

2017: The Year in Review

Prophecy - Signs

Monday, January 02, 2017

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After a volatile and ‘seemingly unpredictable’ election year, the newly forming Trump administration likewise promises to be one that is largely driven around the personality of Donald Trump. His campaign of *Make America Great Again* (MAGA) has pumped new vigor into a sagging economy and has spurred both trepidation and curiosity of almost every nation around the world. President Elect Trump is unlike anything, anyone has ever seen in that office, and has been closely scrutinized for operating largely off script and predictably-unpredictable.

With that said, Fortune Magazine (Fortune.com) has teamed up with IBM’s artificial intelligence “powerhouse” Watson this year for the first time, to give their own version of a 2017 forecast by mining the internet for trends to analyze. While my analysis here is a far cry from having a powerful Artificial Intelligence resource sifting through millions of terabytes of information, I do have one advantage. I’m simply a guy who looks at the world from a Biblical perspective and bases my understanding through a scriptural prism. Seeing that God is the only Being in existence who can see both the end from the beginning, and the beginning from the end...I’d say the odds are in my favor. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

Last year, I began sort of a light-hearted (as in I don’t take myself that seriously) prediction journal of the year to come, ([2016: The Year in Review](#)) on January 4th, 2016, which was based on previous years “Snapshot of a Moving Picture” review of geo-political events. As promised, I wanted to follow-up on just the major ‘hits and misses’ from that brief before going into 2017. So let’s recap those 2016 predictions.

Election

Hit-In January of 2016, my prediction was that Trump would win the Republican Primaries. In September 26th 2016 in the “[The Last Trump](#)” article, my prediction was that the General Election would be a “Trump blowout in November”. My hunch then of a Trump victory was based on something rather simple-it was who had the momentum. It didn’t matter what the press, or Hillary, or even fellow Republicans threw at Trump...nothing stuck to him. Things that would have crippled other candidates simply rolled off Trump like water off a duck’s back. This is where his business mind comes in—and that is the art of taking the good and the bad and making it all work for you. Again, most of the “[experts](#)” got it wrong.

Miss-Trump brings in Cruz/Rubio as running mate. I got this wrong because I thought he would use one or the other to solidify the Hispanic vote. Also, I didn’t know much about Mike Pence, but it turned out to be a solid choice and definitely one of the reasons why Evangelicals lined up to support the ticket.

Afghanistan

Hit: US keeps troops beyond pull out date. This isn't really a win per se, but the general consensus was that Pres. Obama would pull an "Iraq" in Afghanistan, and yank everyone out on a certain date regardless of what was happening tactically on the ground.

Miss: US sticks to drawdown numbers. I didn't think he'd do it, but despite the Pentagon's advice against doing this, Pres. Obama continued the draw down to around 9,800 troops. Now that has the potential to be reversed under a Trump Administration, but I don't think he sees Afghanistan as a 'wise' investment. At the same time, we can't leave a vacuum there like we did in Iraq, or another "ISIS" type organization will just pop up.

Syria

Miss: Russia bombs Damascus. Although Russia has done a generous amount of bombings all over Syria, I thought they would level Damascus (thus fulfilling Isaiah 17) as a means to clear the rubble for Assad...but alas, this did not happen...yet.

Hit: Intensification of the fight over the Golan Heights as Israel begins limited bombings on the Syrian side along with Iran's escalation into the fray.

Energy

Hit: Israel, Cyprus, and Greece increased cooperation on a transnational natural gas pipeline. Below is some interesting excerpts from a recent article based on a meeting that took place this past December 2016: [Israel, Greece, Cyprus to hold second trilateral summit](#)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades will hold a one-day summit on Thursday. The three first met together in January in Nicosia in what was hailed as the formation of a new "strategic alliance" in the eastern Mediterranean... Israel is currently weighing three options for exporting its recently discovered natural gas. The **first** is to export to Egypt for its needs. The **second** is to export to Turkey, a country keen on diversifying its energy supplies, and the **third** is to lay a pipeline to Cyprus and then to Greece. This option is by far the most expensive.

My hunch is you can bank on option three.

Oil

Hit: Saudis (OPEC) to cut production. Having experienced several years of back to back low gas prices, the house of Saud, and by extension OPEC, has finally decided to cut back on oil production. The Saudi's had been trying to drown the market with excess oil causing lowered prices to knock out US Shale companies while simultaneously putting the economic squeeze on Russia and Iran. The problem though is that the Saudi's have been blowing through cash like no tomorrow. Well, tomorrow came. [OPEC Confounds Skeptics, Agrees to First Oil Cuts in 8 Years](#)

EU Army

Hit: Serious dialogue predicted, serious dialogue and [traction](#) continuing, especially in light of a threatening Russia, and a departing Great Britain. More than ever, a real “need” for an [EU Army](#) is emerging.

2017 Predictions

Middle East

Israel: US finally moves embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This will be a highly controversial move and would expect nothing less than a [Psalm 83](#)-type reaction from the Arab world to occur. It's also likely, that there could be a strong push from within the United Nations to move their headquarters out of New York as a means to protest Trump's embassy move. It's hard to say exactly when this would occur, but I would expect it to be within the first year of Trump's presidency. (Genesis 12:3)

Syria: Like Libya and Iraq, Syria has truly become a borderless, non-nation, international-battleground with many different actors (nations, rebel groups, foreign fighters, and terrorist organizations) all vying for real estate. It is unlikely that the Syria we knew in the 20th century will ever come back into existence.

Now, here is where I want to deviate from my previous prediction on her future. The prophet Isaiah states that Damascus would be utterly and completely destroyed. But that destruction occurs overnight, not dragged out over five years. So that tells me that as we enter into the sixth year of war there, either Damascus is secured by the Syrian “government” (via Russia and Iran), and is rebuilt to some degree, or what's left of it is bombed triggering the [underground](#) chemical bunkers...making it permanently and quickly destroyed as stated in Isaiah 17.

Iran has also recently created the “[Fifth Attack Corps](#)”, which is a new formation of between 50-70,000 fighters-much akin to a *Shiite Foreign Legion*, made up of mixed fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah, Iraqi Shia, Iranians, and Syrian loyalists, all backed militarily by Russia. The name “Fifth Corps” may be an attempt to mock Iran's main antagonist in the region, the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, which is based opposite Iran in the Sunni-Arab state of Bahrain.

Iraq: ISIS will finally be driving underground from Iraq through renewed US and allied forces efforts to dislodge, dismantle, and destroy ISIS. Meanwhile, I fully expect that the Iraqi Kurds will finally secure statehood this year in northern Iraq as the central government in Baghdad continues to struggle to find its own sovereignty.

EU/Russia

BREXIT: Fizzles and stalls...not completely off the table, but no clear way forward on making it a reality in 2017. In other words...easy to vote, hard to enact.

Germany: Angela Merkel loses her reelection as chancellor

France: Marine Le Pen wins. I am not completely sold on this choice, but given all the issues the French have had this past year with Islamic terrorism...it's not a stretch either.

EU Army: Continues to be solidified...especially in light of Trump's stance on the EU (and other allies) bearing more of the cost to provide for their own defense. This could also be the year we start to see the crossover of NATO commands and personnel to the newly forming EU Defence force.

NATO: NATO must decrease so that the EU Defense force can increase. While an EU centric army has not truly existed since the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it is not hard to imagine from what pool this new EU Army will recruit from. If you are a Colonel in some role within NATO, and the EU Army offers to make you a general or admiral...trust me, it will not be hard to get the leadership. They also have largely failed economies in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece...so you have a large number of unemployed youth to recruit from.

CERN: Finally opens the inter-dimensional star-gate. [Sarcasm intended-but who knows?]

Russia: Trump has been accused of cronyism with Vladimir Putin and his ilk. If my memory serves me right, it was President Bush who saw his soul-mate in the eyes of Putin, and it was President Obama who assured his intentions openly (via [live microphone](#)) to then President Dimitri Medvedev that he (Obama) would have more flexibility to act after the 2012 elections. While Trump has at least two Russia-friendly cabinet picks thus far, it is not guaranteed that he will be any more accommodating towards Russia than his predecessors were. At the end of the day, there is still plenty of daylight (Ukraine, Iran, and Syria) between Russia and the United States. And considering his wife Melania is Slovenian (formerly Czechoslovakia), she is more than adequately adept at helping him navigate the little nuances from that region of the world.

United States

Democrats: Look for a renewed and increasingly hostile reaction to the Trump Administration, similar to the last few years of the Bush Presidency. Expect [CALEXIT](#) and other state secessionist movements to pick up steam.

A Pacific Pivot at last? Pres. Obama had signaled a Pacific shift back in [2011](#) as new strategy away from the Middle East, but I believe he was a bit too premature on this. Actually, his *Pacific Pivot* was more economic (think Trans Pacific Partnership) than it ever was militarily. But as the nontraditional candidate, business magnate, and now president-elect, I believe we will finally see that major shift to the Pacific (militarily) under Trump as he consciously picks at the scab we know as the [Taiwan Conundrum](#), to which China is extremely sensitive towards. This has already played out with some aggressive (even by China's standard) chest thumping, and could play out by loosening the leash of even more unhinged North Korea.

[Pizza-gate](#): This has been and continues to be an extremely disturbing story. According to Megyn Kelly from *Fox News*, the whole thing is a 'conspiracy theory' generated by "fake news". She then ran a cover piece with practically zero digging into the actual story, but centered solely on one lone crazy gunman. I don't expect this story to go away. The *potential* fallout from this for those of the predominantly Democrat flavor, but *could* be a real game

changer to American politics. Yes...it is that big. Now, considering the mainstream media has and continues to largely be in the tank for the Democrat party, means that this story has to fight its way through the bias, the slant, and the political cover-up...which is a significant hill to climb...but I believe there will eventually be a full blown “Benghazi” investigation. See also [Sky Watch News report](#) on it.

Afghanistan: As mentioned earlier, I believe we will start to look at serious options for a pull-out. Since Trump was not an elected official when either the Iraq and Afghanistan military operations began, and we have dragged this on now for 16 years, I expect him to get a no-frill (am I getting what I’m paying for??) brief from both the new SECDEF and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on continued operations in the proverbial ‘graveyard of nations’. He may use the threat of a complete military pull-out as a means to renegotiate Pakistan’s role in harboring the seasonal and migratory Taliban and Haqqani Network, who largely move back and forth from Afghanistan to Pakistan’s Waziristan region at will, making this war nearly impossible to ever end.

Conclusion

As always, I’m looking at future events from a 2016 perspective, and there are is always the potential for the ‘black swan’ events to come out of nowhere and throw our world into turmoil. North Korea could launch a preemptive assault on South Korea. The South China Seas could flare up in hostilities. Major earthquakes and tsunamis could happen in various places. And as always, the Rapture of the Church could still happen at any moment.

The Bible predicts that the world will wax worse and worse. It predicts that the world will come under one system. It predicts that Damascus as a city will be destroyed overnight, and never lived in again. The Bible predicts that the Antichrist and the ‘Beast’ system will arise again out of the ashes of the old Roman Empire. But in order for them to rise, the current world super power, has to be set aside as the leader so Europe can step into the void. We balance that with the knowledge that Jesus said ([Luke 17:26-30](#)) that the world will be normal (or have a sense of normalcy to it) when He returns for the Church. What we are seeing now, is the continued fine-tuning of the geo-political and social formations arranging themselves so that when the time for fulfillment comes, it will happen exactly as the Bible says it will.

So take comfort in the reality that while I may be wrong in my understanding in the timing of how Scripture plays out, and many of my predictions may fall flat, the God we serve knows and His word never falters.

Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,’ **Isaiah 46:9-10**

The Rapture According to Jesus Christ

Not many years ago, famed Reformist and Partial-Preterist theologian R.C. Sproul authored a book entitled “The Last Days According to Jesus Christ”. In it he states that “I am convinced that the *substance* of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in AD 70 and that the *bulk* of Revelation was likewise fulfilled in that time period” (page 158). Unfortunately, his view is not unique within Christendom.

