

Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place. 2 Peter 1:19

Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

MAR/APR 2024

THE PRIMACY OF PROPHECY



LAMB & LION
MINISTRIES
STANDS WITH ISRAEL

Lamplighter

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Observations from the Editor

When did you first learn about God's prophetic Word?

For me it was 1993. I was almost 27 years old. I'd been in church all my life and could not remember any sermons or lessons based on Bible prophecy. Sure, prophecies related to Christ's First Advent were mentioned at Christmas, but in 26 years I was never encouraged to appreciate the significance of prophecies saturating the Word of God.

When I first learned that God has revealed so many things that have come to pass—and others that await fulfillment still—I felt like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. As the Scriptures were opened to me anew, my heart began to burn within me (Luke 24:32).

That sparked a fervent desire to study the entire Word of God. It put stories that had been presented to me as mere historical anecdotes or morality tales in context, and affirmed that God is still very much at work in the world today. Prophecy gave me tremendous appreciation for the scope and sweep of His plan for mankind—and assurance that He will fulfill every promise.

Ironically, in hindsight, I was thankful that I had not been handed a stilted framework of interpretation by some tradition of man. When I began studying Bible prophecy for myself, I was able to read it at face value. I found that I did not need an advanced degree in hermeneutics for the plain sense to make sense.

Bible prophecy also made me realize that in addition to all the promises God has made to me as

a follower of Christ, He has also made promises to the Jewish people, to the Creation, to Satan, and especially to Jesus Christ. Just as I can trust that His promises to me are guaranteed, I can be certain that He will keep every promise in the fullness of time.

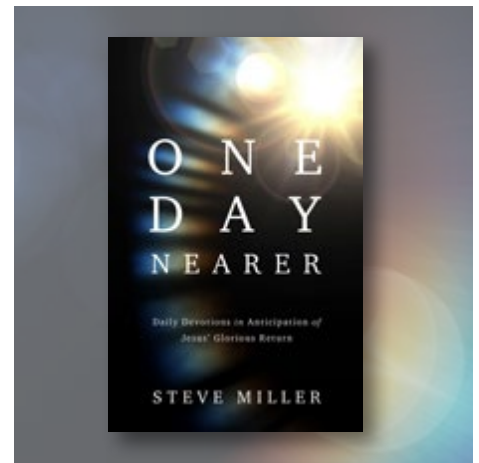
Before you delve into this edition of the *Lamplighter*, take a moment to consider all the promises of God that you can recount from memory.

Thank Him that He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And praise Him that in Christ all His promises are Yes and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20).

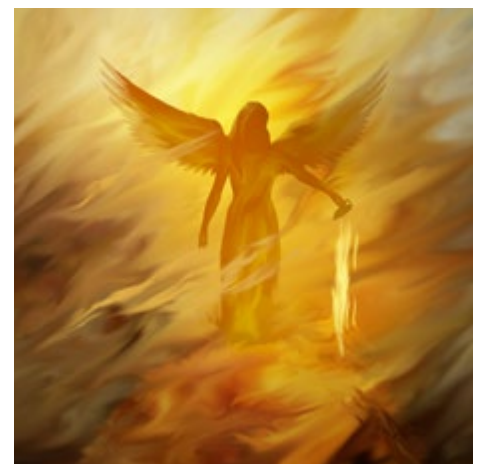


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THE PRIMACY OF PROPHECY

We Have the Prophetic Word Made More Sure

Tim Moore

“Can your idols make such claims as these? Let them come and show what they can do!” says God, the King of Israel. “Let them try to tell us what occurred in years gone by, or what the future holds.”

“Yes, that’s it! If you are gods, tell what will happen in the days ahead! Or do some mighty miracle that makes us stare, amazed. But no! You are less than nothing and can do nothing at all.”

(Isaiah 41:21-24, The Living Bible)

Omniscient. Omnipotent. Audacious.

Those words describe God’s ability and determination to proclaim in advance His plans for mankind. His willingness to put Himself on the line by foretelling what will happen in the future is unique to the true and living God. No other supposed god makes declarative predictions—and for good reason.

Prophecy is not only a unique feature of the Bible, but also a validating aspect of all it contains. But perhaps we should step back and define these terms.

Forthtelling and Foretelling

Biblical prophecy can be defined as the forthtelling of truth or foretelling of what is to come. Prophecies are revealed by God through a human prophet as divine warnings, instructions, expectations, or exhortations. Always, the prophet and the prophecy point to and glorify God.

Prophecy that foretells future events (whether already realized or yet to be fulfilled) makes up 28-32% of the Bible. Even that variance is based on whether you count verses, chapters, or books. But it is evident



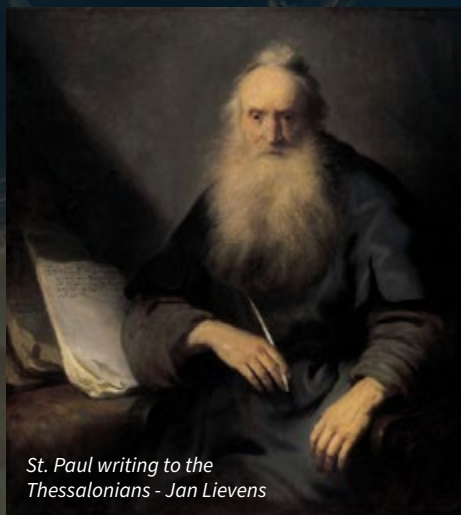
Foretell - a declaration of future events as revealed by the Lord.

Forthtell - the proclamation of truth which can only be known by divine revelation.

Foretelling and forthtelling prophecies are given to glorify God and edify (rebuke, encourage, warn, or offer hope to) the recipients of His prophetic Word. Both are revealed authoritatively through a prophet given insight by God (Deuteronomy 18:15-22 and Matthew 7:29).

to anyone who reads the text that a sizable portion of Scripture pertains to people, circumstances, and events well before their appearance in human history.

For the past couple of years, I've emphasized that all of God's Word is prophetic if you include the portion that forthtells truth. From beginning to end, the Bible reveals God's truth. Although there was no human eyewitness to the Creation, God revealed His precise sequence of events "in the beginning." Every declarative statement made by God—whether attributed to Him as a direct quotation or recorded by the authors of Scripture as the Holy Spirit inspired them—contains the Truth He wants us to comprehend.



St. Paul writing to the Thessalonians - Jan Lievens

Some prophets specialized in forthtelling truth. When the prophet Nathan approached King David and described the covetous offense of a rich man, David was rightfully indignant. But the prophet quick-

ly delivered God's ultimatum on David's grievous sin: "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). That forthtold truth cut David to the core and he immediately recognized his sin. Sadly, the only foretold truth in that encounter was Nathan's foretelling that David and Bathsheba's child would die.

The phrase, "Thus saith the LORD," is found over 1900 times in the Bible. It is as if God wants to be very clear that He is the Author of Scripture. That is why we call the Bible the Word of God.

It is also why Satan has been determined to undermine God's credibility in the eyes of the creatures made in His image since the beginning.

Did God Really Say?

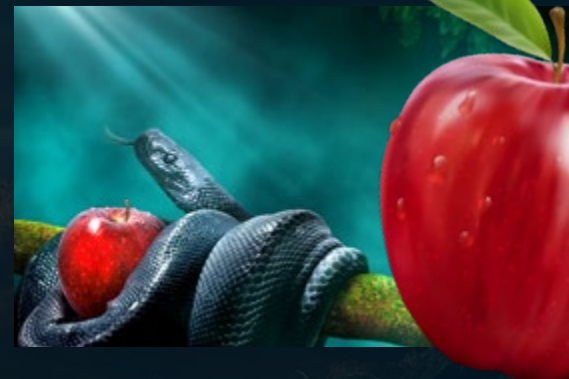
When God created the heavens and the earth and placed man and woman on the earth to subdue and rule over it (Genesis 1:28), He made only one stipulation: do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Long before there were ten commandments, there was only one boundary for man to observe.

Scripture does not tell us how long Adam and Eve enjoyed the good earth as they cultivated and kept the Garden of Eden. But Genesis 3 records that, in short order, Satan came in the form of a serpent to question God's clear directive. He first asked, "Indeed, has God

said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' " By purposely jumbling God's instruction, Satan intended to subtly plant doubt and suggest that God's prohibition was too extreme.

When Eve then responded with her own mistaken rendering of God's command, Satan directly contradicted God by declaring, "You will not die!"

Jesus said of the devil, "he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). In the 21st Century after Christ, we can attest to the millennia of lies perpetrated by the devil and countless hapless people fooled into disbelieving God.



