

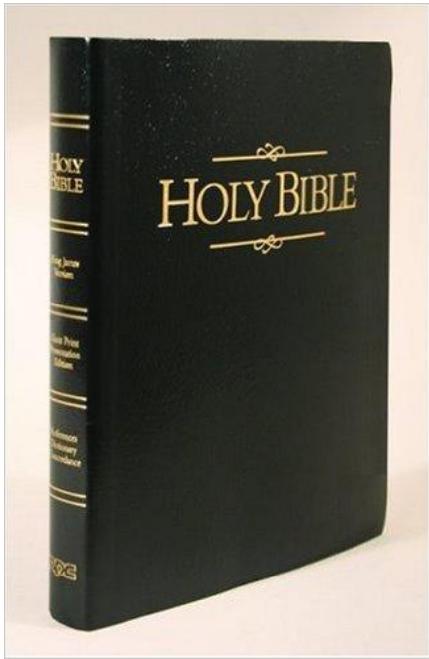
Prophecy in Perspective

Dr. Scott Gregory Downing
An email newsletter

Are We Living In The Time of the Lord's Return?

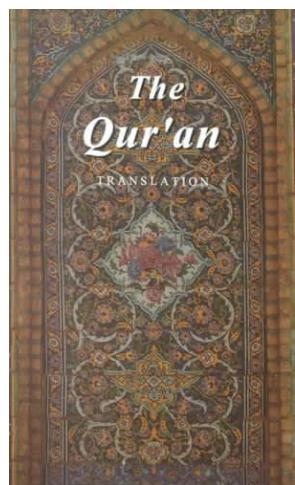
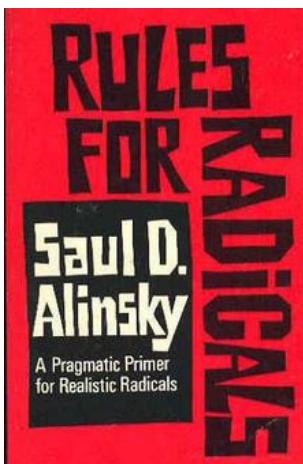
There is a very interesting verse in Psalm 102:13, which says: *"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come."* Based on the covenant promise of God to Abraham

(Genesis 12:1-3), and hundreds of other prophecies in the Bible concerning the existence and future of Israel, I believe that God's plan for Israel is still unfolding. But since Israel initially rejected Jesus at His first coming, Jesus began the church which is made up of both born again Jews and Gentiles (Romans 11; Ephesians 3). We are now living in what is likely the latter days of the church age (1 Timothy 3:1-9); Revelation 3:14-4:2). This age will close with the rapture of the Church. Then Daniel's 70th week of 7 years will begin the great tribulation when God's work in Israel and the entire world will accelerate to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth (Daniel 9:24-27). Bible prophecy is clear that Jesus will return to redeem Israel as a nation (Zechariah 14; Isaiah 60-63). We have witnessed the re-establishment of Israel as a nation and the regathering of the Jews from all over the world back to their homeland.



We have also witnessed two distinct but related movements in the world and in America today: First, we see the development of a demonic and rigorous hostility toward the Jews and Israel being played out in the political realm in these latter days of history. This is

especially seen in the rise of a growing anti-Bible, anti-Semitic, Socialist-Progressive world-view in American government, in education, in law, and in the general culture. These are views that are based on the demonic writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engles' Communist Manifesto and Sal Alinsky's Rules for Radicals. Second, we see the rising of violent, radical Islam which is actually the most accurate expression of the unscriptural teachings of the Koran (pictured right). As surprising as it may appear at first glance, it should be noticed that the anti-Semitic goals of Socialist Progressivism are **identical with those of**



radical Islam as taught in the Koran. I also believe there are two common goals of both Progressivism and Radical Islam: First, the discrediting and marginalizing of biblical Christianity, and, Second, the complete destruction of Israel. The ultimate goal for both of these movements is the establishment of a global anti-Christ dictatorship.