From the fourth century onward, the dominant eschatological view within Christendom had been built upon Augustine’s teachings that the Kingdom was a spiritual one which was already in effect. By the time Augustine had come to some renown, Israel had not existed as a nation for the better part of 300 years. Much of Augustine’s teachings were used as the foundation stones for the budding amalgamation between pagan Rome and Roman Christianity...which later came to be formally known as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

With the decline of the Roman Empire, the RCC became the prevailing force dominating Europe and parts of the Middle East for the next thousand years. It wouldn’t be until the 14th century that an awakening began to take hold for those who wanted out from underneath the oppressive Roman Catholic regime. Men like Jan Hus, Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe, and later Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Huldrych Zwingli did much too course-correct Roman Catholicism’s abusive and errant stray from true, biblical Christianity.

But one of the leftover doctrines that did not get reformed was that of Christian Eschatology. The Reformers all but kept the same teachings that were first propagated by Augustine that the Kingdom was now. Unfortunately, Augustine’s influence continued to have a significant impact on Martin Luther and John Calvin who were the fathers of the newly flourishing Protestant movement.

The only major difference between the Reformers and the RCC Papists was who actually was running ‘the Kingdom’. Obviously, the RCC thought they were since the Pope himself was supposed to be the ‘Vicar of Christ’ on earth. The Reformers later began to view that if anything, the Pope was not the ‘Vicar of Christ’, but rather the ‘Antichrist’. What they did agree on was that the Kingdom was already in effect, the Jewish people were no longer God’s chosen, and that most of prophecy had already been fulfilled.

Given their time-frame (circa 14th-17th centuries), who could blame them? Christendom had just emerged out of the Dark Ages. Israel hadn’t existed as a nation for over a 1,000 years. Life moved at the speed of horse. Technological advancements had just given the world the printing press. The Ottoman Turks were the rising power in the Middle East. Roman Catholic domination over the politics in Europe was fracturing, and a whole new world was being discovered and exploited.

The early Protestant Reformers may have had cause to think the way they did eschatologically speaking...but what excuse does the R.C. Sproul *types* have today?

The world went through two great wars and a Nazi Holocaust causing six million Jewish deaths. Israel became a nation again miraculously after almost 1,900 years. The world has progressed faster technologically and educationally speaking, than the previous twenty centuries combined. Pestilences, earthquakes, wars, national and ethnic strife, violence, and starvation are increasingly amplifying. The world population has reached over seven billion, while at the same time the world is teetering on economic collapse...but somehow the first century was worse than the twentieth? (Matt. 24:21-22)

Assessment

Christian theology is chock full of doctrines, teachings, insights, and various other topics that have seemingly become more and more controversial over the past two millennia. It doesn't matter if you're talking about spiritual gifts, eternal security, the Trinity, Sabbath day worship, baptism, Communion, tithing, etc...If there is a topic-Christians of every stripe and flavor have found a way to argue and divide over it. But perhaps none have been as controversial as the doctrine of *the Rapture of the Church*.

The Apostle Paul didn't invent the doctrine, (Gal. 1:11-12) rather he simply expounded upon what the Lord had already said concerning it. *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (1 Thess. 4:15)*. So regardless of denominational history, church dogma, creeds, early church father views, etc....Jesus has a theological position on both the Rapture and the Second Coming, and I promise you it's not Augustinian.

The Rapture of the Church vs. the Second Coming

The first thing we have to realize is that Christ's Second Coming is broken up into two parts...the Rapture (Harpazo-catching up) of His bride the Church (1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-56)...and His return to earth with His bride the Church...at the Triumphal Return as chronicled in Zech. 14:3-5, Matt. 24:29-31; 26:64, Jude 1:14-15, Rev. 1:7; 19:11-14. These cannot be the same event because of the numerous and glaring distinctions juxtaposed against each other. ([Differences chart](#))

Critics of my aforementioned statement (Second Coming in two parts) fail to recognize that the Jews of Jesus's day had that exact same problem concerning Christ's First Coming as these critics now have with His Second Coming. They (first century Jews) thought the Messiah would come kick the Romans out and usher in the Kingdom right then and there. What they failed to see in the Old Testament (but what we Christians now clearly see with Scriptural hindsight) is the two separate comings of the Messiah...first as the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, and later as the conquering King. (Isaiah 53, Dan. 9:24-26, John 1:29, Psalm 2, Zech. 10, 14) Critics of the Pre-Tribulation view, fail to see that Christ's Second Coming is also in two parts.

We (proponents of the Pre-Tribulation view) recognize that Jesus does talk extensively about the events leading up to and including His Triumphal Return, but that does not diminish nor deny that He also talks about His return for the Church first.

Days of Noah vs. the Olivet Discourse

The first mention of the concept of the Rapture in the Gospels is found in [Luke 17:26-30](#). In it Jesus likened the time of His return to that of *the days of Noah and Lot*-a world which was largely carrying on as if it didn't have a care in the world. In fact, He went out of His way to emphasize the sense of normalcy surrounding these events despite their OT pinning's. Were they in massive tribulation prior to the flood, or prior to Sodom and Gomorrah's fiery hailstorm? No...life was normal. Incessantly wicked and violent yes, but normal in the sense that a frog cooking in a pot doesn't realize the water it's in is being boiled until it's too late. (Gen 6, 19)

People were going about their normal lives...*and then* calamity struck. Jesus could not be possibly referring to the events inside the 70th Week of Daniel primarily because after 21 divine judgments are unleashed, the world is forever changed. Those judgments cause half the world's population to die, large percentages of the ocean and fresh water to turn to blood, the sun has a 'nova' like event, then goes dark, people are struck with sores, and the Two Witness's perform unbelievable signs and wonders, etc., so there leaves little possibility for 'normal' inside the seven-year Tribulation.

The Olivet Discourse on the other hand is what most people automatically default to when they want to get Jesus's view on the last days. The **Synoptic Gospels**-Matthew, Mark, and Luke all carry a variant of the *Olivet Discourse*. What often gets overlooked, is that each of the Gospels, provide a different perspective on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus because they were geared toward different audiences.

Matthew: portrays Christ as the rightful Heir of 'David's Throne' and has very Jewish overtones throughout the book...and it contains the *Olivet Discourse*. (Written circa 50AD)

Mark: portrays the servanthood of Christ and is written with a Gentile audience in mind...and has the *Olivet Discourse*. (Circa 68AD)

Luke: portrays the humanity of Christ and is written with a Greek audience in mind...has the *Olivet Discourse*. (Circa 60AD)

John: portrays the deity of Christ...is the last gospel written well into the Church era and does not have any version of the *Olivet Discourse*. (Circa 85AD)

Wait...did John forget to put his version of the *Olivet Discourse* in there? He was one of the attendees after all (Mark 13:3). Maybe he knew he was going to write the book of Revelation later in life (95AD) and decided to save it till then...oh wait...he didn't know that either. (Did he know he was going to get banished to the Isle of Patmos under Domitian?) Hmmm...I wonder why John didn't record a variant of the *Olivet Discourse*? Why would John leave out one of his Lord's longest and most prolific discussions? Perhaps it is because the Holy Spirit instructed him not to. Instead, he records the *Upper Room Discourse* (John 14-16)...which was taught exclusively to the eleven disciples the night before His crucifixion. Instead of recording wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilences, etc....John records the comforting words that Christians of every generation could take solace in.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **John 14:1-3**

Jesus (being God in the Flesh) knew before He ever came the first time that His second coming would not be a singular event. Rather it would be two events, both of which bestow a special place of honor for His bride the Church. It is not that we the Church are deserving of any such honor, but only because Christ shed His own divine blood for us and that we are the Church He built (Matt. 16:18-19). We are *the pearl of great price* in the parable in which the merchant sold all He had to purchase it (Matt. 13:45-46).

Conclusion

Now R.C. Sproul and many other subscribers to the Amillennial, Post-Tribulation Rapture, and Preterist views consider the *Olivet Discourse* to be the be-all, end-all description of the last days, but they do so neglecting many other passages that fill in the gaps of Jesus’s macro-view of the last days. While they might disagree on when those last days actually occur (Post-Trib sees future while Amillennialist and Preterist look to past fulfillment circa 70AD), what they miss are the clear distinctions between the two future comings.

The conundrum is this; if it’s already all happened, why the instruction to watch and be ready? Or, if I’m destined to go into the worst period of human history and I can’t change anything about it...why am I to take comfort in that? Some reason that we need purification...so why aren’t they missionaries in North Korea at this very moment boldly proclaiming the Gospel? My response is that there is plenty of purification going on there these days...so why wait?

Watching and waiting in and of itself has a very purifying effect not only on our lives, but on our theology as well. It keeps us grounded by not becoming so focused on building our own little kingdoms in the here and now. Being earth-focused is what led us to the Dark Ages in the first place. If Christ didn’t want us to understand and learn Bible prophecy, He wouldn’t have given John *the Revelation* to give to us. Furthermore, when Jesus revealed Himself glorified to John on Patmos, He had some choice words to say for the early church...and by extension us-*he who has an ear, let him hear.*

Speaking to the Church with her Vicar, her political machinations, and her “Kingdom” He says-

And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. Rev. 2:21-22

Speaking to the Christian Church who does not watch and understand prophecy-

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. **Rev. 3:3**

Speaking to the Christian Church who does-

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the *hour of trial* which shall come upon *the whole world*, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. **Rev. 3:10-11**

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Revelation 22:20-21

The Last Days According to Everyone

The ancient Vikings believed in 'Ragnarök'. The Buddhist believe in the coming of the 'Maitreya'. The Hindus believe that the 'Kalki' brings an end to the current Kali Yuga. Islam predicts that the end will come when the 'Mahdi' returns. Even atheists and skeptics posit that we are overdue for an occurrence such as a meteor, super volcano, global weather extreme, or other cataclysmic earth-ending event.

It is common for cultures and societies to look toward the future with a certain level of trepidation. The future represents change. It is the big and dark 'unknown'. With that said, every religion and/or belief system in the world today has some view, position, or opinion about what they consider the 'end-times' or the 'last days'.

Within Christianity, around 30% of the Holy Bible contains 'prophecy', and more applicable to the discussion at hand is what academics call 'eschatology'. (Koine Greek-Eschatos = last or final things, logy=the study of) That said, Christianity has become largely divided over how to interpret the passages pertaining to the 'last days'.

On one hand, the largely Protestant, mainline denominations (Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, etc.) tend to view Bible prophecy in much the same way as their predecessor, the Roman Catholic Church viewed it...as already complete and spiritually in effect. To them, that means that much of what the Bible has to say about the last days was completed in the first century, and that what is ongoing now is the ongoing spiritual kingdom.

Granted there are disagreements on some of the finer points as to exactly how and when things like the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur, or who the 'Antichrist' might be, but for the most part they agree in large measure on three main points:

1. The Church has replaced Israel as God's Chosen people (this is known as 'Replacement Theology' or 'Supersessionism').
2. Most, if not all of prophecy was completed with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 by the Romans under General Titus and his legions.
3. The 'Kingdom', is in affect now, and Christ currently reigns through His church here on earth. Also known as Kingdom Now, or Dominion Theology.

Each of these major theological premises are accompanied and supported by their eschatological positions, which are predicated in how they interpret scriptural passages. So for instance, a 'literal' interpretation of Scripture, would not support the theological position of Replacement Theology (1). Romans 11 for instance flatly rejects this notion.

They are then forced to select another form of interpretation such as the allegorical (or non-literal) method to make their theological position of Replacement Theology mesh with their view that they have replaced Israel as 'God's Chosen'. Simply put, they have to use the allegorical approach, because the plain reading of scripture (in context) does not back up their suppositions.

This makes the overarching end-times view within both Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestantism a mix between Post Millennialism (Church conquers the world before Christ returns) and Amillennialism [a-as a negative] (the world continues on perpetuity until some indefinite end as yet defined).