Sadly, today there are many who claim to follow Christ but deny the reality of Bible prophecy—or at least minimize its relevance and power. Or, through willful ignorance they simply discount Bible prophecy altogether. Regarding God's prophetic Word, if Satan

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever...”

Deuteronomy 29:29

were to ask, “Did God really say?” they would essentially respond, “I don’t know, and I really don’t care.”

Others who *do* know the prophetic Word of God have become scoffers. Fulfilling Peter’s prophecy, they are now mockers who say, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3-4). Peter said the last days would be marked by this kind of mocking. Sadly, he was speaking of mockers who are fully aware of Jesus’ promised return and His account of creation—in other words, professing Christians.

Words to Inform, Inspire, and Exhort

It may sound harsh to describe the attitude of those who ignore or minimize Bible prophecy so callously. But imagine if your spouse wrote you a letter and purposed to tell you their deepest thoughts and most far-reaching plans. Who in their right mind would say to themselves: “I’ll read the parts of their letter that describe the weather and their daily activity, but I have no interest in their plans for the future”?

Why does God reveal Himself and His plans to us, His creatures? Because He wants us to know what He chooses to reveal. Amos recorded, “Surely the Lord GOD

does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7, NASB). That is not to say that God tells us everything that only His infinite mind can know or comprehend.

Moses spoke truly when he said, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever...” (Deuteronomy 29:29). To some, that selective revelation is off-putting and leaves them unwilling to believe God. I’ve come to realize that God’s great goodness keeps Him from revealing many things to us.



For one, our limited minds could not contain or comprehend the mind of God. For another, too much knowledge would prove destructive to us—just as it did to Adam and Eve. And, finally, as any-

one who has been exposed to any top-secret information knows, some information should only be shared on a “need-to-know” basis.

God has revealed what He wants us to know (and what we need to know) to inform, inspire, and exhort us. But He is neither obligated nor inclined to reveal more than we can comprehend. Judges 13 offers a wonderful example of this. The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah and his wife to prophesy that they would have a son. In a great messianic foreshadowing, the angel’s only response to an inquiry about His identity was, “I am” (Judges 13:11). When pressed for His actual name, the angel responded, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?” (Judges 13:18).

Manoah later realized that during his interaction with the angel he had “seen God.” Many believe that the angel was Jesus in pre-incarnate form. He declined to reveal His name to Manoah and his wife because it was not yet time to do so.

So, although we can become impatient to know what has yet to be revealed, we should rejoice that many things have been unveiled for us already. For instance, we can call Jesus by His name and praise Him for His finished work of salvation. Peter wrote, “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inqui-

ries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicated as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow” (1 Peter 1:10-11).

We have the blessing and advantage of hindsight, whereas they gazed forward as through a glass dimly. And yet, even now we know in part, and live anticipating the fulfillment of “the grace to be brought to [us] at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

God of Space and Time

Although we are confined to time and limited in our knowledge, God is not. He is the God of space and time—a truth clearly demonstrated even in Jesus’ first miracle.

Faced with the unique and personal crisis of a shortage of wine in Cana, Jesus’ Jewish mama encouraged Him to assist the host of the wedding. Reluctant to reveal His power because His hour had not yet come, Jesus honored His mother’s request (John 2:1-11). With no fanfare and no personal effort or intervention, He miraculously changed water into wine.



This relatively mundane beginning to His signs and miracles established His power over the material universe (because water does not naturally transform into wine), time (because the conversion of grape juice into wine is not instantaneous), and space (because He knew the wine was ready without physically interacting with the water pots).

Following His resurrection, Jesus had a physical body and could eat and fellowship with His disciples (Luke 24:38-43). Yet He also demonstrated His ability to pass through locked doors (John 20:19 and 26), vanish in an instant (Luke 24:31), and ascend into the

heavens and out of sight (Acts 1:9). Perhaps we will enjoy these same abilities in our glorified bodies!

Because God exists outside of space and time, He can gaze down upon our universe and into time as we know it without constraints. And while He chose to enter the world in human form at an appointed moment in human time, He can also see from everlasting to everlasting. That gives Him a unique perspective.




God’s Eye View

The challenge of foreseeing the future has intrigued mankind throughout history. But we are only able to experience time in a linear fashion. We have some recollection of the past, but no awareness of the future.

Traveling down the highway presents a fitting analogy. We are able to look into our rearview mirror and see a limited distance behind us. If the weather is clear, we can see a limited distance ahead. But, unless we have a modern app in our car or on our phone, we have no way of knowing what lies beyond the next turn. We are inevitably surprised when we come over a hill and find ourselves in a miles-long traffic jam.

But, as a pilot, I can soar above the earth and see many miles ahead of drivers just below me. In fact, from 30-40,000 feet, I can see well over a hundred miles in every direction. I know what awaits oblivious drivers around the next turn and an hour ahead. Pilots call this a “God’s-eye view,” not out of disrespect but because they recognize that God’s perspective is far beyond that of humans confined to the earth.

God’s ability to see far beyond the horizons of our time is very much the same. Unconstrained by our linear timeline, He sees behind and ahead of us with equal clarity. From His infinite perspective, the beginning and the end are just as clear as the here and now. That is why He can proclaim, “I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning,



“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Revelation 19:10, NASB

and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’ ” (Isaiah 46:9-10, NASB).

The Purpose of Prophecy

I made the claim that Bible prophecy is meant to offer divine warning, instruction, expectation, or exhortation, but that in every case, the prophet and prophecy points to and glorifies God. The “fellow servant” John encountered in his vision of heaven explained that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10, NASB). Peter reminds us that “no prophecy was ever made by the will of man, but men being moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21). So, again, prophecies are revealed by God, to the people of God, and for the purpose of God.

As we witness the dissolution of our society and the convergence of signs pointing to the End Times, the value of Bible prophecy is proven day after day. Satan is still whispering, “Did God really say?” Scoffers are still mocking, “Where is the promise of His coming?” Certainly, in this world, our troubles are multiplying.

All that the Lord has revealed to us affirms the revelation Jesus shared with His disciples: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The “little-t” tribulation or trouble we have in the world is external, while the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, [guards our] hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Bible prophecy assures us that God is in control, that He works all things together for His glory and our good

(Romans 8:28), and that Jesus will rescue His children from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

What Will You Do with God’s Prophetic Word?

Pilate asked a rhetorical question of the mob gathered around his palace in Jerusalem: “What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22). Their answer demonstrated the hardness of their heart and their rejection of the Lord: “Crucify Him!”



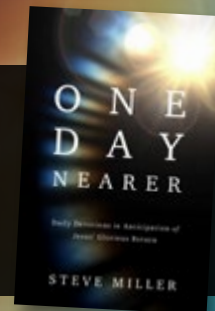
Today, God’s Word presents a challenge to all who claim to follow Him. What will you do with the prophetic Word that He has revealed for your instruction and exhortation and His glory? Will you disregard it, discount it, and ignore it? Or, will you believe it, study it, and obey it?

The choice is yours, but the blessing is only for those who “read and heed it,” as described in Revelation 1:3 and 22:7. †

THE PURPOSES OF BIBLE PROPHECY

Steve Miller

The following is an excerpt from Steve Miller’s wonderful book, *One Day Nearer*, published by our friends at Harvest House Publishers. As Steve wrote, “The End Times are rapidly approaching. Our Lord has called us to be watchful and faithful, using our time well and making our lives count for eternity. The better we know God’s purposes for the future, the more we are able to live wisely today.”



1 To Give Hope

Imagine the Bible with no prophecies in it. Suppose God had decided not to tell us anything about the Second Coming, ultimate victory over evil, and our future home in heaven and eternity. If God had left prophecies out of His Word, we would have no idea of what the future holds. Instead, all we would know is that the world we live in is descending deeper and deeper into darkness, evil, and hopelessness.

With no knowledge of what is to come, life would be bleak. We would have nothing to look forward to. We would go from day to day filled with dread and uncertainty.

But because God chose to provide us with glimpses of the glorious future that awaits us, we can live with hope. That is the major reason God filled the Bible with so many prophecies about what is to come: to give us hope.

What we know about the future helps to influence our thoughts and actions in the present. Because we know the ultimate outcome of the battle now being waged on earth, we can live with anticipation rather than angst. Bible prophecy helps us to have an eternal focus—it reminds us that no matter how bad things get, good and righteousness will prevail. Victory is certain.

That is why, in 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul wrote at length about the promised Rapture that will deliver us from this world and take us to heaven. He concluded with the exhortation that we “encourage one another with these words” (verse 18, ESV). The more we remind each other of God’s prophetic promises, the more we give one another hope.