Students of biblical prophecy understand, however, that these demonic goals will never fully be realized. The true church, will continue to preach the gospel during this age. This will result in the conversion of many Muslims to Jesus Christ who are truly seeking to know God. There may even be a few socialist progressives who will get saved as well, but admittedly, I actually believe the hearts of socialist progressives are far more hardened against God! At the coming of Christ in the clouds, the church will be raptured off the earth to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). After the tribulation period, Israel will become the kingdom headquarters of the earth when Jesus Christ returns with His Church to Jerusalem. Meanwhile, we see the exciting, and interesting unfolding of events which signal the soon fulfillment of the predictions of biblical prophecy. I truly believe that with the beginning of the year 2016, Christians and Jews can say with David to the Lord: "***Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come.***" Perhaps we are right at the moment in prophetic history where God's "set time is come." Are you ready?

First Bible Verses For 2016

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever (Psalm 146:5&6).

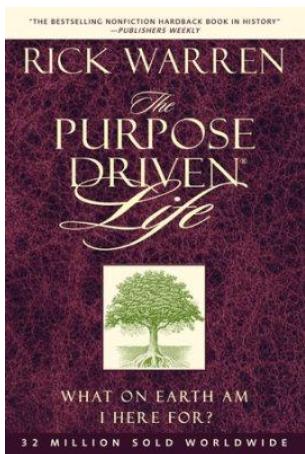
These are the first verses I read just after 12 am in the new year 2016, I found them to be very key for the confusing and violent times in which we live. Our times today are like those in the book of Judges when, "*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 21:25).

We have just learned to our disgust that our own National Security Association (NSA) has been spying both on our Congress and our ally, Israel over concerns that, Netanyahu (pictured right) might decide to attack Iran during or after our misguided negotiations with Iran. This news, unfortunately, is not shocking to Christians and Jews who support Israel. It just points up our increasingly anti-Semitic and pro-Islamic foreign policy from a President who treats our allies as enemies and our enemies as allies. President Obama is highly sympathetic to Islam and seems outwardly enthusiastic about its global advancement, especially the Iranian, Shiite version of it. Yet, he tells the world that the most important threat to the world today is climate change. He is a very odd man indeed!



This past year we have seen Russia growing in power and influence, along with Iran, ISIS and China. This is while the United States, through much focused effort and manipulation, has been generally weakened over the last number of years economically, morally, culturally and militarily. The family in America has taken many hits from the demonically motivated progressive left as homosexual "marriage" was affirmed through what I believe to be a renegade Supreme Court. The justices who made this decision should be impeached, as their

decision resulted from much pressure and intimidation from a president who has lost all moral and ethical standing with his country as well as with the world.



As the moral and cultural assault on this once great Judeo-Christian nation continues to advance, the mega-seeker-sensitive churches and preachers continue their doctrinal and theological retreat from the Bible. Many have virtually traded the clear and inspiring teachings of the Bible for those of the Purpose Driven Life (pictured on the left). A recent article stated that one third of Southern Baptists agree with the homosexual lifestyle and believe that homosexual marriage is ok. (See article at, <http://pulpitandpen.org/2015/12/18/nearly-third-of-southern-baptists-approve-of-homosexuality-and-growing/>)

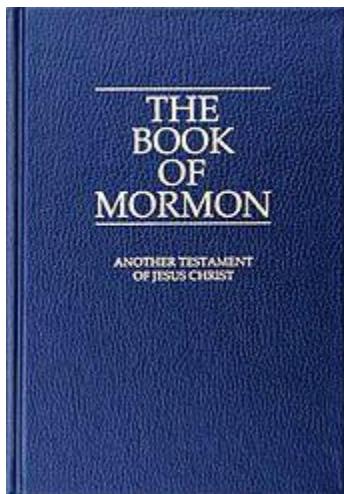
Preachers, and most church leaders, are not sounding the alarm of the demonic doctrines that are being pushed into our culture and churches these days. The silence on these issues is not only deafening, it is downright dangerous. The clear message they are spreading these days seems to be to avoid any comment or teaching on marriage, family, or prophecy in any clearly defined way. These are prosperity and seeker-sensitive preachers who are not aware, nor do they care, that Jesus Christ may soon call away His true Church to heaven. We are living in days of growing church apostasy. (listen to an important message by David Wilkerson, "Last Days Deception," at, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPdTxSNcC5Y>) A few preachers however, are still faithfully preaching the Bible. We should pray that they continue to do so even while they are under great pressure to get on board with the contemplative prayer and emerging church movements.