Another branch within Christianity is the Evangelicals. Evangelicals tend to take more of the literalist interpretation of Scripture (i.e...take the text at what it says, in context). Within Evangelical Christianity, there are still divergent views on how the end happens, but for the most part, the two major views are the following:

1. The Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation (also known as Pre-Tribulation Rapture view).
2. The Second Coming of Christ (also known as the Post-Tribulation view).

Assessment

So consider some of the older religions from groups such as the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans, Mayans, and Vikings...if their beliefs were true-then these civilizations would still be in effect. In other words, if their views had any merit to them...wouldn't their 'gods' have foretold the demise of their own civilizations in order to prevent that from ever happening?

So for that purpose, this article we will forego any religious system that is already extinct or of no effect to the world today, and simply apply how their eschatology fits into the world of today. This leaves the following list by order of number of devotees and the potential ramifications for their eschatological beliefs:

Roman Catholicism/Protestant Christianity (2.2 Billion)

The Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches generally (not all) advocate the same type of eschatological views. The long-term view is Amillennial, and their practical day to day view is Dominionist. Both of these support the repeated attempts at creating theocratic rule by the Church. Such was the case during the Dark Ages with its Crusades, Inquisitions, Geneva, and the new American colonies.

Islam (1.6 billion)

The current divide between Sunni (majority) and Shia (minority) currently keeps the Muslim world divided amongst itself. The major division is over both their lineage and their eschatology. Divisions within each branch of Islam also keep them divided as they vie for power in an attempt to reestablish their own versions of the 'caliphate'.

Hinduism (1 Billion)

Hinduism is largely concentrated in India, with some bleed over to neighboring nations like Burma and China. Hinduism is not currently as driven for world-wide domination as say Islam and Christianity are but tend to take more of a pantheist (everything is 'god') view

with thousands of deities already on tap. Fits in with an ecumenical global religion very easily.

Buddhism (375 million)

Like Hinduism, Buddhism will bring in the much needed “diversity” and deep-seated eastern philosophical underpinnings of the new global ecumenism. Christian missionaries to Nepal and India have described their experiences in these regions as even more spiritually oppressive than Islam.

Evangelical Christianity (100-300 Million est. worldwide)

Out of all the religions, Evangelical Christianity is a subset within the broader scope of what we would call, Christendom. It presents the most exclusive views on salvation as being solely based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Because of the exclusivity and nature of our salvation, Evangelicalism is also the least likely to embrace religious ecumenicalism as well as having the most cataclysmic view (in terms of consequential eschatological views) out of all the world’s belief systems.

Two scenarios will likely bring about the end of the world and both center on a period of time known as the ‘Tribulation’ (Matthew 24, Revelation 6-19) or ‘Daniel’s 70th Week’ (Daniel 9:24-27).

1. The Rapture of the Church would immediately remove an estimated 10-20% of the world-wide population.
2. The Second Coming devastates the entire world as Jesus Christ returns in the air and destroys all the armies of the world who have gathered at the Valley of Megiddo (in Israel).

Both upend the world’s order and brings about the rise of a regional, then a singular world order that allows for one man (Antichrist, Man of Lawlessness, Son of Perdition, Rider on the White Horse) to assume total control. Aided by the ‘False Prophet’, they are able to work lying signs and miracles that trick the world into following them in a disastrous set up against what remains of national and ethnic Israel...i.e....at Armageddon.

Remainder (1.1 Billion)

What remains is the atheistic/agnostic/non-religious population which make up around 1.1 billion persons. The remainder (Taoist, Sikhs, Bahai Faith, Judaism, etc.) make up the rest of the minority of religious adherents globally.

Conclusion

Out of all the religious belief system, Christianity is by far the most descriptive of the end-times. Not only is it the most descriptive, but it’s also the most accurate (ie...forecasting geopolitical alignments, restoration of Israel after 1900 years, societal conditions, etc.). Not only is it the most accurate, but it’s also the most believable. In comparing all the other

views along with the day and age we find ourselves, you see the profound difference and superiority of Holy Scripture once you lay them all out together.

Buddha did not predict the end of the world to happen until 5,000 years after his death, which would put their 'last days' around the year 4600 AD, and frankly by then, who cares. This presents no immediate threat as we would all be long gone by then.

Hinduism believes at the end of the fourth Yuga, that the end comes. These are listed by Wikipedia as:

Satya Yuga lasts 1.728 million years.

Treta Yuga lasts 1.296 million years.

Dvapara Yuga lasts 864,000 years.

Kali Yuga lasts 432,000 years."

"Within the current kalpa, there are four yugas, or epochs, that encompass the evolution of this specific cycle. These ages encompass a beginning of complete purity to a descent into total decay."

At least they got the general direction of deterioration correct. But how exactly do they know something happened 1.728 million years ago and not 1.729 million years ago? How could anyone, anywhere, ever validate any of it?.

Islamic Eschatology

Even harder to believe, are the signs given in Islam that would point to the end times. There are 56 minor signs, and 10 major most of which aren't indicative of any specific time period (the drinking of much wine), and some are pretty laughable (people fornicating in the streets like donkey's). One of the major signs... and probably the most damning against it as a viable eschatology, is that of Isa (Islam's Jesus) return prior to the Mahdi. It's damning for two reasons:

1. If Jesus is who He says He is, (and He says He is God in the Flesh), than He cannot be the Jesus of Islam (who was only a man). Subsequently, Islam only knows who Jesus is via the Christian faith which predates it by 700 years.
2. If Jesus returns as predicted in the Koran, than He cannot be the Jesus of the Bible (whom Islam only knows about via the Christian faith) and is a liar (because He claimed to be God) thus invalidating Him as a prophet.

Last of which, the atheist/agnostic/skeptic/scientist view that the earth meets some cataclysmic-end due to a natural or cosmic disaster (i.e...comet collision, super-volcano, etc.). Ironically their view aligns most perfectly with that of the Bible (wormwood, sun going dark, extreme heat, etc.)

The Bible foretold over 2,000 years ago, that certain things would have to happen prior to the return of Christ:

1. Wars and Rumors of wars, pestilences, earthquakes, ethnic and national strife, and false prophets/messiah's claiming to be Christ. (Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)
 - a. The Bible uniquely qualifies these as 'birth pangs', increasing in frequency and intensity.
2. Technology would increase to the point to where one man could control all the buying and selling in the world. (Rev. 13)
3. Technology would increase to the point to where the whole world could view an event at one location. (Rev. 11:9-10)
4. Nations would align themselves in certain geopolitical /economic/military alliances. (Ezekiel 38-39, Daniel 11, Rev. 16)
5. All the world would come under one religious system. (Rev. 13, 17)
6. Israel would be back in her land as nation again. (Isaiah 11, Ezekiel 36, Amos 9, Luke 21:24)
7. The whole world would come against Israel. (Zechariah 10, 14)
8. Religiously and socially, the world would continue to deteriorate. (2 Tim. 3, 2 Peter 3, Revelation 3)

So given the signs of the end for the major world religions, which seems the most plausible? Which has the most historical, archeological, political, and economic evidence to support its claims? The Bible foretells of worsening conditions, ending with a final world system under the economic, technological, and theological thumb of regional governments, absorbed into one, all headed by a single man.

Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,' (**Isaiah 46:9-10**)

Men of Renown

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. **Luke 17:26-27**

Much discussion has been made about the Nephilim over the past twenty years by many from within evangelical Christianity. Most I'd wager would agree to disagree on the specifics of the who what, when, where, and why of what that actually looks like, but most would agree that they are coming. Personally, I think we need look no further than our current crop of movies to get a glimmer of things to come.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe, or MCU, exploded into movie theaters beginning with the 2008 theatrical release of *Iron Man*, starring Robert Downey Jr. Previous attempts at superhero movies tended to be more misses than hits, but the bar was raised with this release because of the right recipe of timing/cast/technological advancements and direction which made this movie a box office hit, garnering \$585M around the world. But more than that, was the character himself (Tony Stark/Iron Man). People loved the comics long before the movie came out because it told the story of an ordinary man (albeit wealthy and intelligent) who fought evil by overcoming his lack of supernatural powers by harnessing the power of his technological prowess.

Not soon after came the 'god' of thunder *Thor*, dovetailing into the MCU with the visitors from outer space. It explored the notion that beings from other 'realms' could come to earth because man had finally "evolved into a higher form of warfare" (quoting Thor from the *Avengers*). Next came *Captain America*, played by the all-American Chris Evans, who introduced the real-life super-soldier into our world. But, with the success of *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Captain America*, and the *Avengers*, Marvel had cracked the right formula and now possessed the technological know-how to build the Marvel Comic powerhouse into what it has become today. All told we love a movie where an ordinary person can become extraordinary. Given the lack of real magic in the world, who doesn't want an occasional escape from the daily grind into one where good and evil really do wear uniforms...even "spangly" ones.

Assessment

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, *men of renown*. **Genesis 6:4**

The world we live in now is not the way it has always been. That is a difficult reality for most people to accept. What we today would identify as 'pre-history', was known as the 'Golden Age' to the ancient world. Those who lived in the 'Golden Age' are they whom the Greeks and Romans believed lived for centuries, were exceedingly tall and strong, and generally lived a life of bliss. Supposedly, this was in the land known as [Hyperborea](#). Granted there isn't complete consensus on where exactly Hyperborea was as some thought it where Siberia is today, while others thought it in the British Isles. Either way, what the ancient Greeks were in agreement about, was that these people were from the far north and powerful. One other interesting note

about ancient mythologies, is that they generally all share the same back story in that...these super people, originally came down as 'gods'. As far as ancient civilizations go, the generally accepted timeline is as follows:

1. Sumerians
2. Chaldeans
3. Egyptians
4. Assyrians
5. Babylonians
6. Persians
7. Greeks
8. Romans

Even to the ancient Greek historians and scholars like Sophocles, Herodotus, and Hecataeus of Abdera (all 5th-4th BC), the '*Golden Age*' was considered very ancient. Much in the same way we look back to the first century AD as ancient, the '*Golden Age*' to them would have just as far removed back in time. It was a magical time that spoke of gods, demigods, and those ancient 'superheroes' and 'men of renown' that roamed the earth. Interestingly, the bible makes note of just such a time prior to the Flood of Noah.

Genesis 5 lists the accounts of the genealogies from Adam and Eve. The descendants of Adam lived for hundreds of years with Methuselah living to the ripe old age of 969 years. The long life span began to dwindle after Noah's flood, but even Job and Abraham lived supernaturally long lives as compared to our standards today. Assumptions can be made that the veil between our natural world and the spiritual supernatural world was either non-existent (God physically walked with Adam in the Garden) or far different than we have today. We could also deduce that the world (earth and atmosphere) was vastly different before and afterward the flood. For the curious, the non-biblical accounts from the [Book of I Enoch](#) and [Jasher](#) fill in the blanks of what life was like back then.

The Enoch account states that fallen angels came down and settled on Mt. Hermon (now modern-day Lebanon) and comingled with human women. Genesis 6 affirms such accounts that resulted in the [Nephilim](#) (means 'fallen ones' and translated gigantes in Latin to giants when Anglicized). Not to get bogged down on too much familiar territory, but the Nephilim would be the physical descendants of the unnatural sexual relations between fallen angels and human women (Gen. 6). Not only this, but they taught humans things that mankind shouldn't have known about then (weaponry, warfare, astrology, conjuring potions and incantations).

So follow my logic on this; since almost every known culture records some type of mythos pertaining to a superior race of beings, the most likely reason is that they (we) can all trace their stories back to a common event that was known to mankind prior to Babel (Gen. 11). It couldn't have been after that, because God separated mankind linguistically, genetically, and geographically at [Babel](#)-hence no more shared history. Remember, part of the motivation for defying God in the first place was **not** to be scattered around the world.

And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

(Gen. 11:4)

After the flood subsided and Noah and company departed the ark. Two generations would transpire before the Tower of Babel judgment. Thus, we can conclude that the world before Babel all spoke the same language and lived in a region known as Mesopotamia. This is key because at some point either during or after the flood in [Peleg's day](#), the earth's continents separated. The scientific theory of Pangea is one in which the landmasses were all together before separating along their respective tectonic plates. It's also a reasonable conclusion based on the Genesis 1:9 passage in which God collected all the waters (below the firmament) together in one location.