2 To Give us an Eternal Focus

Because we live in a fallen world, life is filled with struggles. Romans 5:12 says that “just as sin came into the



**“I will accomplish all my purpose...
I will bring it to pass; I have
purposed, and I will do it.”**

Isaiah 46:10-11

world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (ESV). No one can avoid sin and its devastating consequences. Even “creation [is] subject to futility”—all of nature is in “bondage to corruption.” It groans in anticipation of the day when we are freed from our decaying mortal bodies and given new, immortal bodies (Romans 8:19-23, ESV).



Sin is the reason that life is filled with pain and trials. And after we receive salvation in Christ, we enter a new kind of battle. Because we have turned away from sin to walk in the light, we are now at odds with the darkness around us. Jesus warned the disciples—and us, by extension—that “in the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33).

But notice Jesus’ very next words: “Take courage; I have overcome the world.” In our times of suffering, we can find hope in the Lord’s promises of future redemption and victory. Even when life becomes so unbearable we don’t know how we can possibly go on, we are remind-

ed that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

God’s promises about the future are meant to help us look beyond the present and develop an eternal focus. As we learn what it means to live with our minds and hearts set on eternity, we are more able to persevere through the difficulties we face now. Every prophecy about the future is designed to keep us looking up and ahead at the glory that awaits us.

3 To Motivate Us to Purity

One of the most amazing truths in Scripture is that someday, we will be fully transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Because we dwell in imperfect bodies in a fallen world, we are not able to fully grasp what we will become. As the apostle Paul wrote, “for now we see in a mirror dimly” (1 Corinthians 13:12). There is com-

ing a day when we will see clearly—when “the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:54, ESV). At long last, we will be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29).

We eagerly look forward to that day, don’t we? We tire of succumbing to temptation and stumbling into sin. We become increasingly frustrated as we fight the same spiritual battles over and over. With Paul, we say, “I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out...I do not do the good I want” (Romans 7:18-19, ESV).

When we struggle with sin, the prophetic promise that we will someday have glorified bodies and be like Christ is uplifting. This hope not only keeps us going, it also motivates us to personal purity. As 1 John 3:3 says, “Everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure” (ESV).

As we fix our hope on the promise that we will be transformed to



Christlikeness in the future, the result is that we will want to be more like Him in the present. In this way, Bible prophecy has a powerful and sanctifying effect on our lives.

4 To Spur Us to Share the Gospel

Time is running out. Each day that we draw nearer to Christ's Second Coming, we draw closer to when it will be too late for unbelievers to receive Jesus as their Savior. When the King of kings and Lord of lords descends from heaven to reclaim the earth, He will wield "a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations" (Revelation 19:15). On that day, every unbeliever on earth will have their eternal fate sealed.

Now, it is true that after Christ raptures all believers to heaven, the seven-year Tribulation will offer more time for unbelievers to come to salvation. We might think, If my loved one or friend doesn't become a Christian before the Rapture, they will still have opportunities during the Tribulation.

But consider the dismal survival rates of those who end up being on the earth during the Tribulation. In Revelation 6:7-8, we are told that one-fourth of the world's population will die during the fourth Seal Judgment. Then in Revelation 9:15-18, we read about four angels who will "kill a third of mankind." Between those two events, half the people on the earth will die. Also, many people will be so hardhearted that even when they recognize God as the source of the Tribulation judgments, they will call for the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them rather than turn from their sin (Revelation 6:15-17).



When it comes to sharing the Gospel, sooner is better than later. The fact that we don't know the time of Christ's coming should fill us with a sense of urgency. God's desire is that Bible prophecy will spur us to proclaim the message of salvation before it's too late.

5 To Give Hope

Only God is able to declare "the end from the beginning." And not only does He know the future, He plans it. He dares to say, "I will accomplish all my purpose...I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

Those aren't just empty words. Up to this point in time, every one of God's declarations about the future—in the form of Bible prophecies—has come to pass with precision. This helps us to realize that prophecies are not merely guesses or predictions; rather, they reveal exactly what God will do. Prophecy is history written in advance.

The abundance of fulfilled prophecies serves as powerful confirmation that God truly is God. His sovereignty is total; nothing can alter what He says will happen. He who created and sustains the universe guides the course of human history and our individual lives. As chaos swirls seemingly out of control here on earth, all is calm in God's throne room. As surely as Jesus silenced the storm and the waves, God has all world events in His hands.

Because every single prophecy about Christ's First Coming was fulfilled literally with 100 percent accuracy, we can be at peace—confident that the same will be true with every single prophecy about Christ's Second Coming. There is coming a day when every wrong in this world will be righted—for all eternity. Nothing can keep that from happening, because God is God. Because His sovereignty is total, our heavenly future is secure. †

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Steve Miller is the senior editor at Harvest House Publishers and author of multiple books. He and his wife, Becky, are active in deaf ministry. His book *One Day Nearer* offers 365 wonderful devotions anticipating Jesus' glorious return. It can be found at stevemillerresources.com



DANIEL ON THE TIMELY UNDERSTANDING OF PROPHECY

Nathan Jones

But as for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” (Daniel 12:8).

The prophet Daniel had been listening intently to the angel Gabriel pronouncing a series of mind-blowing messages. God was revealing the rise and fall of great empires, leading eventually to a global empire led by a despot whom the Apostle John would later call the Antichrist, with its inevitable demise at the divine hand of God.

Of course, all these great empires were still so far off in the future, from Daniel’s perspective, that he was obviously quite perplexed by what he was hearing. Rubbing his wrinkled forehead in confusion, Daniel requested God’s mighty messenger to provide some elaboration. To his dismay, the angel replied with a firm, “No way!” He explained that Daniel could never

truly understand these prophecies because too many events needed to happen first before they could be fulfilled and, therefore, properly understood.

Fortunately, Gabriel added there would be three major signs that would mark the “time of the end” in which the finale in this series of events would culminate. We find the source text for these signs in Daniel 12:4. “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the time of the end; many will go to and fro, and knowledge will increase.” He added that only those living in the End Times who were “wise” (meaning spiritually discerning) would at last understand these prophecies. They would recognize that the exponential increase in knowledge, travel, and prophetic understanding would herald the end of these human-controlled kingdoms with the Second Advent of the Messiah establishing His earthly millennial reign (Daniel 12:3-10).

1 Increase in Knowledge

Let's explore the first sign—a great increase in knowledge.

Unless you're a toddler playing with your mother's smartphone, you have lived long enough to realize that the way we obtain information has changed a lot—a whole lot—over the last few decades. Let's not even talk decades but in years. The child attaining adulthood today can, with a shudder, look back to the early 2000s when there was no Wikipedia, no Gmail, no social media like Facebook and Twitter (now called X), no cloud computing, no tablets, no smartphones, and certainly no high-speed Internet connectivity. Remember the sound a modem made when connecting a surfer to the World Wide Web? Ask a ten-year-old that question today and they couldn't even tell you. Even Bob Dylan couldn't have imagined how much things would be changing when way back in the stone ages of 1964 he sang, "The Times They Are A-changin'."

Times a-changin' wasn't always the way things were, though. For

thousands of years of human history, life remained pretty much the same. Sure, every 300 years or so the world eked out an innovation that revolutionized the world, moving humanity from, say, the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. But, for the most part, limitations in travel left most inventions cordoned off to a tiny corner of the world. But then, AD 1454 finally arrived, and the German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg released the very first mobile, reusable type press (like an antique photocopier). At last, words of knowledge could be mass-copied onto paper and distributed far and wide. The age of the printed book revolutionized the world, and Gutenberg started with the fount of all knowledge—the Bible.

Were you surprised to learn from your history classes that the most world-changing advances were made just in the last 150 years or so? And, as we got closer to our day and age, how each discovery came about faster and faster, as one breakthrough was achieved on top of another? This increasingly rapid acceleration in learning is called the Exponential Curve. Our

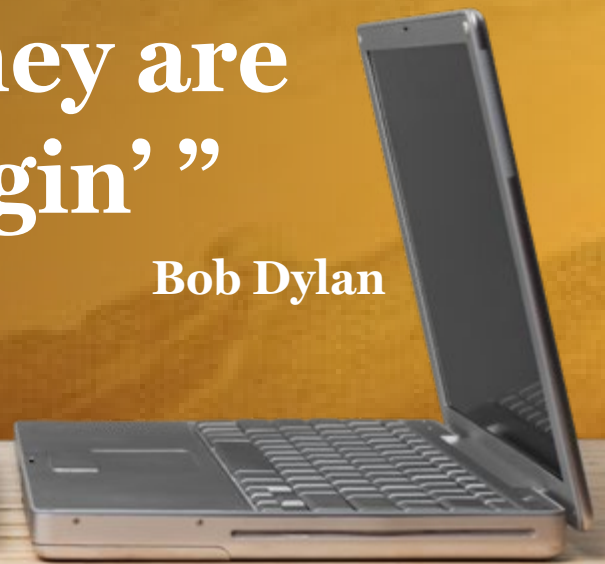
knowledge has been experiencing exponential growth as one breakthrough builds upon another at an increasingly faster and faster pace.

