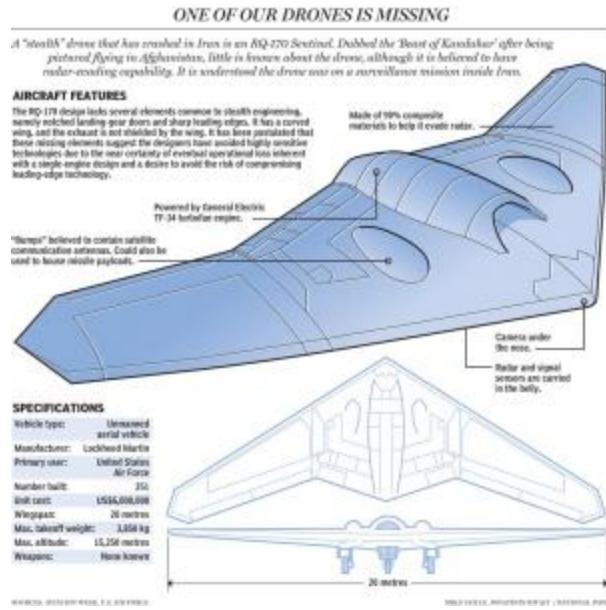
During the early part of the twentieth century, the Jews began their re-gathering back to Israel. The Turks were in control of Jerusalem and were threatening war with the Jews. They greatly outnumbered

the weak and vulnerable Jews. There was no hope except for God's intervention. British General Allenby, had responsibility for the task of looking after the protection of the Jews. He greatly desired to free Jerusalem from Turkish control. Allenby was a Christian, and even in his youth he would pray each day: "Lord, forget not thine ancient people. Hasten the day when they shall be restored to thy favour and to their land..." Years later, as a British general, he came across a particular prophecy in Isaiah: "***As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.***" The next morning, Allenby ordered his British Air Force to fly over Jerusalem. They were to fly low and in waves without firing their guns. On witnessing this intimidating display of aerial might, the Turks surrendered. Jerusalem was saved and the Jews protected. God's Word will never fail!



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In a continuing effort, even if indirectly, to protect Israel from the skies, the United States flew an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), otherwise known as a surveillance drone into Iranian Airspace a few days ago. Something happened that brought to drone down and into the control of the Iranians. They have stated they will not give the drone back to the US and that they will begin to reverse engineer the



vehicle to see what secrets they can discover and to attempt to build one of their own. President Obama had the opportunity to take the drone out of Iranian hands, but elected to allow them to keep it. He stated in so many words that he was concerned that an attempt to retrieve the drone or to destroy it may cause a war. But with the withdrawing all of our troops from Iraq at this same time, we are certainly showing the Iranians our weakness and unwillingness to risk problems. This, I believe makes us and Israel more vulnerable to intimidation and even attack from Iran or its ally, Syria. I believe the possibility is strong that the drone is partly being given up the Iranians as an attempt to appease them. The hope may be that they will delay their plans to assert dominance in Iraq at

least until after the next elections in the US. Only time will tell whether this is true or not. At any rate, there is nothing else that would hinder the Iranians from quickly moving into the immense power vacuum that exists in Iraq. They certainly have every opportunity afforded them to do so. It appears to me that Iraq, in spite of the sacrifices of our brave soldiers there, as well those of the loyal Iraqis, is being handed over to their enemy Iran on a silver platter.

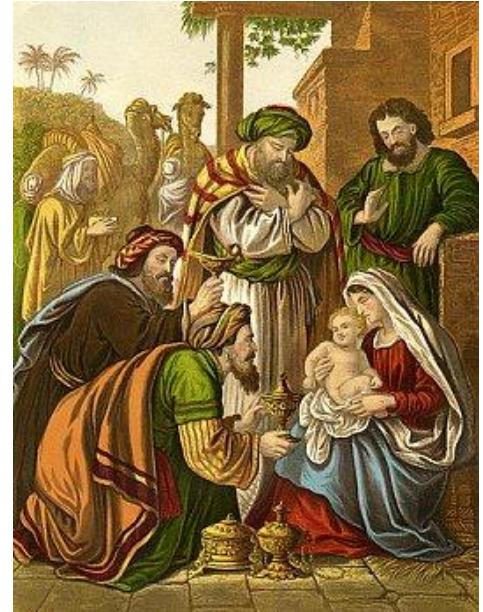
Yet, the Lord will be faithful, in spite of liberal US leaders, to protect His people, Israel. And He is perfectly capable of using any means to accomplish this. The sky is no limit to the Lord. *"As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it."*