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.

Yet despite the separation which existed until today, most (if not all) cultures across the planet share similar ancient mythologies about a large or global flood and that of ‘demi-gods’ reigning upon the earth. Most ancient cultures tell tales of giants. If none of these were true, where did the ideas come from? There would have to be some truth to their myths or they would have never lasted as long as they did. The ‘gods’ never really changed, just their names.

How long would Judaism have lasted if Moses hadn't been called, the plagues never took place, or the Exodus stalled out at the Red Sea? How long would Christianity have survived had Christ not come? There has to be some signs and supernatural activities (Elijah calling fire down, Jesus raising the dead and of His own resurrection, and the miracles of the Apostles, etc.) in order for Christianity to have presented itself as a form of real power.

Conclusion

A nation's pop-culture reflects what's on the hearts and minds of that generation. Simply look back to the American 1950's to see who they held up as heroes. Our generation on the other hand is fixated on violence and loosening sexual proclivities of every kind. Thus, the success of the MCU, Science Fiction genre, and the occult likewise consume man's obsession on to evolving to that next level. Just like the old saying goes, ‘if you can dream it, you can do it’.

An idea is birthed in the minds of fallen men. That idea gives legs to conceptual design, and then onto analytical research. That research begins to find solutions to the things man is lacking until a breakthrough occurs. What modern man lacks today is a race of fallen angels physically guiding them on how to create hybrid humans. What modern man now has is the technological knowhow to circumvent that through quantum computing, artificial intelligence, bioengineering via genetic manipulation. What once took decades, is now down to years. Pretty soon those years will turn into months, and then man will achieve the very things he has set his mind towards.

People may scoff at the return of the supernatural and fantastic. People may scoff at the idea that ‘Captain America’ and ‘Iron Man’ people might become the norm. Remember, people use to

scoff at the idea of planes and cars, or that the mile could be ran in under four minutes. People scoffed at the idea of sending a man (men) to the moon. Yet, nobody's scoffing at those things anymore are they? What was it that God once said?

And the Lord said, "Indeed the people *are one* and they *all have one language*, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. **Genesis 11:6**

When man becomes united in a single purpose, we have a pretty good track record of doing that thing. If CERN is intent on opening portals to other dimensions, you can pretty much guarantee that they will (barring God's intervention). If man becomes intent on creating a sentient, self-aware artificial intelligence system that is billions of times smarter than the smartest person, you can pretty much bet man will ultimately achieve it. If man becomes on intent on creating hybrid humans (whether trans-human or biologically altered), you can pretty much bet man will achieve that thing.

My understanding has developed somewhat regarding my understanding of the *Dispensation of the Church* (which was from [Pentecost](#) until today). Rather than calling the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the 'birth of the Church', I now understand that it is actually the 'conception of the Church'. This is akin to the outcome of the Holy Spirit [overshadowing](#) Mary at the *Immaculate Conception*, of which she didn't give birth right then, but rather became pregnant. Likewise, the Church wasn't born at Pentecost, but rather was conceived and has entered into this 2,000 year gestation period, in which believers are being added daily into the body of Christ. (Romans 11:25)

The reason for my departure into the topic of the Church age dispensation, is that once we are complete, we are then birthed into our perfect, incorruptible bodies at the Rapture. We will be translated from mortal to immortal and from corruptible to incorruptible. Our departure, which coincides with the removal as the Restrainer (Holy Spirit empowers us to be salt and light), allows for darkness to ascend and allow the age of lying signs and wonders to once again take hold of the earth. (Romans 8:22-23, 1st Thess. 4:13-18, 2 Thess. 2:9-12, 1st Cor. 15:51-56)

The return of the days of the supernatural are not farfetched. This correlates with what will be coming during *Daniel's 70th Week*...which then is a continuation of the Dispensation of the Law, which saw the Red Sea parted, the Exodus plagues, giants ([Anakim](#)), fire from the heavens, etc. Further corroborating this idea, is the return of the Two Witnesses, who this author believes to be Moses and Elijah which perform signs and wonders as both a judgment on those who reject God and a witness to the Jews. ([Rev. 11:1-14](#), Malachi 4:5-6, Jude 1:9, Matt. 17:2-4)

Does this current obsession with the fantasy and the occult feed into the 'strong delusion' that God allows to happen once He removes His Spirit-filled Church at the Rapture? It would seem so. 1st Corinthians 1:22 states that the Jews (God's chosen) seek after a sign, to which Daniel's 70th Week promises to be the likes man has never seen.

World War IV: Part 1

In early 1914, though, it seemed almost impossible that Britain and France would go to war with Germany to defend Russia against Austria-Hungary over a dispute with Serbia. Yet by June 28, war moved straight from impossible to inevitable — without ever passing through improbable. Four years later, 10 million people had died. (From *World War One: First war was impossible, then inevitable*; [Anatole Kaletsky](#))

Things often seem unlikely, improbable, or impossible...until they are not. You'd think humans would have figured that out by now. Nonetheless, when we talk about 'things to come', the "experts" in academia, government, politics, and the media always mock the idea that what the Bible has to say is valid or credible. These "experts" were the same ones that said WWI couldn't happen. They also said that if you just appease evil (Hitler), his ambitions will be satiated and peace achieved. "Peace in our time" they said. The same kind of "experts" today say the same thing about Islam and radical leftism. Which is why listening to most of the pundits today speak on foreign policy, political or economic outcomes, and the future state of the world, should be considered a form of cruel and unusual punishment. (The Bible does have a perfect track record thus far...just saying)

WWI

Perhaps the deadliest bullet ever fired triggered the First World War. On June 28th, 1914, a 19 year old Yugoslav nationalist by the name of Gavrilo Princip, fired a shot which successfully assassinated the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife thus igniting the flames of tension that had been steadily brewing for decades in Europe. His actions subsequently resulted in the Austro-Hungarian Empire aligning with Germany, and the Ottoman Turks and then declaring war on practically everyone else. By its end, some 10 million had died from battle, and another 28 million were either missing in action, or died due to wounds, starvation, and disease in the world's first Great War of the 20th century.

WWII

To the German Weimar leadership, both the predictable and consequential byproducts of losing WWI resulted in the conditions which would set the stage some twenty years later for an even greater global conflict...World War II. The following reasons are attributed as causation: a perceived economic and geo-political injustice (Versailles Treaty), an ongoing global economic downturn (the Great Depression), and the decline of the then world's only superpower, the British Empire. These three reasons created the right conditions of which when absent strong global leadership, created a geo-political vacuum which Adolph Hitler and his National Socialists were all too eager to fill. Adding fuel to the fire were the Italian and Japanese ambitions of global conquest. As a result, World War II ensued and in its wake, more than 72 million inhabitants of the earth met an early death.

WWIII

The next great global war was fought primarily behind the scenes and was simply known as the *Cold War*. It began at the end of WWII when the Soviet Union began to cordon off Eastern Europe as recompense for its massive losses to Nazi Germany. Although we don't consider it a "war" in the traditional sense, it very much was and lasted longer than any we had ever fought before. It resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. The *Cold War* continued as

the Soviets (and later the Chinese) began to export their poisonous ideology globally. In response, the United States (and her allies) tried to counter and contain the '[domino effect](#)'.

The physical clashes between east and west were carried out via proxy wars which were fought over the next forty-six years with mixed results (Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan). In 1989 and 1991, the US prematurely declared herself the winner at the collapsing of the 'Iron Curtain' and the Soviet regime. After her collapse, we weren't rewarded with peace, but we simply traded in one enemy for another. While the Communist had been atheistic in nature and whose political and philosophical underpinnings were largely based on human secularism and Marxism, what followed was the rise of militant fundamentalist Islam.

The rapid rise of fundamentalist Islam which quickly rushed into fill the void being left by the communists as early as in the 1970's. This was first evidenced in the 1972 Olympics attack by the *Black September* Palestinian terrorist group, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the 1980 Wahhabi-hardening of Saudi Arabia, and the US-backed Taliban victory over the Russians in Afghanistan. By the late 1980's, other Muslim nations who were once considered "moderate", began to see a groundswell of their own radicalized Islamic movements within their borders (Lebanon, Egypt, and Pakistan). At the same time, Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) terrorist front man [Yasser Arafat](#) (who was Egyptian) attempted to co-opt and unify the growing Arab discontent and anger and harness it into a global jihad movement against the nation of Israel.

Assessment

Albert Einstein famously quipped that "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." This sentiment, along with the fear of a US-USSR nuclear exchange, formulated US foreign policy for half a century prompting the creation of a highly symbolic [Doomsday Clock](#), along with the START Treaties which were meant to scale back nuclear arsenals we both had pointed at each other. While well-meaning, they ignored the reality that WWII had already begun. WWII wasn't just fought with bombs and bullets in proxy wars, but with ideologies.

These socialist ideologies had crept into the university, the seminary, popular culture, and into government long before...corrupting a whole generation. It came to a head in the late 1960's and early 1970's with *Flower Power* and Anti-Vietnam demonstrations. Unfortunately, that generation is now in charge and as a result, we are now just as divided as we were prior to the American Civil War. Consider these:

- * Common-sense has been replaced by political correctness. Political correctness is [Cultural Marxism](#) and has infected almost every institute of government, media, and education without question.

- * To counter an increasingly destabilized world, liberty has been traded for security. To counter a global threat, we created the very thing President Eisenhower warned us about in his farewell address...the [Military Industrial Complex](#) whose arsenal contains increasingly devastating weapons of war as well as providing the tools necessary to create a virtual police state.

- * Economic freedom has been replaced by financial bondage. At \$20T in [debt](#), our nation will either have to collapse financially, or completely restructure its financial and currency systems. Massive deficits have been accrued particularly over the last two decades at the expense of our children and grandchildren's future.

Thus, we have a myriad of forces today arrayed against the West that are increasingly and aggressively seeking to challenge US dominance on the global stage. Some of those forces are non-state aligned actors such as: Narco-gangs, Islamic terrorist, anarchist groups, cybercriminal networks, and organized criminal networks. Others are state-sponsored from China, North Korea, Russia, and Iran and include armies and rebel/militia movements who serve as destabilizers. Regardless, the US is increasingly having to cover-down on partner nations who can't or won't handle their own issues thus requiring US military involvement.

Still, another faction working to destabilize the world is that of economic-terrorist. Billionaire George Soros (and men like him), along with his spider-web network of shadow-organizations have funneled hundreds of millions of Dollars, Pounds, Rubles, and Euros through to push their agendas of toppling western governments. He's done this through buying off politicians who share the open-border immigration policies and other hard-left agendas, funding groups who will violently protest and riot, and organizations that actively commit [law-fare](#). This in an attempt to create a singular global system by which they believe will fix all the world's problems.

Fair to say that [World War III](#) has been ongoing since the end of WWII, and our enemy's corruption is bent solely on the destruction of western governance and rule of law. Since secular-leftism (Socialism and Marxism in its varying forms) has the same agenda as that of Islamic fundamentalism--it's a natural synchronization to see the two partnered up to fight against Western-capitalism, democracy, constitutional republics, and Judeo-Christian values. Hence the phrase "*the enemy of my enemy is my friend*" rings true.

Assessment-World War IV

And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. **Revelation 6:2-4**

Seeing as World War III wasn't a single war in the traditional sense, but rather an ongoing series of conflicts (both militarily and ideologically), World War IV will follow along the same vein. The Apostle John was shown the opening of the Seal Judgments by Christ in Heaven after the age of the Church has ended. As Christ takes the scrolls and opens them, terrible judgments are poured out upon the earth. The first to appear on the scene is the Antichrist, who quickly rises to power and takes over. The Second Seal is opened and a rider on a red horse takes peace from the earth. After this, the riders on the black and pale horses (pestilence, starvation, and death) quickly ensue in the aftermath of total-war.