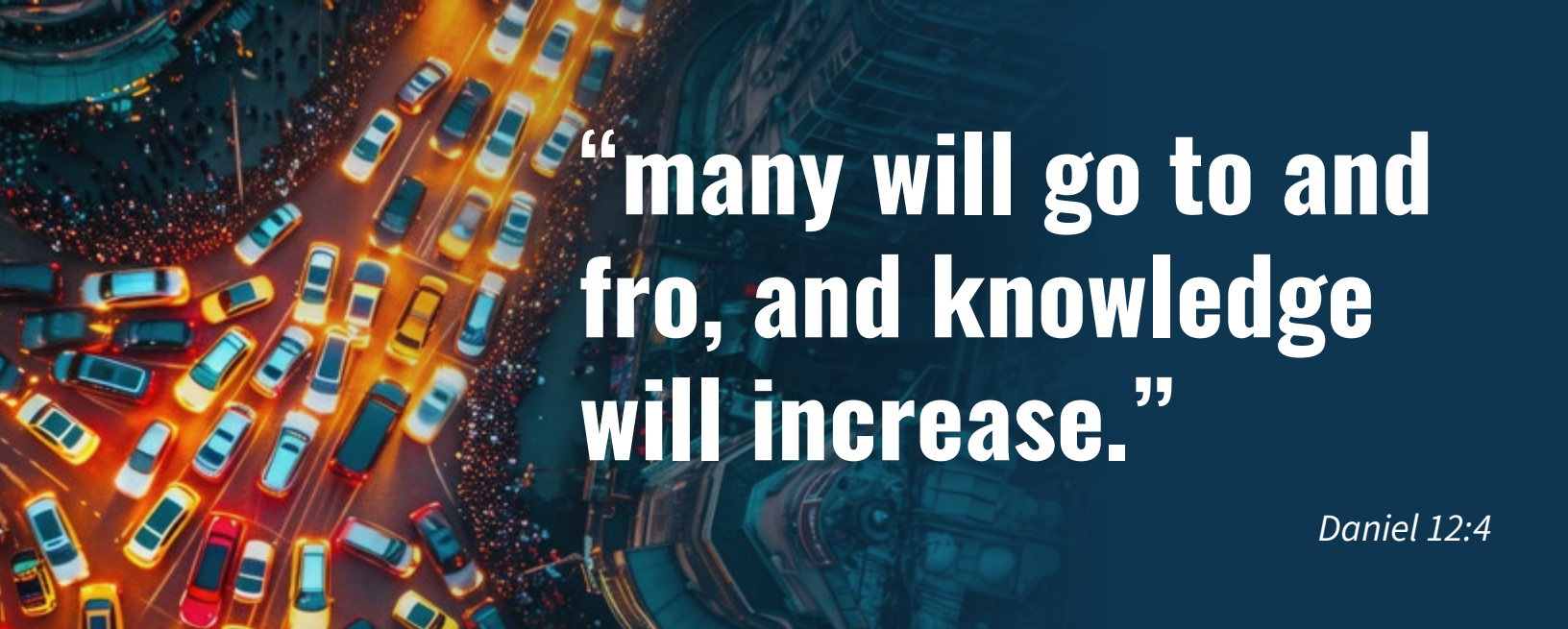
What would you say was the most important discovery that has helped us facilitate the advent of this massive explosion in the growth of knowledge? If you answered "the computer," then you'd be correct. When it comes to the exponential curve for computers, the old joke is, "How do you know when your computer is obsolete?" The answer is, "When you take it out of the box." That's not too far from the truth, though, because computer companies double computer processing speeds about every 18 months.

Known as Moore's Law (after Intel co-founder Gordon Moore), this is just one manifestation of the greater trend in how all change happens to be occurring at an exponential rate. In 2023, quantum computers began processing at speeds equivalent to the human brain. By 2045, in a mere quarter of a century, Moore's Law predicts we will possess computers with the computational ability equivalent to the entire human race!

“The times, they are a-changin’”

Bob Dylan





“many will go to and fro, and knowledge will increase.”

Daniel 12:4

Not only has the exponential curve in all areas of computer technology increased our knowledge to stupendous levels, but computers have aided in all the major scientific discoveries of our day. We don't need to cram so many facts into our brains anymore either, for the ability to easily store and access data means we can continue to learn like we've never learned before in human history.

The exponential curve is not just limited to computers. Other advances in biomedicine, space science, chemical engineering, human engineering, and all the other sciences have been climbing faster and steeper up their exponential curves with every passing day. In the next five years, the world's technology is expected to be 32 times greater than it is today.

It's also been estimated that 65% of today's kindergartners, once they finally graduate from college, will ultimately end up working in completely new jobs that, at this time, don't yet even exist.

Consider that just a hundred years ago, the information most people learned throughout their entire lifetime equated to the con-

tent of one Sunday edition of *The New York Times*. Our ability today to practically consume that same amount of information daily shows just how far mankind's knowledge has increased in a very short amount of time.

Today's exponential increase in knowledge points to the fact that we are living in the prophesied End Times and that Jesus Christ is coming soon.

2 Increase in Transportation

Notice in that same prophecy the angel told Daniel that, besides a great increase in knowledge, "many will go to and fro" (Daniel 12:4). This tremendous increase in travel would also occur in the same context: the End Times. God was revealing that once people began to go to and fro, both farther and faster, those final years before Christ returned to set up His Millennial Kingdom were finally upon us.

Stop and think how people traveled just a single century ago. Most roads weren't even paved yet and were traversed by horse-drawn wagons. A YouTube video of San Francisco recorded back in

1906 reveals far more horses than horseless carriages. People rarely, if ever, left their hometowns. Animal domestication and the early beginnings of decent roads, then bicycles, balloons, boats, and simple automobiles were developing, but not widely received. Since the early part of the twentieth century, mankind went on to invent airplanes and jets, and we've even left Earth's atmosphere in rockets and space shuttles. It used to take months for people to travel overseas by boat, but now we travel that same distance abroad in mere hours. In today's world, people are always on the move, just as the angel prophesied to Daniel.

Today's exponential increase in travel points to the fact that Jesus Christ is returning soon.



3 Increase in Understanding Prophecy

Did you know that Bible prophecy constitutes a whopping 31% of the Bible? God's overall plan for the ages appears to be rather like a 100-piece puzzle, and so far, He has only provided 75 pieces. We can recognize the outline of a picture, but until certain events unfold, and new pieces are added to the puzzle, the picture remains incomplete.

Still, the 75 pieces we have now are far more numerous than what Daniel ever had. As Jesus explained to His disciples, "For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Matthew 13:17). Even then, the Apostles didn't understand many of Christ's teachings until after His resurrection when He openly explained them and then later sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to provide further illumination. Even then, the Apostles were expecting the imminent return of Christ and not a 2,000-year long wait.

Today, the various End Times signs related to nature, society, world politics, technology, Israel, and spiritual signs are coming at us at such a fantastic rate that Bible prophecy teachers such as Dr. Ron Rhodes have begun to call the phenomenon "The Convergence." So many End Times signs converging all at once has greatly enhanced our understanding of End Times Bible prophecy, just as Gabriel foretold.