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

### Keep Looking Up!

The Bible speaks about the importance of things that are seen in the heavens. The wise men who followed the star that appeared to them in the East were probably familiar with the prophecy that was given by Balaam in Numbers 24:17 which stated: *"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult."* These wise men were likely from the area of ancient Babylon of present

day Iraq and Iran. There were many Jews living in this region at the time of the birth of Jesus. They were descendants of the Jews who remained from the time of Daniel. These wise men were certainly familiar with the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures. They studied the heavens at the time of the birth of Christ for the appearance of the star spoken of by Balaam. These may have been astrologers (magoi) who believed in the Jewish God. Hopefully, they had abandoned their misguided system and beliefs of Eastern astrology, but used their intricate understanding of the heavens to look for indications of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Others were anticipating the soon arrival of the Messiah such as Simeon and Anna in Jerusalem. I believe the times were stirring with anticipation in those days, especially among the devout Jews, as well as gentile believers in God and the Scriptures that the Christ was about to appear. The long journey of the Magi from the east to Jerusalem, the dreams they had from God to guide and to warn them about Herod, as well as their bringing of expensive gifts all witnessed to their belief in the one true God of Israel. And through them, God was telling the world, that the Son of God was coming as a shining light in the darkness, to save them from the despair of sin and wickedness in the world and to deliver them by the power of Jesus, who would be the King.



The prophecy of Balaam signaled the coming of One who, like that special "*Star*" in the heavens would come from heaven to the earth to be a shining Light to give direction to all who would believe in Him. But the prophecy also speaks of Him as being a "*Scepter*" that "*shall rise out of Israel and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.*" The "Scepter" reference is probably what brought the Magi to ask this question of Herod when they arrived in Jerusalem: "*Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.*" (*Matthew 2:2*). This question was very disturbing to Herod and even "*all Jerusalem.*" (*Matthew 2:3*). The prophecies of the coming of the Messiah were clearly giving in the Scriptures, but the Jews as a Nation were unprepared for His coming.

The Jewish leaders and teachers in general were not looking for the glorious fulfillment of God's prophetic word. It is likely that, as with most of the preachers and teachers of today, they were ignoring the prophetic indications of the arrival of the Messiah. They were not looking for a spiritual deliverer, but a military one who would get the Romans out of their country. One would indeed come to deliver them from their physical oppressors, as the prophecy of Balaam and other prophecies indicate. But first, the Messiah would come as the "Star" who would be a "*Light (shining) in the darkness.*" (*John 1:5a*) But, because they were not even looking for Him to come, "*the darkness did not comprehend it.*" (*John 1:5b*). In reality, the Lord Jesus Christ was to come first as our humble Savior to die for the sins of the world, and then to rise from the dead in victory. Then He was to return at a later time, with His

believing saints, as the "*Scepter (that) shall rise out of Israel...*" to reign over the entire earth. At that time He would deal decisively with His and all of Israel's enemies, "*Moab, and...all the sons of tumult.*" (See also Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19)

We should observe the difference in response to the Lord's coming between the wise men, representing those who take Bible prophecy literally and seriously, and Herod and all Jerusalem who were ignorant of or generally ignoring Bible prophecy and focusing on more immediate concerns like how to get and maintain a following of loyal subjects. This is an important lesson to us today to study the prophecies of Scripture to see how these latter days are shaping up. We should ask ourselves: Am I preparing for the coming of the Lord when He returns for His church?

This is why, during this Christmas season and into the new year, we need to keep looking up. "Looking up" means both keeping a positive outlook on the unfolding of world events knowing that things are shaping up just as the Bible predicts. "Looking up" also means watching for the coming of the Lord when, at any moment, "*the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. and the dead in Christ will rise first. then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:5).

*To all the readers of Prophecy in Perspective I want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and blessed New Year as you continue to watch for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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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.)*