So how does it all begin?

Like every other war, they do not just happen out of thin air. There is a cause (real or contrived), a buildup of forces, logistical preparations, information gathering, political posturing, and lastly, diplomatic severing. Neither are 'world wars' just single battles. They're conflicts extending days, weeks, months, and years over many nations.

A reasonable, scripturally-based hypothesis is that we (the Church) have been in existence since the first century. Christ said that we would be 'salt and light' to a world that was dying and in darkness. In other words, we were a stabilizing force meant to preserve the conditions so that the Gospel could be spread to all nations. (Matt. 5:13-14, 28:18-20) We know that the Church Age had a beginning (Acts 2-Pentecost) and it will also have an ending. This ending of the Church

Age will culminate in an event known as the *Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church* (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-56, John 14:1-3, Rev. 3:10). We also know that the year 2032 would mark exactly 2,000 years since that first Pentecost when the Church was conceived.

It is 2017 now...will we go the full distance to 2032? Hard to say, because other dispensations weren't exact (that we know of anyway). But we can deduce in general terms, that 4,000 years of human history preceded Christ's first coming going back to Adam and Eve. 2,000 years have since ensued since His birth, so we are definitely 'in the window' if the Six Day/Six Millennium-model holds true. The Seventh Millennium thus marking the Sabbath Rest for man and Creation, just as it was at Creation.

To be continued...

World War IV: Conclusion

We don't think of time as a weapon, it absolutely can be. For example, a siege on a town counts on time by waiting out its inhabitants so that they run out of resources and surrender. If one knew the future...that also could be a very powerful weapon. Although we as finite beings can't know the future, we serve a God who does. He exists outside of time and space, thus sees the end from the beginning just as clearly as He sees everything in between. He reserves this right for Himself alone, and even our chief adversary, Satan cannot know the day or hour for *the Rapture of the Church*.

Why is this significant? Well, as I'll demonstrate in this brief, God is precise. Not only is He precise, but He's already seen this play out before, thus can utilize this foreknowledge to exact the precise execution of His will (Gal. 4:4-5). I believe that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is not just an event where the Church (the body) is brought back together with the Head (Christ), but the trump, the shout, the meeting in the air while being simultaneously transformed from mortal, to immortal, is all part of His battle plan (1st Cor. 15:51-56, 1st Thess. 4:13-18, Eph. 6:12-13).

But not just the Rapture of the Church, but for everything that lays beyond it, because those events ALL hinge on the Rapture transpiring first. In a way, the Rapture is like the 'gate-keeper' for which nothing may proceed beyond until it is complete. But that does not mean those other prophetic events can't be prepositioned and readied for their impending eventuality. Speaking to the rapidity to which things transpire, it reminds me of a quote from the book, *The Sun Also Rises*, by Ernest Hemingway. The conversation goes as following...

"How did you go bankrupt?" Bill asked.

"Two ways," Mike said. "Gradually and then suddenly."

Humanity has been moving at the speed of horse for the past 6,000 years, and it is only in this past century (20th) that events have been put on overdrive. Is there a reason for this? Why wasn't the car invented in the 5th century? The internet in the 10th? Why now? Well, because that is the way God shaped events to turn out like. Preciseness. In other words, it is going to be non-stop and unrelenting. The following is the outline I believe the Bible lays out for us.

Assessment-Outline

1. **Rapture of the Church** (the Gatekeeper Event)
 - a. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church happens
 - b. Global Chaos window (length of time unknown)
 - c. The world begins to realign regionally, politically, economically, and militarily
2. **Battle of Gog and Magog**
 - a. Israel's enemies take advantage of this window of chaos (Ez. 38)
 - b. God supernaturally delivers Israel destroying the attacking militaries
 - c. Newly aligned world powers enter into mutually-beneficial political covenant with Israel. This could include meeting energy/security needs for Europe (Russia's demise equals loss of natural gas to EU). This can run concurrent with the first Seal

- d. Israel gains what she has always wanted since 1948...global political recognition and acceptance at the world's table in conjunction with an agreement to grant a new temple on the Temple Mount
- 3. Seal Judgments**
- a. The Seven Seals opened by Christ
 - b. 25% of the earth's population dies (Rev. 6:8)
 - c. This leaves 75% of the human population alive
 - d. **70th Week of Daniel** (See Gen 29:26-30, Daniel 9:27)
 - i. The Antichrist covenant officially starts God's own 'doomsday clock' countdown by seven years
 - 1. Seal 1: The rider on the white horse (the Antichrist) revealed (Rev. 6:1-2)
 - ii. The 'Week' is divided up into two 3.5 year periods (each 42 months or 1260 day segments). The mid-way point is marked by the *abomination of desolation* (Matt. 24:15, Dan. 9:27)
 - iii. The latter half is known as the 'time of Jacob's troubles' (Jeremiah 30:7-11). This is when 2/3's of Israel's population dies (Zech. 13:8-9)
- 4. Trumpet Judgments**
- a. Seven Trumpets blown by seven angels (Rev. 8:2)
 - b. Another 1/3 (of that 75%) population dies (Rev. 9:15)
 - c. $1/3 \text{ of } 3/4 \text{ (remaining 75\%)} = 1/4$
 - d. This leaves only half the global population alive (so roughly 3.5 billion)
 - i. $1/4 \text{ [Seals]} + 1/4 \text{ [Trumpets]} = 1/2$
- 5. Bowl Judgments**
- a. Seven Bowls poured out by seven angels
 - b. A solid assumption is that the remaining half of the earth's population is reduced by another 1/3 or 1/4th
 - c. If the above (b) is true, than by the Second Coming, only 25% of the earth's population remains
- 6. Armageddon / Second Coming of Christ with His Church back to the Earth:**
- a. ALL nations come against Israel (Zech. 14:1-5)
 - b. Earth's armies are destroyed (Rev. 19:19-21)
 - c. The antichrist and false prophet are thrown alive into the *Lake of Fire* (Rev. 19:20)
 - d. Satan is thrown bound into the Abyss. (Rev. 19:11-20:1-2)
 - e. Sheep and Goat Judgment ensues (the nations) (Matt. 25)
- 7. The Millennial Reign of Christ**
- a. Christ rules upon the earth (Psalm 2, Isaiah 2, 11, 65:17-25, Luke 1:32-33, Revelation 20)

There should be some flexibility in the outline above as some events may overlap each other. Other events may have windows of time built in that we aren't privy to see or know. Likewise, the geo-political situation in the Middle East is changing even now, so at some point, Israel's guard is let down for some reasons we aren't able to understand just yet. But regardless, they will

happen because God's Word says they happen for that we can be sure. With that said I believe that what we are witnessing today economically, politically, culturally, religiously, technologically, and militarily, is simply the finishing touches on a world that is being primed to enter into this final testing period for all who dwell on the earth.

Assessment- Imminent or Established?

Just because we cannot know the exact *when* of the Rapture, does not mean that God has not aligned it to occur on a specific day with significance to the Jewish/Scriptural Feasts of the Lord. We know at Christ's First Coming, He did so in accordance with a number of Old Testament Prophecies.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. **Galatians 4:4-5**

Two schools of thought on the timing of the Rapture are;

Imminence: That it could happen at any moment and is not dependent upon any Jewish holiday or global event, but rather is driven by the total number of Gentiles brought into the universal *body of Christ*. (Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:35-36, Rom. 11:25)

Prophetic Feast Fulfillment: The other view is that God uses times and seasons as markers, to which He knows exactly when and how this will align and fit in with His purposes. (Matt. 16:1-4, Gal. 4:4-5, 1 Thess. 5:1-3) So the Rapture isn't dependent on a particular number, but on a particular date/time. A good summation is found here at GotQuestions.org

- 1) Passover ([Leviticus 23:5](#)) – Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover lamb ([1 Corinthians 5:7](#)) whose blood would be shed for our sins. Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover at the same hour that the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening ([John 19:14](#)).
- 2) Unleavened Bread ([Leviticus 23:6](#)) – Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.
- 3) First Fruits ([Leviticus 23:10](#)) – Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Jesus was resurrected on this very day, which is one of the reasons that Paul refers to him in [1 Corinthians 15:20](#) as the "first fruits from the dead."
- 4) Weeks or Pentecost ([Leviticus 23:16](#)) – Occurred fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile, who would be brought into the kingdom of God during the Church Age (see [Acts 2](#)). The Church was actually established on this day when God poured out His Holy Spirit and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's great sermon and his first proclamation of the gospel.
- 5) Trumpets ([Leviticus 23:24](#)) – The first of the fall feasts. Many believe this day points to the Rapture of the Church when the Messiah Jesus will appear in the heavens as He comes for His bride, the Church. The Rapture is always associated in Scripture with the blowing of a loud trumpet ([1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) and [1 Corinthians 15:52](#)).

- 6) Day of Atonement ([Leviticus 23:27](#)) – Many believe this prophetically points to the day of the Second Coming of Jesus when He will return to earth. That will be the Day of Atonement for the Jewish remnant when they "look upon Him whom they have pierced," repent of their sins, and receive Him as their Messiah ([Zechariah 12:10](#) and [Romans 11:1-6, 25-36](#)).
- 7) Tabernacles or Booths ([Leviticus 23:34](#)) – Many scholars believe that this feast day points to the Lord's promise that He will once again "tabernacle" with His people when He returns to reign over all the world ([Micah 4:1-7](#)).

In His birth, life, and ministry Christ fulfilled both the Law and the Prophets flawlessly (Matt. 5:17-18). In His death, burial, and resurrection, Christ fulfilled the first of the three Feast days. But these aren't just Jewish Feast dates...remember, *The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, these are the appointed feasts of the Lord that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts."* **Leviticus 23:1-2**

Task and Purpose

While the latter group tends to get more excitable around major Feast dates, the former promotes the idea that we should always be ready. What both views share in common (whether they admit it or not) is if the Rapture follows the pattern of [Christ's fulfillment](#) of major prophetic events falling on Feast Dates, **OR** whether the date is completely and utterly independent of anything other than God's own reasoning- either way, we can't be certain. **And maybe that is the point** and thus fulfills the passage that 'no man knows the day or hour'. But just because we can't know, doesn't necessitate that the Rapture itself has to be random. Either way, it is unprovable and unknowable, and the second it happens, it will be too late to argue about it.

The only reason humanity in its current form has gone on as long as it has, is because God is longsuffering that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9) and this is the number one divine directive for our current dispensation. What I do believe is that in the aftermath of the Rapture, *the battle of Gog and Magog* ensues. ([Ezekiel 38](#))

The purpose of removing this unique body of believers (the Church) via *the Pre-Tribulation Rapture* then, in which God removes His bride the Church from the earth (a body made up of both Jew and Gentile into one new body-that is neither Jew nor Gentile), is to keep His promise in John 14:1-3.

At this point, He then returns His focus back onto the nation of Israel. This dovetails directly into the 70th Week of Daniel, which is primarily about restoring Israel back to himself. (Dan. 9:24, Jer. 30:7-11)

The purpose of *the battle of Gog and Magog* then is to get Israel's attention focused back on Him by supernaturally delivering them (Ez. 38:16, 23). Not only that...but to all the nations who recognize this as a supernatural deliverance; this is both an act of mercy and a warning. In bringing His focus back to Israel, and theirs to Him, He can finish what He covenanted with them in Dan. 9:24 (Daniel's people=the Jews, and his holy city=Jerusalem).

The reason for Gog taking advantage of this (God turns him around and puts a hook in his jaw) goes back to the struggle between East and West. The strength of the western world is incumbent upon a strong United States; economically, politically, and militarily. If the US goes down, it will drag everyone in the west along with her.

Put another way, since Israel's rebirth as a nation she has been under the sometimes careful, and sometimes lackluster protection by her biggest benefactor, the United States. So the only time that Israel isn't protected in one degree or another by some type of security arrangement is that short window of time between when the Rapture occurs and when the Antichrist-covenant takes effect. And given the fact that after the Rapture, the world will be anything but peaceful and secure, it makes sense that this transpires between the two. It's likely that at seeing this supernatural deliverance, Israel probably enters into the Dan. 9:27 covenant without even thinking the two are related.