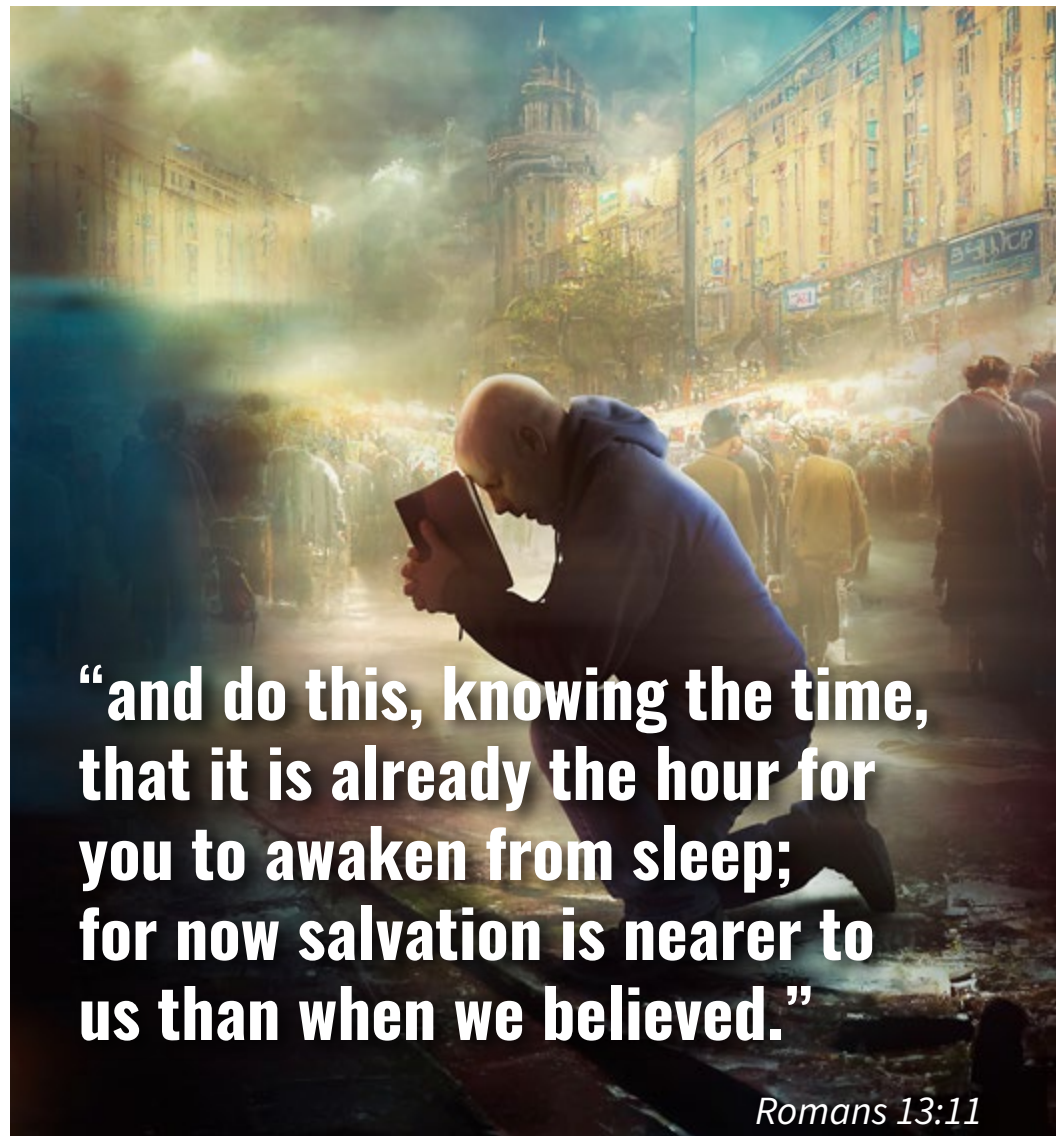
Today's exponential increase in the understanding of God's prophetic Word points to the fact that Jesus Christ is returning soon.

Recognize the Times

These three major signs, along with the hundreds more provided in the Bible, being fulfilled in our day, reveal the fact that the Lord could indeed return at any moment. By looking through the filter of the Bible at all the wondrous yet fearful events playing out before us, we should clearly understand the times in which we are living. As a result, we are comforted knowing that God's got it all under control, that He has a great big plan in

place, and that His children play a vital role in that plan. Christians are called to serve God in these dark times with all our unique gifts, resources, and experiences.

For those of you who haven't yet accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, but now recognize that we *are* living in the End Times, the realization should act like an alarm clock buzzing you awake to the fact that the world doesn't have much time left to it. We are all living on borrowed time. Therefore, embrace the fact that God loves the world so much that He gave His one and only Son and that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). †



“and 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.”

Romans 13:11



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO B

The theme of the book of Revelation is this: The end of your life as you know it is coming soon. That end will come either through your death or through the return of Jesus Christ, but your life is about to undergo a big change. And the knowledge that your life is going to end should affect how you live right now.

What is the future that God has planned for us? Many Christians get confused about the end times. Let's simplify the subject of Bible prophecy by looking at a preview of God's plan.

The Church Age

The first event in Bible prophecy is the Church Age. The Church Age is the period from Pentecost until the

Rapture during which Gentiles are invited to participate in the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. God issued an invitation to Abraham and his descendants, the Jews, to be in a covenant relationship with Him. But Israel temporarily rejected that invitation when they rejected Christ. So God extended His invitation to include non-Jews, that we might be saved. This is the period we are living in right now, when God has temporarily set aside Israel and has invited everybody to be part of His covenant blessing.

Make no mistake: God is not finished with Israel. In Romans 11:1, 25, Paul said, "God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!... a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in..." When

the church age ends, God will finish His dealings with Israel.

The Rapture of the Church

The Church Age will end at the Rapture of the Church. The Rapture is the snatching away to Heaven of all Christians before the Tribulation begins. Paul described it in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

There are four elements of the

Robert Jeffress

BIBLE PROPHECY



Rapture: First of all, the Lord will descend from Heaven. He descends into the air, not to the ground. Second, the dead in Christ will be raised. Who are the dead in Christ? It's every believer who has died since Pentecost. When Christians die, our bodies remain on Earth but our spirits go to be with the Lord. Paul said, "To be absent from the body [is] to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). But our bodies won't

stay on Earth forever. At the Rapture, the graves will be opened and the bodies of the saved will be raised. Third, Christians who are alive at that time will meet the Lord in the air. There will be a generation of Christians who never experience death; they will be caught up to meet the Lord. Fourth, our bodies will be changed from mortal to immortal. Paul said, "This mortal [body] must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53). Your body may be suited for this world, but it's not suited for the next world. At the Rapture, we will receive brand-new bodies from God that are free from pain, suffering, and sickness.

The Rapture is the next event on God's prophetic timeline. There are no prophecies that have to be fulfilled prior to the Rapture. It could happen at any moment.

The Tribulation

The Rapture of the Church will be followed by the Tribulation. The Tribulation is a seven-year period that will begin when the world leader known as the Antichrist signs a peace covenant with Israel, and it

will end with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This is the final seven years of Earth's history.

There are two purposes for the Tribulation. First, it will be a time of salvation for Jews and Gentiles. Many people will be saved, Jews and Gentiles alike, during these final seven years. It's a sign of God's mercy. He wants to save as many people as possible. Second, it will be a time of condemnation of unbelievers.

Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ

The Tribulation will be followed by the Second Coming of Christ. This is the visible return of Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on the earth. At the end of the seven-year Tribulation, all the world forces will assemble on the plain of Megiddo in Israel to wage war and overthrow the Antichrist. This final world conflict is called the Battle of Armageddon.



As the world forces are fighting the Antichrist, suddenly the heavens will part and the Lord Jesus will appear. Revelation 19:11–16 (NASB) says, “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and

wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’”

The Second Coming is different from the Rapture. In the Rapture, only believers will see the Lord; at the Second Coming, everybody will see Him. At the Rapture, Christians will meet the Lord in the air; at the Second Coming, His feet will touch the ground. This is the visible return of Jesus Christ.

The Millennium

The Second Coming of Christ is followed by the Millennium. The Millennium is a thousand-year period during which Christ will reign on the earth. This is the time when God will fulfill His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 of a land, seed, and blessing where Messiah will rule on the throne of David from Jerusalem.

Revelation 20:1–3 (NASB) says, “I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into

the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed.”



With Satan bound for a thousand years, part of the curse of sin will be removed, but not all of it. This is the time Isaiah 65 describes, when people will live to be at least one hundred and won't have difficulty with thorns and thistles. It is a renovation, not a recreation of the earth.

Satan Released and the Final Rebellion

At the end of these thousand years, Satan will be released for a little while. Why would God let him go? Here's why: Only believers enter the Millennium. You and I will enter the Millennium in the new, resurrected bodies we received at the Rapture. Resurrected bodies don't reproduce, but natural bodies do. People who are saved during the Tribulation will enter the Millennium in their natural bodies. That means they will be able to have children.

It is important that every person be given a choice whether to follow Jesus. So God will loose Satan for a short time; and amazingly some children who were born and grew up during the Millennium will choose to follow Satan instead of Jesus. That is the final rebellion.

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.”

2 Peter 3:11–12

The Great White Throne Judgment

God puts an end to this rebellion at the Great White Throne Judgment. This is God’s final judgment against all unbelievers who have ever lived. Revelation 20:13 says, “The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.” When unbelievers die, their spirits go to Hades. Jesus talked about it in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man died and went to Hades, and he said, “I am in agony in this flame” (Luke 16:24). Hades is a place of intense suffering for the unsaved until their final judgment.