Further, today, the typical Christian is being distracted by secondary things from his or her personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondary things are keeping many believers from their private, daily study of God's Word and effective prayer. Christians have consequently and regrettably lost sight of some of the basic teachings of the Bible. Often, this is because they have grown dependent on the news media or religious personalities as well as the entertainment industry for biblical and spiritual instruction. Many "seekers" are under the impression that to find a good church means it must be a place where they "enjoy" worship and the kids can have a "fun" time. This usually means that the leaders will not be referring to sin or holy living in any real or specific sense. They can "feel" better about their church knowing that the pastor will not bother them about their political or even moral views and they won't be "embarrassed" by convicting messages about unbiblical and immoral relationships or the personal lifestyles of the members of their own church.

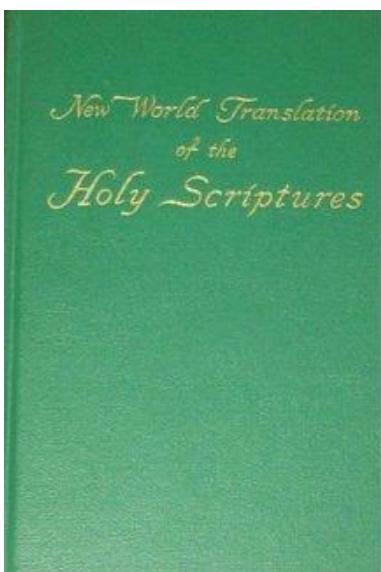
They can bring guests, but also be comfortable knowing that they will not be inconvenienced by an outdated and time consuming altar call. There will be no pressure to be "born again," but they may be encouraged to "follow Jesus." The concept of "following Jesus" as it is promoted in the contemporary church is a long way from what Jesus had in mind when He first called His disciples to follow Him. This is a "seeker-sensitive" version of "becoming a Christian." This trend comes right out of the "what would Jesus do" movement of some years ago, and the Purpose Driven movement of seeker-sensitive teachings of today. Jesus said: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). Jesus' legitimate call to follow Him is actually a salvation call to follow Jesus to the cross. It is the solemn calling of preachers and all Christians to be witnesses for Jesus Christ and His cross, that the lost must be born again. For millions, this is the cross road of decision between heaven and hell forever. Have you been born again?

Yet, God has a word for us these first days of 2016: "**Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; Who's hope is in the Lord His God...**" (Ps 146:5). For us today, I believe this shows us that real happiness does not come out of being made to "feel comfortable" in our sins or to trust in man's methods to "succeed" in life without God. But, genuine happiness comes out of a daily walk that is a personal walk and relationship with the Savior, the Lord, Jesus Christ. These days, God must be identified and defined as the God of truth. Verse 6 states that the God of Jacob, the God Who revealed Himself to the Jews and through the Bible, is the God of unchanging truth, "**He keepeth truth forever.**" This is precisely why there was no need for any other so called "revelation" on earth besides the Bible. Any "adding to" or "correcting of" the Scripture is strictly forbidden in the solemn words of Revelation:

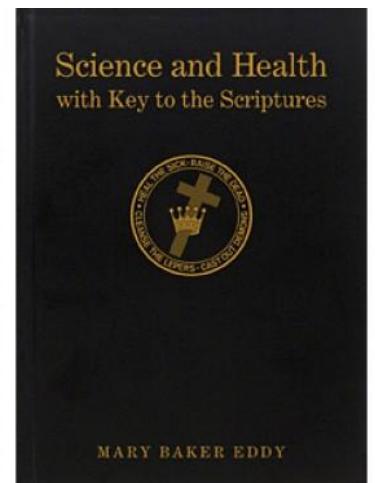
For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Revelation 22:18-19).