Conclusion

Even time itself seems to be confirming the idea that this age we are in is about to come to its conclusion as we entered both a new millennium (the year 2000) and a new century (the 21st). While we don't know the exact day or hour the Lord will return, it seems that the consensus growing in an increasingly shrinking group of watching-believers...is more of a confirmation by the Holy Spirit within us, rather than anything we could contrive individually.

There is a war coming, like a storm on the horizon. Some can sense the change of energy in the air. Others can smell the rain. Still others feel it in their bones. The ultimate battle between good and evil is drawing closer, and we can sense things picking up. The world continues on in spiritual blindness, and thus will be as unprepared as those in Noah's day, or those in Lots. Things will continue get rough between now and then because the enemy knows his time is drawing short, but thankfully and by God's graciousness, we won't be here to endure it.

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. **Revelation 3:10-11**

Why Rapture?

In a theological world bent on consensus and ecumenism, you have to wonder why some things in the Bible are the way they are. Some things seem so fantastical that to hold to them in a literal manner would immediately draw derision and division from the world. A seven-day Creation, a world-wide Flood, the Tower of Babel, the Red Sea crossing, David and Goliath, resurrection from the dead, and the Rapture of the Church to name a few. Did they really happen, or were these biblical accounts simply subjective object-lessons on faith? If only lessons, where do they come from? What higher purpose do they serve?

Today there is a growing group of “clergy” who simply dismiss more and more of Scripture. Some claim to only follow what we would identify as the “red letters,” (or Jesus’s actual words) to build their theology around. These “red-letter” Christians, spend much of their time dismissing the rest of the Bible. They even dismiss the “red letters” if they don’t mesh with their culturally declining consensus. These are they who routinely trade objective truth for subjective reasoning. As fantastical as some of the physical, global, and supernatural events were in the Old Testament, the New Testament offered the revelation of the mysteries of God.

It was to the apostle Paul, who God made known the mysteries revealed in the New Testament. Among the seven mysteries, we will primarily focus on one. But for an expansive and well-written view, see doctrine.org. Below are excerpts from that article.

1. The Secret of the Gospel of the Grace of God ([Romans 16.25-26](#))
2. The Secret of the One Body ([1 Corinthians 12.12-27](#); [Ephesians 1.22-23](#); [Colossians 1.18, 24](#)) was His body and that its nature was that Jew and Gentile were equal in Christ ([Galatians 3.26-29](#)). The Lord did not reveal this truth to Peter or the Twelve. Search the Scriptures—one will find no word about the body of Christ from anyone but Paul.
3. The Secret of Heavenly Citizenship ([Ephesians 1.3](#); [Ephesians 2.4-6](#); [Philippians 3.20-21](#); [2 Corinthians 5.1-3](#))
4. The Secret of the Blinding of Israel ([Romans 11.25-27](#))
5. The Secret of His Will ([Ephesians 1.9-10](#); [Colossians 1.19-20](#))
6. The Secret of the Grace of God ([1 Corinthians 15.1-4](#); [Romans 8.29](#); [Philippians 1.6](#); [1 Timothy 1.15](#))
7. The Secret of the Rapture or Resurrection of the Body of Christ

The “rapture” is the resurrection of the Church, the body of Christ. In this divine event, members of the body of Christ will receive resurrection bodies. When the body of Christ

is complete, God will take His body unto Himself. Paul called this the “fullness of the Gentiles” ([Romans 11.25](#)) since the body of Christ is composed primarily of Gentiles. The word Paul used for the Rapture was [ἀρπάζω](#) which means “to seize” or “to snatch away.” Our English word “rapture” comes from the Latin “rapiemur” which is the word Jerome used in the Latin Vulgate to translate ἀρπάζω. Paul revealed the secret of the Rapture in [1 Corinthians 15.51-53](#):

⁵¹ *Behold, I tell you a mystery [secret]; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,*
⁵² *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* ⁵³ *For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Paul elaborated on this event when he wrote the Thessalonians about the order of the resurrection of the body of Christ:

¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.* ¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.* ¹⁵ *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.* ¹⁶ *For 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.* ¹⁷ *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.* ¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words.* ([1 Thessalonians 4.13-18](#)).

Assessment

I’ve often wondered why God would choose being caught up in *the blink of an eye* as the mechanism of our delivery at that appointed time. Why aren’t we transformed in full view of a Christ-rejecting world like something out of a Disney princess movie? Why couldn’t God turn us all into super-human immortals and allow us to breeze through the Tribulation (Daniel’s 70th Week) unscathed? He could have if He wanted too for sure. But our physical absence speaks to our role in that final week of years. The mystery of the one body, is why the Church is physically not present on earth during the last seven years.

The Church is the bride of Christ. The Church is also the body of Christ, of whom Jesus said He would build (Matt. 16:18). Jesus is also the head of the body who is the Church. In piecing together the metaphors and symbolizing we see spelled out in various passages brings us back to the institution of marriage. In marriage, the husband and wife become one flesh which is what our marriage (hence our combining) then symbolizes.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **Ephesians 5:30-32**

Our marriage is what the Church is doing in heaven while the Tribulation is being poured out upon the earth. Various errant eschatological views have the Church being raptured either during or after the 70th Week. That is only possible by confusing who and what the Church is.

The Church ([ekklesia](#)) is called out assembly of believers that only exist between the resurrection of Christ and the Rapture. We couldn't exist before Christ died on the cross because it takes the death of the testator in order for that New Testament (Covenant) to take effect.

For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

Hebrews 9:16-17

Now there have been believers since the days of Genesis. Being a believer in and of itself does not mean that one is in the Church. Just as God divided people up by sex, ethnicity, and other distinctive traits and just as there are separate classes of the angelic hosts, so too will believers fall into different categories. There were Old Testament believers (believing in the One who would come), and there are New Testament believers (who were redeemed because of the death, burial, and resurrection of the One).

The OT saints were not saved by the redeeming power of the cross, because the Christ had not yet come. But they were justified as we are, by grace through faith in God. In other words, the object of our faith is different, but the result is the same-in that we are ultimately redeemed by God. The idea that the Christ had to die on a cross and be raised again was unknown to those who lived before that time.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery*, the *hidden* wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **1 Cor. 2:6-8**

When OT believers died, they went to a holding place known as *Abraham's Bosom* or *Paradise* (Luke 16:22-23, 23:43). Unlike the Church who is resurrected/translated into our immortal bodies **before** the 70th Week, they (OT saints) will be resurrected into their immortal, glorified bodies **after** the 70th Week along with those believers who are martyred during the 70th Week (Daniel 12:1-3, [Matt. 24:31](#), Lk. 11:24, Rev. 6:9-11, 20:4). So this resurrection is divided only by seven years (or so). This depends on whether or not a gap of time exists between the Rapture and the start of the 70th Week of Daniel.

We know currently that those believers (since Pentecost) who have physically died, are spiritually alive and in the presence of God (2 Cor. 5:6-8). These are they who come WITH Christ at the Rapture to meet those still alive, in the air. As I've stated in previous articles, why we meet in the air is in my opinion, a triumphal procession through the midst of enemy territory (Eph. 2:2). This is where Christ parades His trophy (the Church-1 Peter 2:9) before His defeated enemies on our way to the bema judgment and marriage ceremony in Heaven.

Some argue that God's judgment doesn't begin with the Seal Judgments, but with the Trumpets. This seems unlikely seeing as Christ is the only One found worthy to take and open the sealed scroll, thus **initiating** the subsequent entire chain of events (Revelation 5:1-7). If Christ's judgment only begins at the Trumpet Judgments, then shouldn't Christ blow the first Trumpet? Since He was the ONLY one worthy to open the sealed scroll, if the judgments aren't from Him, then to whom do they belong? It likewise seems counterintuitive for Him to pour out His judgments upon Himself (since His body the Church).

Conclusion

In God's providential wisdom, He chose the Rapture as the manner of delivery because it both serves the purpose of removing His body from the earth prior to His judgment and because of the necessary timing required for the bema and marriage to occur. It also reinforces the *strong delusion* that will come upon the earth after the Rapture occurs (2 Thess. 2:9-11). Lastly, because the world mocks at the very notion of a Rapture, God will use it to destroy the "wise."

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? **1 Cor. 1:18-20**

If the Rapture seems too fantastical to believe, then what do these "wise" pastors do with the world-wide flood? Or Moses crossing the Red Sea? Or [Samson](#) killing a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass? It seems to me, that God loves to specialize in the fantastical simply because He can. Besides we have seen other instances where God supernaturally (well, for Him it would be natural) move people about at will. He took up Enoch (Heb. 11:5), Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), Paul (2 Cor. 12:2-5), and John (Rev. 4:1-2) as well as moved Ezekiel (Ez. 8:3) and Philip (Acts 8:39).

We live in a world that is continually trying to reinvent and redefine what truth is. The problem the world keeps running into, is that when it promotes one anti-Biblical thing as truth (i.e....Darwinian Evolution, Big Bang theory, Manmade global warming, gender dysphoria, atheism, communism, etc., ad nausea), it continually runs into the brick wall of another opposing humanistic ideology that contradicts it. The same can be said for liberal or progressive "Christian" pastors who deny some, most, or all of the Bible, to include the Rapture.

I believe that the Rapture has come back into our biblical understanding, because of the nearness of its proximity. It wasn't relative to know this back in the 15th century from God's perspective. It is relative now. If we believe that God reveals things progressively to man, then He does so when it is pertinent for that particular generation. That's why we don't hear any cautionary sermons today warning people about a world-wide flood. That's why we don't hear sermons today warning about an imminent Assyrian invasion. It was relative to Noah, Isaiah and Jeremiah's audience, but not to us today. Today we warn of the coming *Rapture of the Church*, and the subsequent hellish vacuum that will fill the earth in our absence.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief...For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. **1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9-10**

The World That Was

In early 1914, though, it seemed almost impossible that Britain and France would go to war with Germany to defend Russia against Austria-Hungary over a dispute with Serbia. Yet by June 28, war moved straight from impossible to inevitable — without ever passing through improbable. Four years later, 10 million people had died. (From *World War One: First war was impossible, then inevitable*; Anatole Kaletsky)

Although I've used this quote in the past, I've found myself drawn to it again due to its precise accuracy describing the seemingly incredible and often *unpredictable* nature of geopolitics. Prior to World War I, who would have believed it? Yet after it was over, the warning signs of impending trouble were so obvious that most couldn't believe they had missed it. Although unforeseen, the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand became the right crisis at the right time by the old powers to set the world afire. World War I itself then became a forcing function by which the old world still attempted to stubbornly cling to the dying vestiges of the world as it was. But change came nonetheless and no one could stop it.

Juxtaposed to the seemingly unpredictable (and unbelievable) nature of global geopolitics, is the inevitable march towards a future, one-world system. We can see early efforts for this in moves like the *League of Nations* and later, the *United Nations* (UN). The UN, along with its cornucopia of bureaucratic offshoots, continue to try to gain global influence and power through treaty and peer pressure. What it lacks at present is a military force capable of enforcing either of these.

Furthermore, the combined globalist efforts in the financial, informational, and military sectors are solely concentrating on consolidating more and more power into fewer and fewer hands. These globalist advancements are only made possible by the snowball-effect of the technological advancements in the 20th century. In fact, so much innovation has transpired over the past century alone, has all but eclipsed the progress of the previous six thousand years of human history combined. Unfortunately, our dependence on modern technology has all but ensured that a centralized power controlling everyone and everything is nothing more than a foregone conclusion.