At the Great White Throne Judgment, unbelievers will be judged by their works. Revelation 20:13 says, “They were judged every one of them according to their deeds.” Why are they judged by their works? Unbelievers say, “I don’t need the forgiveness of Jesus Christ; I’m good enough to get into Heaven.” So God says to them, “Fine. I’ll judge you by your works.” Unfortunately, the standard by which God

judges is the perfection of Jesus Christ. And by that standard, “all . . . fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

The result of this judgment is eternal condemnation. Revelation 20:14–15 says, “Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Verse 10 says, “They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Unbelievers are not destroyed when they are judged; they suffer forever and ever. The horrible truth about hell is this: When you have spent three trillion years in the agony of hell, you will not have reduced by one second the amount of time you have left. That is the fate of everyone who dies without trusting in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Eternity Future

After the Great White Throne Judgment, we enter eternity future. This is the permanent state of believers inhabiting the new Heaven and Earth, and unbelievers inhabiting the lake of fire. In 2 Peter 3:7, 10, the present Heaven and Earth will be destroyed by fire. John said in Revelation 21:1, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away.” We’re not going to spend eternity floating around some-

place. The earth will be re-created to the state God originally intended it to be. In the new earth, God will “wipe away every tear from [our] eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (v. 4).

That is the future God has planned for those who know Jesus Christ.

Are You Ready?

How should that affect how we live today? One day, the Bible says, the trumpet will sound, the heavens will part, and we will see the King of kings and Lord of lords. When that happens, tragically, many Christians will be embarrassed by their lives. They will be clothed in immorality, greed, and personal ambition instead of being clothed in the righteous acts of the saints.

Let me ask you this: when you meet God face-to-face, either through your death or through the Rapture, will you be embarrassed about the life you have lived up to this point? If so, now is the time to make those changes that will ensure you are ready on your coming appointment with God. That’s why Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:11–12, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.” †

10 Reasons

Why God Gave Bible Prophecy

Nathan Jones & Todd Hampson

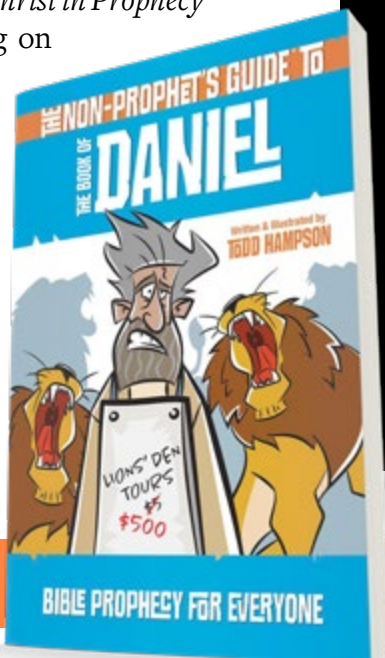
Did you know that a whopping 31% of the Bible is God revealing how events will unfold before they happen? Our Heavenly Father wants His children to know what the future holds!

Nathan Jones and Todd Hampson (of the Prophecy Pros podcast) have compiled a list of the following reasons why they believe Bible prophecy exists. You can find more information accompanying each of these 10 points in the full article posted at our website.

Condensed articles like this are shared with Lamb & Lion Ministries supporters each week through our online e-newsletter. If you'd like to sign up for free, timely, and insightful articles that share the Gospel and message of Jesus' soon return, just visit ChristinProphecy.org.

In February and March, our *Christ in Prophecy* television program is focusing on the book of Daniel. We are featuring Todd Hampson's book, *The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Daniel*. It is an enjoyable and enlightening read. Visit our website or call our ministry to order a copy. †

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Christ in Prophecy

HIGHLIGHTS

Beginning in February, *Christ in Prophecy* television launched two new prophecy-focused series—one on the book of Daniel and another on the book of Revelation.

Arguably, all of our programs are prophecy-focused, as our title implies. Whether we are reviewing the Signs of the Times (as we did throughout 2023), the Feasts of Israel, the Gaza War, or books focusing on prophetic topics, *Christ in Prophecy* will always emphasize just that: Jesus Christ throughout God’s prophetic Word.

Sometimes we adhere to that theme in an obvious way, as with our extensive “Jesus in the Old Testament” series from 2021 and 2022. At other times, prophecies pointing to Jesus and His soon return are the undercurrent within a specific episode—much like the “scarlet thread” that runs throughout Scripture, pointing to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for our sins.

With these series of episodes on Daniel (“Revelation in the Old Testament”) and Revelation itself, we are diving deep into the two books that are most related

to the End Times. Admittedly, a 30-minute television program only allows limited time to expound each week. In fact, the actual teaching time is often less than 22 minutes per episode. Instead of comprehensively exploring each chapter and verse, we can only aspire to whet our viewers appetites and encourage them to continue their studies.

Complementing what we broadcast, we will be posting articles and Prophetic Perspectives online. Dave Bowen will dedicate a number of his “Deep Dive” videos to lessons from Daniel and Revelation. Along with him, Nathan and I will post commentaries correlating to each chapter of these two great books of prophecy. And, as we will highlight on the air, we’ve also updated our *Revelation Study Guide* with new graphics and material. Along with classic audio recordings by Dr. Reagan, it offers a wonderful tool to guide your study of Revelation.

The following pages offer a sample of the material you can access at ChristinProphecy.org. †





From the “Introduction to Daniel” commentary by Tim Moore found at ChristInProphecy.org:

Daniel’s life had the makings of a great tragedy. Carried into exile by the people who conquered his nation, he could have succumbed to despair or been subsumed into the pagan culture of Babylon. Instead, he determined to remain faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Because he was faithful, the Lord gave him dramatic visions of the End Times.

Similarly, the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos late in the 1st Century under the reign of Domitian. He too could have abandoned hope, but he was a “partaker of the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus” because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Both Daniel and John were quite matter-of-fact about the visions they were given, and both recorded that they did not understand everything they saw. Daniel said so pointedly (Daniel 12:8) and John consistently utilized the word “like” to convey that it was difficult to even describe the wonders he saw. But, whereas God told Daniel that “these words are concealed until the end of time” when “those who have understanding will understand” (12:9-10), John was told, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (22:10).

Certainly, there are aspects of God’s eternal plan that are beyond human comprehension. Daniel testified, “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him” (Daniel 2:22) But even the great seer and interpreter of dreams and visions could not understand all that was revealed. John was pointedly told not to record the things which the seven peals of thunder spoke in heaven (Revelation 10:4). But God has chosen to reveal certain things to those who are His. Moses respected this God-honoring balance. He wrote, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever...” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

We have an advantage Moses and Daniel and even John lacked. We have hindsight.

Living in the 21st Century, we know the identity of the Messiah and can worship Him by Name. In the Church Age, we have the blessing of the Holy Spirit—“the Spirit of truth [Jesus sent] to guide [us] into all the truth...and disclose to [us] what is to come” (John 16:13). And, as the End Times approach, we have the promise given to Daniel that “those who have understanding will understand.” †

Daniel

Revelation in the Old Testament

From “Nuggets from Daniel – Part 1”, a Deep Dive with Dave Bowen found at Christinprophecy.org:

Is Daniel a Forgery?

Critics of Scripture say Daniel is a forgery that was written during the Maccabean period — the four hundred years between the Old and New Testaments. Why do they incorrectly assert this? Because the content of Daniel is so accurate, but also so far ahead of his time, that those who do not have a high view of inspiration and inerrancy believe God could not have given Daniel these words to write.

Twice, Daniel claimed to be the author—in Daniel 7:12 and 12:4. He wrote in the third person until chapter 7; however, from chapters 7 to 12, he wrote in the first person. Also, Ezekiel 14:14 speaks of Daniel’s obedience and Ezekiel 28:3 speaks of Daniel’s character. The ultimate confirmation that Daniel wrote this book is found in the words of Jesus, in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.

Divine Interpretation

A key to understanding prophetic books, such as Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation, is understanding prophecy will have visions, symbols, and, most importantly, some divine interpretation. In Daniel’s case, we see several

times where an angel explains the vision that Daniel is seeing. This is important because, in Chapters 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12, Daniel records truth that only God could reveal.

When a prophet sees the vision, he records them EXACTLY as he sees them. Often he does not understand them himself, which is why an interpreter, often an angel, explains the meaning of the vision.

The Theme of Daniel

The structure of Daniel is not chronological thematic. The same can be said for the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah’s theme explains the REASON for the divine punishment of Judah. Daniel records from the PERSPECTIVE of those in captivity. The overall theme of Daniel is “The time of the Gentiles.”