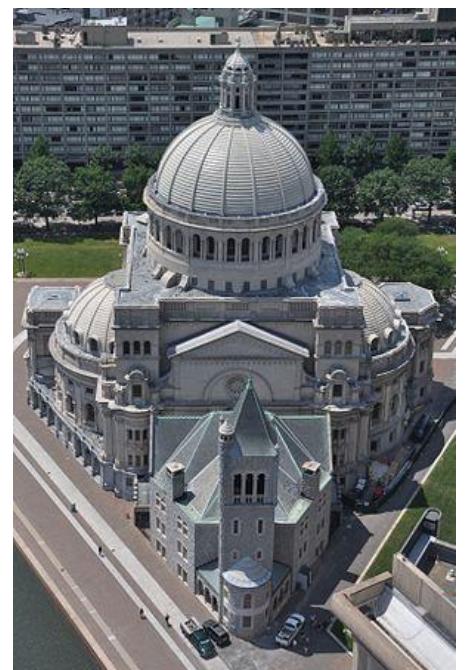
Since the entire Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, 66 books, is presented as a whole unit (Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 3:16), it is ridiculous, and dangerous, to think these words from Revelation do not also apply to the entire Bible. Again, the words "*He Keepeth truth forever,*" points us to the reality that God has once and for all spoken through the pages of the inerrant and infallible Word of God, the Bible.



teaching and preaching of the Bible.



The false Book of Mormon, by Joseph Smith (pictured upper left) and the demonic writings of Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures, (pictured above right; also their false temple of First Church Christ Science, Boston, Mass., pictured right) as well as the deceptive translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses', New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, (pictured left) along with all the writings of hundreds of false world religions, all fall under the warning and rebuke of Revelation 22:18-19. This is why the world and church today needs the expository and systematic



I can usually tell if people are not reading their Bible with any real depth when they insist that there is truth in all religions. This is the first step to saying that there is more than one way to heaven besides faith in Jesus

Christ. Yet, Jesus unabashedly and unequivocally stated: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:5).

We hear this defining truth stated in these narrow terms less and less today from Americas' churches, television ministries, and denominations. On the other extreme, often, those who are preaching these truths however, do so without love and in anger. A.W. Tozer had some things to say about this approach:

If I were writing to preachers, to young preachers particularly, I would say to them, "There are two things required of you before your congregation. One is to always speak the truth. The other is to always speak the truth in love." You have heard the truth spoken in a hostile manner where the one speaking gave the impression that he was very angry with the congregation; and if they were going to hell, it was all right with him. And if they were going to backslide, he was going to wash his hands of it.

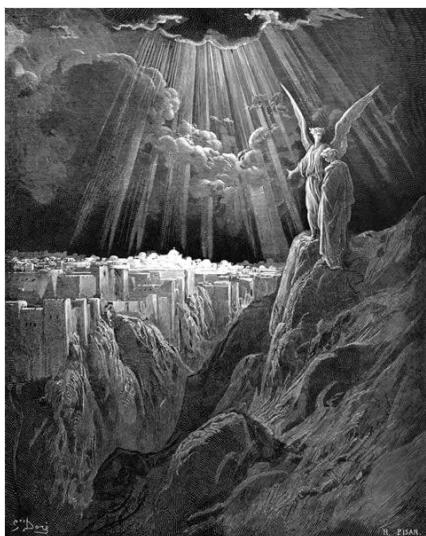
This the man of God never does. He preaches the truth in love. No Christian is ever required of God to listen to a man who does not preach in love. Neither should there be preaching in love at the sacrifice of truth. Either way there comes a danger of going off into deep water. (Tozer, A.W., A Disruptive Faith, p. 89)

But the narrow way of Jesus Christ is for specifically defined truth to be faithfully set forth before God's people for their edification, as it is taught in the Bible. This kind of belief and teaching, so dreadfully neglected today,

is what stirs up true joy in the Christian's heart and will brighten his or her outlook toward life today as the words of John express: "*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*" (3 John 1:4).

The clarity and finality of the Bible was intended by God to give us a plain path in which to walk. The Bible is very clear for us today to encourage us and direct us in the way we should go and how to carry out God's will in the world. The Bible sets forth over and over the plain truth that Jesus Christ could return at any moment to take all born again Christians to heaven. Being serious about prophecy means that we take to heart that God is now preparing us through our life situations and circumstances for heaven. God, in His loving and wise providence in the unfolding of history, is going to lead us faithfully and victoriously into and through 2016, one day at a time,

until the time of our glorious home-going to our mansion in heaven and, most wonderful of all, into the presence of Jesus Christ, when our faith will become sight as we behold the Lord face to face. (Above left is Gustave Dore's etching of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21).



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