When asked about the last days, Jesus told His disciples that [*the end of the age*](#) would be recognizable because of the many signs those days would present themselves. Although these signs in and of themselves were not unique (as signs are meant to point to something further down the road), what would be unique was the manner of their manifestation. Jesus likened these signs to 'birth pangs' a woman goes through leading up to the birth of a child. In pregnancy, the first and second trimesters have few (if any) contractions (pangs). But as a woman enters into the third (final) trimester, the pangs first come sporadically but soon come in rapid-fire regularity finally reaching a crescendo both in frequency and intensity to the point where the child is coming and she must seek immediate care for delivery. So too would the generation that enters into this final "trimester" of human history be witness to the delivery of 'the [*child*](#).'

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the

glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. **Romans 8:20-23**

Assessment

Just as Rome's founding was many centuries before it became a world power, the same is true for the United States. The US was founded in 1776 but did not become a world power until the end of World War II. For a brief period following WWII, the US remained the world's lone super-power. It was here in this tiny window of time, that she became instrumental in providing the global and political clout the newly formed nation of Israel would need to survive as an island of democracy in a sea of tumultuous Islamic theocracies.

But like everything else, the world's corruptive and persistent influence has/is forcing the United States to concede to its demand to divide Israel. This is primarily due to our dependence on oil from said Islamic theocracies. Inevitably, our betrayal equates to a "ratcheting-up" of seemingly insolvable problems due to the [Abrahamic Covenant](#) effect, which God both promises and warns that *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you*. We view this covenant in a global sense, (since God was speaking to the nation who would come from Abraham) as the prophetic fulfillment we know simply as *the convergence*. In other words, the more the world turns against Israel, the more problems the world is going to have.

“For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land.

Joel 3:1-2

The convergence then is simply the visible escalation and divine approval of natural calamities and man-caused problems since 1977. This was the year that the “land for peace” agenda began between Egypt, Israel, and the United States with the *Camp David Accords*. Since then, there has been an ever increasing series of tragic and horrific events overwhelming the entire world. For those watching, the rapid uptick has been startling. For the rest of the world, the *normalcy bias* has set in and the world has been lulled back to its slumber.

Presumably, Satan learned his lesson post-Calvary ([1 Cor. 2:6-7](#)) and now understands ([Rev. 12:12](#)) that his time is running out. The conflict we then see in the world is one in which the world that is currently controlled by Satan ([Luke 4:5-6](#)) is trying to stay the way it is, rather than allow God to press forward with His divine timeline. This then results in wars and rumors of wars, which inevitably allows for rapid innovation. Man's technological, financial, and political

progress careens forward then because crisis demands action and solutions. In other words, Satan can't stop God's agenda no matter what he tries.

The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. **Luke 16:16**

So in the macro-sense, the world continues to press forward in all aspects, and the drama involving all its nation-states seems to be ever-fluid and unpredictable. The issues of death, eternity, the kingdom of God, heaven, hell, God, the angels, etc., all seem to be distant things no one wants to talk or even think about, yet it will not go away. Inarguably, there have been moments in time where mankind's mortality (in the collective sense) has been so shaken, that it unintentionally makes the world wake up, even if only for the briefest of moments. Such has been the case with 9/11 or the 2011 Japanese Tsunami. But even then, a little time passes and said-event passes into mankind's short-term memory.

Conclusion

The election of Donald J. Trump was in a sense, the last gasp of a free American people. Here is a man who by all accounts (at least according to every expert and think tank on the planet) should not have won the election. His election was as unthinkable and as impossible, as the scenario found in the start of World War I. Yet, win he did, and he did so with as Steve Bannon called it, *the island of misfit toys* team. It wasn't so much that he ran against the Democratic-socialist agenda, but against an entrenched establishment (the political class) who were nestled snugly in the Washington D.C. swamplands.

For eight years, both Christians and conservatives had been force-fed the incessant mantra of the big three lies by the Obama administration. It was done with an intensity and zealotry that was shocking to anyone who had an ounce of common sense. For brevity's sake, the big three whoppers were: Man-made climate change, aggressive historical revision (whitewashing or rewriting historical facts), and that all cultures and religions are equal. It was piped through all the Sunday news shows and by all the academic panels with their "experts." These were they who all created the perfect echo chamber to make sure this message was beaten into our heads day after day.

By the time 2016 rolled around, the last vestiges of American common sense found itself electing a man who was so far removed from the mainstream political fray out of sense of rebellion against having to endure another four years of the democrat propaganda machine.

But elections have consequences and the lies that were pumped via airwaves and Wi-Fi for eight years have unfortunately stuck in Western culture. This has us Christians are looking around the world today and finding ourselves increasingly at odds with the mainstream narrative. Even worse, is that the past eight years expedited the already growing rift within Christendom over the issues of gay marriage, transgenderism, abortion on demand, illegal immigration, cultural relativism, etc. On one side, there are more and more churches bending the knee to popular consensus. On the other, is the dwindling remnant of those who still hold too and believe in a Biblical world-view. Pretty soon, those not bending the knee to popular consensus will be as

popular and numerous as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were on the plain of Dura ([Daniel 3](#)).

But are Christians today just as guilty as those in the Pre-WWI colonial world of the same type of wishful thinking? Do we believe that we can keep the world as it was by *Making America Great Again*? Like every other significant empire and nation who came before us, we too, shall watch the sun set on this great and final experiment in human governance.

The Bible does not predict any great Christian revival in the last days leading up to the Tribulation (i.e., the 70th Week of Daniel). America is far too diverse today to ever make that an eventuality. I don't mean ethnically diverse, but politically, religiously, and ideologically. Ten people in a room couldn't agree on where the moon was in relation to the earth. Furthermore, President Trump is finding out the hard way that the *swamp* doesn't want to be drained, and will do everything in its power to prevent it.

The same could be said for our brothers and sisters across the pond in Great Britain with BREXIT. I don't believe it ever will happen because the EU and British *swamps* can't let that happen. The world's brief flirtation again with nationalism and populism is going to be crushed under the boot-heel of the coming singular global system ran by the Antichrist.

My intent is not to be *Mr. Doom and Gloom*, but to simply make one point. The reason that the born-again Christian is finding themselves increasingly at odds with the world, is that the world is the swamp, and is in the process of giving itself over to a strong delusion. Just as there are increasing measures of birth-pangs, so too are the increasing stages of unrighteousness. These progress in as much as God gives nations them over to their own delusions and subsequent judgment (Romans 1:16-32; Jeremiah 30:7-11).

But God is not going to drain this swamp, He is going to purge it with judgment and fire before He makes the planet great again. But before He does any of that, He is going to remove His people (true born again believers) by way of the *Harpazo* (i.e., the catching up or the Rapture). Then the world will be forcibly cast headlong into the final week of years. So fellow believer, don't get too sentimental on the world as it is, or was, or what it's becoming. Because it is all about to change.

For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. **1 John 2:16-17**

The Unseen Realm

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. **Ephesians 6:12**

I am currently reading through G.H. Pember's *Earth's Earliest Ages*. I bought this book back in 2009, but somehow never got a chance to actually sit down and read it, although I am somewhat familiar with the premise of the book. As to the accounts of a "pre-Adamic" race, I can't say. I believe that the Bible seems to hint at that, but does not give enough specifics to firmly plant my battle flag down on to defend. So while I will not be speaking to races that may or may not have existed, or even to the *Gap Theory* (between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2), the book does bring some other interesting things to mind; primarily that of spiritual warfare, and how little we actually know about it.

The world we currently live in, with all of its modernity and science, treats the spiritual realm as mostly fantasy. Aside from fictional books and movies, cable television shows depicting the paranormal "hunters," religion offers the only other discussions pertaining to the unseen realm. Even the non-religious are somewhat cautious in how they deal with the topic of religion since it can encompass many things to many people.

But while the Christian religion is in decline in the West, spiritualism is on the increase. The reason for this is two-fold; first is that humans are hybrid beings, half-flesh and half-spirit. The second is that we crave worship (either to be worshipped, or to worship). If Christianity is no longer filling that void in our lives, something else will fill that vacuum. Thus, Spiritualism is purposely meant to be a broad, all-inclusive, inoffensive statement people make today that means that although they are open to the supernatural, they are not dogmatic about it. The idea is that faith is something people have in something they can't prove. I.e. faith in faith is enough to sustain the human heart. C.S. Lewis probably said it best in describing the *human-condition*:

Humans are amphibians...half spirit and half animal...as spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time. This means that while their spirit can be directed to an eternal object, their bodies, passions, and imaginations are in continual change, for to be in time, means to change. Their nearest approach to constancy,

therefore, is undulation--the repeated return to a level from which they repeatedly fall back, a series of troughs and peaks.

Historical

Back at the turn of the 19-20th century, the West enjoyed a resurgence of the esoteric (mystery) teachings found within [spiritualism](#) and [mysticism](#). Spiritualism was the search into the afterlife through the use of séances, mediums, Tarot cards, and the like. Mysticism sought out secret (or forbidden) knowledge through the revival of the “ancient” arts belonging to the Vikings, the Greeks, the Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, etc. Non-religious groups such as the Rosicrucian’s, the Illuminati, and the Free Masons had already operated in the West for some time, and had successfully incorporated secret initiations and “knowledge” in a more superficial manner. What they really offered, was inclusivity and a manner to network amongst fellow *travelers*.

The Victorian-era spiritualists and mystics on the other hand (both in the U.S. and Europe), became enthralled with the idea of discovering the supernatural. It was also very appealing in how one dealt with the spiritual realm and the afterlife. Although Christianity was the main “religion” for both sides of the Atlantic, mainline denominations had failed to offer the titillation that these secret groups promised. Thus, esoteric and/or mystery groups like the *Theosophical Society* became the rage, as people became fascinated with the afterlife.

Mainline Christianity had also come under assault during the *Age of Reason* through philosophical challenges and “scientific” discoveries from men like (but not limited too) Karl Marx and Charles Darwin. Occultic groups like the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, or numerous other Pagan and Wiccan groups likewise mixed eastern mysticism into Western ideology and theology. All of these promised to offer insight and forbidden knowledge that had been lacking in a “Christian” society devoid of both. Seemingly, all of these seemed to be rooted in [Neoplatonism](#).

Assessment

That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. **Ecclesiastes 1:9**

Since the days before Noah’s Flood (the Antediluvian Period/Dispensation of Conscious) (Genesis 4-8), man has known and understood that physical reality is not all that there is. Adam and Eve, as well as Cain and Abel at the very least had

personal interactions with God both in and out of the Garden of Eden. Their descendants also knew that there was a spiritual realm jam packed with beings (both good and nefarious) who interacted with the physical realm on a daily basis. It was during this age that much of what we understand today as mythology, actually stems from. It was an age of gods, demigods, giants, beings from heaven, “ancient aliens,” magic, etc.

It is believed by many (too include this author) that the reason for the Flood was that the fallen angels ([the sons of God](#)) intermingled with the daughters of men in an attempt to genetically corrupt man’s bloodline to prevent Genesis 3:15 from becoming a reality. The end result produced a hybrid race of beings that were neither fully human, nor fully angelic. According to the extra-biblical accounts of Enoch and Jasher, as well as the Jewish historian Josephus, these beings were giant, violent, and dominated mankind in cruelty.

Jesus stated ([Luke 17:26-30](#)) that the days of His return would be similar to that of the days of Noah and that of Lot. While it is unknown if physical beings like the Nephilim will actually return in the last days, we can reasonably assume that the demonic hosts (disembodied spirits of the Noah’s day Nephilim) will be able to fully possess human hosts. We have seen in recent history that people (being half spirit beings) can open themselves up to demonic possession through religious rituals as well as music and games. We can already see a foreshadowing of what this future demonic possession will look like with people using drugs ([Pharmakeia/sorcery](#)) like flakka and bath salts. We can assume that as technology such as virtual reality and transhumanism progresses, we will see this as another gateway for demons to inhabit human hosts.

Three of the overarching themes for both Noah’s and Lot’s days, was that of exceeding wickedness, violence, and sexual perversity. We live in a day and age where gender identities are being blurred, sexual freedom is esteemed above all else, the world is engulfed in violence (in crime, entertainment, and warfare), and every evil thought of man’s heart is being introduced as acceptable and the new normal. Adding to that is the resurgence of spiritualism (in the form of eastern mysticism) is merging heavily into Christianity.