Besides the prophetic aspect of Daniel, this work also details how Jews can live in a Gentile world and be faithful to the law of Moses. Also, this book teaches Gentile nations the nature of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Timing of Daniel

Lastly, let’s look at the timing of the book of Daniel. Three times,

Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar seized Jerusalem and took Jewish exiles back to Babylon. This happened over nineteen years. The first seize occurred in 605 B.C., when a young Daniel was taken to Babylon. The second seize occurred when Ezekiel and his wife were among the 10,000 Jews taken captive to Babylon in 597 B.C.—when Ezekiel was about 25 years old. The third and final seize occurred in 586 B.C. 2 Kings 25:8 records the date very specifically: “On the seventh day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.”

With the destruction of Jerusalem, the Babylonians took all the silver and gold articles from the Temple and carried many Jews off to Babylon. This poses an important question: WAS the God of Israel defeated? See, in ancient times, when a nation was defeated, their gods were also defeated. Their God ALSO goes into captivity! But there was no idol of God in the Jewish temple for the Babylonians to take and conquer. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could not be captured and defeated. They looted all the vessels used for worship, but that decision would eventually lead to Babylon’s downfall. †

REVELATION

HARD TO BELIEVE

► From the “Introduction to Revelation” commentary found at ChristInProphecy.org:

Some people have a hard time accepting reality. Some things simply sound “too good to be true.” That could be said of Jesus’ promises to those who accept Him: absolute forgiveness and eternal life in the presence of God.

On the other hand, some people cannot accept the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the wrath of God that abides on all who do not obey the Son by accepting Him as Savior and Lord (John 3:36). They like the sound of a god who would not harm a fly but cannot accept the living God who will pour out His righteous indignation on a world that has rejected Him. They are even more appalled by the idea of Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, administering the wrath of God. Yet that is exactly what Revelation teaches (6:16).

It has been said that Revelation is too hard to understand. But Henry Morris, the founder of the Institute for Creation Research, once said, “Revelation is not hard to understand. It is hard to believe;

but if you will believe it, you will understand it.”

Before we dive into a chapter-by-chapter review of Revelation, it is critical that we understand up front that this final book in the canon of God’s Word is not merely the fanciful and imaginative vision of John the Apostle. The very first verse in the book establishes that it is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The same verse goes on to explain the purpose behind Jesus unveiling all that John would be tasked to record: “...which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John” (NASB). Driving the point home even further, verse 2 tells us that John “testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.”

Other prophets of God affirm the divine inspiration to their prophecies by frequently weaving in the phrase, “Thus saith the Lord.” But John established up front that Rev-

elation is the testimony of none other than Jesus Christ.

Revelation is unique in one other respect. No other book offers a promise of blessing for merely reading what is written. But verse 3 says, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near” (NASB). Not clear enough? Jesus repeats the same promise in 22:7: “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Reading and hearing can be easily done. But how do you heed a book of prophecy—especially one as expansive as Revelation? How can I heed the sweeping prophecies yet to be fulfilled and often related to God’s wrath that abides on the unbelieving world? By doing what Henry Morris advocated and believing this great book of prophecy.

In other words—taking Jesus at His Word. †



▶ Excerpted from “Who Are the Elders of Revelation 4”, a commentary by Nathan Jones found at Christinprophecy.org:

When the Apostle John was caught up to Heaven, he revealed that God’s throne does not stand alone. Rather, it is situated at the center of a circle of lesser thrones.

He wrote, “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads” (Revelation 4:4). John, calling himself the Elder (2 John 1:1), had met the 24 Elders, and in doing so, presented a great mystery. Just who are the 24 Elders?

The first impulse is to identify the 24 Elders as a special elevated class of angels. Such a conclusion is problematic, though. The ancient origins of angels could have certainly earned them the title Elder, but then this would have been the only time in the Bible where angels are called elders.

If not angels, could the 24 Elders be members of humanity? And, if so, which humans? Some theorize

that the 24 Elders could be comprised of the 12 sons of Jacob, Israel’s tribal patriarchs, plus the 12 Apostles, with the two groups representing God’s Old and New Covenants. That configuration has a certain logic to it. But, as the last living Apostle, John’s seat should have remained vacant, yet he still counted 24 Elders present.

If not a Patriarch-Apostle combo, what about the 24 Elders being comprised of still another group of men, ones unknown to us?

I believe these unknown men are representatives of the Church due to how John described the rewards these men hold, rewards promised only to the raptured Church.

After believers in Christ are Raptured, we will undergo the Judgment of the Just. We will be rewarded for the good deeds the Holy Spirit performed through our lives.

Some of those rewards will be immaterial. For example, those saved will live forever with their Creator in a loving relationship on the New Earth. Other rewards will relate to

levels of position, as gloried believers will be granted different degrees of ruling authority during Christ’s millennial reign (Luke 19:11-27).

Still other rewards will be material in nature, such as special white robes (Revelation 6:11; 19:8), and five different crowns which will be bestowed on Christians for meritorious spiritual achievements.

John described the Elders as casting their crowns in worship before the One on the throne while singing a new song: “You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).

Their song certainly proves the 24 Elders are not angels, for these elders needed to be redeemed by Christ’s shed blood, and there is no redemption for angels.

The 24 Elders could only be the Church Age saints. I’ll go even further, one of them could even be you! †

PROPHECY-CENTERED EVANGELISM



Tim Moore

“Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?”

(Acts 8:30-31)

One consistent criticism of Bible prophecy—or at least advocates of the importance of God’s prophetic Word—is that it has little relevance to individual believers, or the core work of the Church. Many pastors express reluctance to preach on prophecy because they have so many other concerns clamoring for their attention, from marriage and family issues to Satan and sin nipping at the heels of their flock.

Others are openly hostile toward Bible prophecy. Rick Warren, a prominent pastor who leads a huge church and is a best-selling author, characterizes prophecy as a “distraction” and says that anyone who

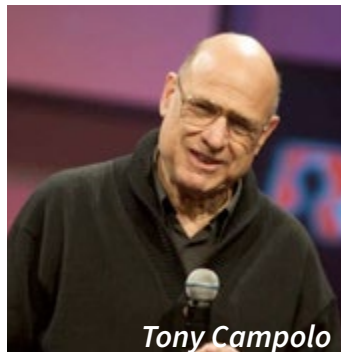
lets himself get involved in distractions like studying prophecy “is not fit for the kingdom of God.” Another well-known advocate of re-envisioned Christianity, Tony Campolo, said, “Rigid Christians who believe in the possibility of Jesus’ soon return are a real problem for the entire world.” Clearly, these men express a hostility toward Bible prophecy that is disturbing.



Jesus’ own disciples expressed certain expectations based on their understanding of Old Testament prophecies. During one visit to Jerusalem, following Jesus’ prophecy concerning the destruction of the impressive Temple built by Herod, they came to the Lord privately and asked, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus did not dismiss their expectations or scoff at their understanding. And He certainly did not rebuke their interest in



Rick Warren



Tony Campolo

“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:3

what had been prophesied. Instead, He expounded on the signs of His coming and of the end of the age.

Why Study Prophecy?

Throughout this issue, we have emphasized the primacy of prophecy. It was introduced in the opening chapters of Genesis by God Himself and is woven through the entire Bible until the last chapter of Revelation. Uttered by God—either directly or through His prophets—it profits those who take it seriously.

Following His resurrection, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-17). But in John 12:44, the rhetorical question behind His interaction with the crowd was, “Do you trust Me?,” even as He said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.” And, since the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10), studying God’s prophetic Word helps us identify, understand, and share the Son.

In a very real sense, the greatest value of understanding Bible prophecy lies not in delving into secret knowledge accessible only to super saints of the Most High. It provides the motivation and insight to share the Gospel with the God-breathed Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

That brings us to the passage cited at the opening to this article

and explains Philip’s mission on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Told by an angel to “Rise up and go south,” he got up and went (Acts 8:26-27). When he got there, he encountered an Ethiopian eunuch (from all indications a Jew) who was returning home after worshiping in Jerusalem. This man was



obviously observant and traveled a long distance to come to the temple. But devout as he was, he was unable to understand the prophetic writings of Isaiah:

He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth.

In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.

- Acts 8:32-33 (NASB), citing Isaiah 53:7-8

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Philip “opened his mouth and from this Scripture he proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35). The Ethiopian’s eyes were also opened and he immediately expressed a desire to profess faith in Christ. Philip’s obedience and willingness to explain the truth of Messianic prophecy caused that new convert to go on his way rejoicing.

Another famous example of evangelism through prophecy is found in Peter’s first sermon at Pentecost. Found in Acts 2:14-36 (NASB), it is a recitation of one prophecy after another fulfilled in the life and person of Jesus:

Joel said, “I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...” - We are not drunk on wine but filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Speaking of the Messiah, David foretold, “You will not abandon My soul to Hades, nor allow Your holy One to undergo decay...” - Jesus the Nazarene, attested to you by God with miracles and signs...was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God to be nailed to a cross and put to death at the hands of godless men...but God raised Him up again, because it was impossible for death to hold Him.

David was also promised that one of his descendants would sit on his throne – but David remains dead and buried while Jesus lives again.

That is why David also foresaw His exalted Son ascending into heaven, and he foreheard, “The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for your feet” – a promise that abides on Jesus, the Lord and Christ whom you have crucified.

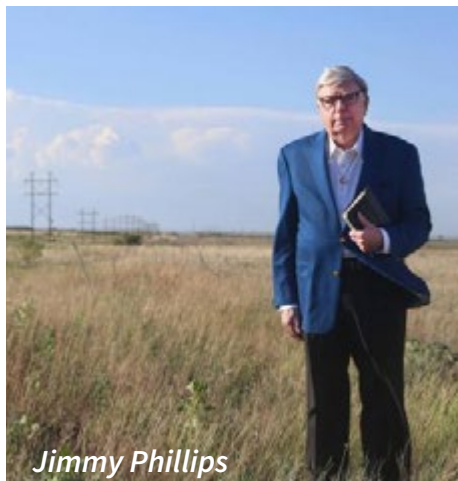
Hearing this clear reading of Bible prophecy and understanding its fulfillment in the Person of Jesus, 3,000 of those gathered in Jerusalem “were pierced to the heart” and cried out for salvation!



Testimonies Abound

We could cite many examples of men and women pierced to the heart by Bible prophecy. Face to face with the truth that Jesus is the prophesied Christ, the Son of the living God; aware that He shed His own innocent blood according to God’s foretold plan of salvation; convinced that He died but did not undergo decay as He arose again and ascended to the right hand of the Father in Heaven; convicted of their own sin and the deserved penalty for their sin against God as foretold in His Word; and believ-

ing His promise to prepare a place for those who trust in Him and rescue us from the wrath to come... men, women, boys, and girls have called upon the Name of Jesus and been saved.



Jimmy Phillips

Our friend and fellow evangelist, Jimmy Phillips, has been preaching Bible prophecy for 76 years. Asked why he emphasizes God’s prophetic Word, Jimmy answered, “I preach it, first of all, because the Bible teaches it. The Bible is without mistakes. And the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Spirit.” Regarding the urgency of that message, Dr. Phillips said, “the convergence of the signs that we have today point to the Rapture of the Church.”



John Neese

John Neese, the founder of SAC Orphans, has found that Bible prophecy connects him with children in Russia. Boys and girls resonate with the hope and promise conveyed in prophecies pointing to our coming Lord.



George Collich

George Collich, who was on staff at Lamb & Lion Ministries for many years, was drawn to the Lord as he listened to Dr. Reagan teaching from Revelation. Jack Hollingsworth, whose life was devastated by alcohol, became a singing evangelist, eager to proclaim the prophetic Truth that set him free.

John the Baptist asked the Pharisees and Sadducees, “who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Matthew 3:7). Paul affirmed that among the blessings God gives to those who receive salvation is “to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Without the prophetic Word, we would have no warning of the wrath and no anticipation of the rescue. Praise God that knowing both, we are motivated to urgent evangelism.

There’s Still Power in the Word

Jesus told His disciples, “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63). Some Christians think the red-letter words of their printed Bible have special significance, having been colored by the editors to highlight

And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” Then He said to me, “They are done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Revelation 21:5-8

the spoken words of Christ. That same pattern continues into Revelation in Bibles touted as “Red-Letter Editions.”

But what about the words recorded in Revelation 21:5-8?

He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these things are faithful and true.” Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”

Those words are not colored red by my editors, yet they are clearly spoken by God. The same is true in Genesis 1:3, when our Creator God said, “Let there be light.”

The point is that whether or not the words in my Bible are red, are in quotations, or even preceded by the phrase, “*Thus saith the LORD*,” all of Scripture is “God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

In short, all of God’s Word is Gospel-centered and evangelistic. And that most certainly includes His prophetic Word. †

THE INTEGRITY OF PROPHECY

Tim Moore

Faithful and True.

Those are descriptive titles given to Jesus Christ in Revelation 19:11. He is indeed trustworthy and dependable.

The same apostle who recorded the book of Revelation also referred to Jesus Christ as the Word—the ultimate Revelation of God. He intentionally equated the person of Christ with the God-breathed book that conveys His revelations to us.

If we accept the Bible as the Word of God, it follows that all of it should be precious to us. From beginning to end, it is His story interwoven with and explaining our history. And when we begin to perceive the prophetic thread woven throughout the text that is revealed in the Gospel, we realize that the entire text points to Jesus Christ.

So, where does Bible prophecy fit into the whole? It is omnipresent throughout Scripture—either as consistent forthtelling or as overt foretelling. When we realize that prophecy simply implies God’s intentional communication with His creatures, it cannot be dismissed as an esoteric playground for fanatics or unwieldy subject of seminary study. It is fertile ground for growth in every Christian heart and a powerful tool of evangelism.

Prophecy is at the heart of God’s Word—conveying the consistent and undivided soundness of His revelation over time. It demonstrates the power and authority of God’s Word. And, it points us to the praiseworthy living Word of God—the Author and Perfector of our faith, Jesus Christ. †

Integrity

- 1) the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles
- 2) the state of being whole and undivided

Charity
Navigator



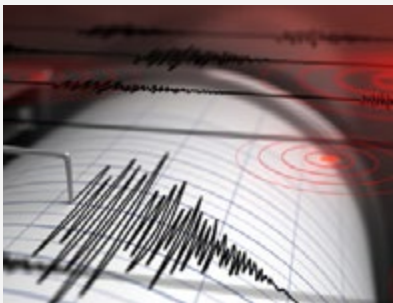
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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Tim Moore

NATURE

The US Geological Survey has documented an uptick in earthquakes worldwide—with a series of quakes recently hitting central Oklahoma. Major earthquakes are also increasing measurably.



Advances in rocket science and imaging technology are making space travel easier and providing new evidence of the expanse and beauty of the universe.



SOCIETY

America is about to enter what may prove to be its most contentious Presidential campaign in living memory, likely with candidates that incite grave animosity among significant portions of the population.



America's biggest cities are being inundated by rampant crime (including violent assaults and mob theft) at the same time that police forces are finding it difficult to motivate new recruits; the result is a devastating rise in lawlessness.



SPIRITUAL

Persecution against Christians is rising around the world, yet left-wing media in America have labeled Speaker Mike Johnson—a confessing Evangelical Christian—as a fundamentalist threat to America.



Amazon Prime's new "Hazbin Hotel" presents Satan as a noble dreamer oppressed by the "elders" of heaven. Joined by his wife Lilith and their woke daughter, Lucifer is remade as a hero for our times. The cartoon format and tone is clearly meant to appeal to children and teens.



The Signs of the Times continue to converge. If you pay attention to this section from edition to edition, you'll notice that specific signs tend to reoccur with greater frequency, the magnitude of the impact continues to increase steadily, and the categories are overlapping with surprising regularity. The birth pangs have begun (Matthew 24:8). Whether you take encouragement or warning from these signs depends entirely on your eternal destiny. God never pours out wrath without warning. Will you heed the signs and be saved?

WORLD POLITICS

As America dithers in the face of challenges from terrorists and tyrants in Gaza, Yemen, and Iran, Turkey's President Erdogan gets cozy with Iran and launches attacks in Syria and Iraq—demonstrating increasing hostility toward Israel.



India has surpassed China as the most populous nation on Earth with just over 1.4 billion people; sadly, it has also joined China as one of the 10 worst persecutors of Christians in the world.



TECHNOLOGY

Leading technology gurus are warning of the rising threat of artificial intelligence (AI) against humans, even as they decry an inability to stop its development. Meanwhile, unaccountable social media represents a clear and present danger to American youth.



With development of America's own hypersonic weapons delayed, military planners have expressed concern that China and Russia may gain the upper hand in this cutting-edge technology, just when American conventional stockpiles are depleted.



ISRAEL

Growing further isolated among the community of nations, Israel has been formally charged with genocide by South Africa in the International Court of Justice at The Hague; the ongoing atrocities of Hamas have been overlooked and ignored.



Warned by their own government that security assistance will be delayed in the event of internal terrorist attacks, Israeli communities are nevertheless unable to easily secure purely defensive equipment from America due to rules quietly imposed by Antony Blinkin at the Biden State Department.



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