While we do not know to what extent the supernatural will cross over into the natural realm this side of the Rapture, we know that after the Rapture, the world of Daniel’s 70th Week will be cast into a new (brief) age of supernaturalism.

The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**

Adding to that is the arrival of the [Two Witnesses](#) (presumably Moses and Elijah) who will be able to counteract the evil supernatural forces with supernatural powers of their own. It stands to reason that if God brings them back to Jerusalem for 3 ½ years, it is necessary to neutralize the perception that only the Antichrist (and the False Prophet) have supernatural powers. Thus, we can deduce that after the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church, the world will once again enter a period of time when the supernatural becomes the new normal.

What we are witnessing today, is the normalization of the supernatural that is being popularized through music, books and movies. It is being aided through the use of technology (the internet, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, etc.), religion (spiritualism, mysticism, ecumenicalism, paganism, etc.), and mind altering substances.

Conclusion

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.” Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”

Luke 4:5-7

While the days seem to be getting darker, it is only an illusory shadow cast by the innumerable demonic hosts which enshroud the earth. There is currently a divine boundary between our realm and the spiritual that appears to be getting thinner and thinner. This is why we are [seeing](#) and [hearing](#) all the unexplainable phenomena that our generation is experiencing. On a micro-level, our present physical reality is temporary and changes the very second we breathe our last breath. On a macro-level, the divine boundaries God put in place after the Flood will be removed after the restraining force of the Holy Spirit is out of the way (2 Thess. 2:7).

Paul called Satan the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) and the “god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4). The Apostle Peter called him a “roaring lion” walking about

seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Jesus referred to him as the “ruler of the world” (John 14:30). Not only is Satan one who seeks to wreak havoc in God’s established order, but at his disposal are countless legion at his disposal (a legion is equal to 6,000 soldiers). If Satan could afford to put one legion in the possessed man at Gadarenes ([Mark 5:1-9](#)), clearly, he can afford to put them anywhere he wants.

The world after the Rapture will be one where the entire demonic host, along with the fallen angels will burst through the veil that separates the physical from the spiritual. It may be why we meet the Lord in the air (Satan’s domain) as opposed to just being instantaneously transported to heaven. We can assume Satan knows about the concept of the Rapture, although he may not believe it. This is why the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation is taught, but not explicitly (or overtly) so in Holy Writ. The Lord intends to signal His temporary withdrawal from the earth (along with those who are His) in a manner much like a *military feint*. It may look like Jesus is packing up all His people and going home, but it’s only temporary and it’s only to accomplish His two purposes (Jer. 30:7-11).

We don’t know to what extent Satan and his forces know/understand/believe the Holy Scriptures, particularly Revelation. We can assume they are at least familiar with it. Either way, they will seek to fill the vacuum left by the Church with something ugly, apostate, and damning to the greatest extent they can in the time they have available. At the mid-point of the 70th Week, we know Satan and company are confined to the earth (Rev. 12:7-12). At the end of the week, we know Christ and the armies of Heaven return triumphantly to earth, decimating the satanic forces without breaking a sweat (Rev. 19:11-21). This is why we today, although surrounded and engulfed in a spiritual warfare, need not succumb to fear trepidation at the darkness of the current hour. Therefore...

...we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal. **2 Cor. 4:16-18**

The Rapture and the Covenant

I am not a scholar, nor the son of a scholar, but I do believe I am being faithful to the calling the Lord has set me upon. In that calling, I've come to understand some basic truths about the nature of God through study, mentorship, and leading by the Holy Spirit. One of those truths is that God never changes. However, how He has dealt with mankind over the past six thousand years, has changed. This is primarily because the information available to mankind has changed. God did not reveal everything to Adam, nor to Noah, or Abraham, etc. Information about God, His nature, and His agenda would be revealed incrementally. This progressive revelation came in the form of administrations, or dispensations. Changing from one to the next, meant changes in what man was accountable for knowing or doing.

I liken these *administrative changes*, to how a parent raises a child. It would be unjust and irresponsible for a parent to have the same rules for a 2-year-old that they do for a 12-year-old, or vice-versa. Even though the rules and responsibilities may change, a good parent never stops loving or caring for their children regardless the age.

So we come to one of those topics today that I inject my understanding of Scripture for the things I know. I'll also inject some speculation on things I am unsure of, simply because there is not enough information about it in Scripture to make firm declarations. And since I am also not a prophet (or son of one), I can only work with the tools I have available at my disposal. One of those topics I believe is what salvation looks like after the Church is caught up in the Rapture. I believe the keys to understanding this are

Old Testament

Old Testament (OT) *salvation* (and I use that term liberally) is not the same thing as our salvation now in this dispensation. **Romans 4:3** states that *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*. But what did Abraham believe? Did he believe in the Gospel of Christ crucified? Well, no, because the Incarnation had not yet happened and thus how God would redeem mankind remained a mystery (**1 Cor. 2:7**). In fact, in **Matthew 16**, when Jesus asked His disciples who men said that He was, He praised Peter's answer of "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" by saying *Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven*.

But Abraham was asked to do to Isaac ([his only son](#)) the very thing that Christ would one day have to do...become the sacrifice. I believe that Abraham's faith in God was that He would resurrect his son and ultimately himself. He may not have understood it then as we do today, but He had faith in God. This is why there is an entire chapter on the faith of the Old Testament saints ([Hebrews 11](#)). In the OT, salvation is more akin to redemption, which is still a result of God's grace through our faith, but the object of said faith was not yet fully understood.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. **Hebrews 11:1-2**

This good testimony is what redeemed them to a place we know as *Paradise* or *Abraham's Bosom*. At certain times and usually for specific reasons, the Holy Spirit would indwell individuals to carry out God's specific task for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it was national deliverance (Samson), sometimes it was national leadership (Saul, David). But what it wasn't, was universal. Not everyone who had this good testimony was indwelt by the Holy Spirit (or at least Scripture does not tell us this).

But the Holy Spirit could also depart from men when they strayed from God's plan (Samson, Saul). When these OT persons died, they either went to a place known as *Paradise* (or Abraham's Bosom), or to *Torments*, which comprised the other half of Sheol (or Hades). (See **Luke 16:19-31, 23:43**)

While redemption was not exclusive to Israel (see [Job 19:25-27](#)), they were however set aside as a people who were meant to be light to a world shrouded in demonic darkness ([Exodus 19:6](#)). Instead, we read about a people who struggled nationally with holiness and the demands of the Law. The Law as it was given to Moses, was designed to point them to their need for the coming Redeemer. Instead, they made a religion out of the Law and began adding to it making it even more cumbersome (Acts 15:10-11). Instead of pointing to the Christ (Messiah), it became a shallow, works-based version of what it was meant to represent. This is why when Jesus pointed out the intent of the Law, the Jewish clerical leadership (Pharisee, Sadducees, and Scribes) plotted to kill Him (**Mark 3:6, 14:1**).

Key takeaway: OT salvation meant justification and/or redemption by faith in God and what He would do (future tense). The Holy Spirit could come upon a person, but could also depart from said person. The Holy Spirit would come and go from man as necessary to accomplish God's plan. The deceased either went to Paradise or Torments. The OT ends with Christ's death on the cross (**Matt. 27:51**).

Dispensation of Grace

Salvation as we know it today is a Church-age phenomenon that makes salvation open to all mankind by believing in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. When Jesus said, *it is finished* (**John 19:30**), He meant that there was nothing further He could do to satisfy God's demands in the Law for sacrifice. He offered Himself as the perfect, blemish-less lamb that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). His burial and subsequent resurrection on the third day, were simply the fulfillment of the prophetic texts (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, etc.), patterns (feasts) and sign ([sign of Jonah](#)) that had to be fulfilled. Furthermore, anyone in this dispensation who believes on Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins is immediately filled and sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (**Eph. 1:11-14, 4:30**). None of the OT saints ever had that guarantee bestowed upon them.

Believers in this age are sealed by the Holy Spirit by a one-time profession of faith. Not because of works, or how dutiful we are in our "Christianity" (**John 3:16, 36; Romans 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9**). The reason it's called the *Age of Grace* by dispensationalists is not because its grace (grace has always been a factor through every dispensation), but probably because we are the least deserving of it. We have history, archeology, prophecy, technology, and a complete set of

Scriptures for our benefit, and still, many reject God, pervert His words, and/or live unchanged lives after we are redeemed (See Luke 12:48).

But one day, this special dispensation (age/era) will come to an end when those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, will be caught up (both the living and the dead) to be glorified in their eternal bodies and be with our Lord forever (**Jn. 14:1-3, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-55**). We have to be changed (from mortal to immortal) because where we are going ([third heaven](#)), the human body (flesh and blood) cannot survive. This is why the Holy Spirit is withdrawn ([2 Thess 2:7](#)) [I believe the ESV has the best translation of this particular chapter], because He currently indwells all believers as a guarantee. But does this mean that no one else can be saved after the Rapture?

Key Takeaway: The key distinctive of this age, and the ones before and after, is the role of the Holy Spirit. Redemption and/or justification by grace through faith remains as it always has, but now, God sent the Holy Spirit to permanently seal those who professed true faith in Christ death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of their sins (**1 Cor. 15:1-5, Gal. 1:9**). Once this dispensation ends, the world goes back to the way it was before Acts 2 *Pentecost*.

The Seventieth Week

The Seventieth Week of Daniel (**Daniel 9:24-27**) chronicles the last seven years of human-led history. This week of years is devoted to two things: destroying all the Christ-rejecting nations, and disciplining, but preserving a remnant of the Jewish nation Israel (hence why it's called 'the time of Jacob's Trouble') ([Jeremiah 30:7-11](#)).

Just like the world before *the day of Pentecost* (Acts 2:1-4 when the Holy Spirit was given), the world will one day return to an age and reality where the Holy Spirit does not, in fact, seal everyone who places their faith in Jesus Christ. If **Acts 2** had any significance at all, then it was the physical, visible given of the Holy Spirit to mankind to demonstrate the significance of the Church Age (or Age of Grace).

But we also know that the Holy Spirit existed on the earth before **Acts 2**. **Genesis 1:2** and numerous subsequent OT passages indicate that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent and was busy on earth long before that Pentecost. So the idea that the HS is no longer on the earth at all is simply a misreading of the passage (**2 Thess. 2:7**). The Holy Spirit is in fact, *the Restrainer*, who is acting to restrain evil by always keeping a remnant of believers alive.

The Church (i.e....the salt and light and body of Christ) preserves God's judgment from being exacted upon a lost world whose current administrator is Satan (**Luke 4:5-6**) until the day of redemption (the Rapture). We do not see the Holy Spirit active on the earth during the last seven years except to seal the 144K Jewish male virgins as found in **Revelation 7**.

But we know that God is merciful and long-suffering (**Jonah 4:2, 2 Peter 3:9**). It could be that the martyrs we see in **Revelation 6:9-11** (the fifth seal) are a result of believers who come to faith in Christ during the gap of time between the Rapture and the beginning of the official 70th Week. Seeing as the Rapture does not start the 70th Week, but must wait for a peace accord or a kind of covenant (**Dan. 9:27**), it makes sense that they come to faith early on *because of* the

Rapture. It could be that the Holy Spirit makes one last pass through (a gleanings if you will) before the *strong delusion* is placed upon the earth (**2 Thess. 2:11**).

We also see that believers come from all the tribes of the earth (primarily Gentiles then) up until the Seventh Seal. There is no mention of anyone being redeemed beyond that point except for those Jews who are saved. But we know that there will be Gentile believers at the end because of **Matthew 25:31-46** and **Isaiah 2:1-4**. Those martyrs who are already physically dead by the Fifth Seal are positioned below the altar of God asking how much longer it would be (**Rev. 6:10-11**). We know that these martyrs aren't part of the Church because the Church isn't hanging out below the altar waiting for God to exact justice on our fellow brethren and servants.

Key Takeaway: Although many will come to faith in the time immediately following the Rapture (and because of it), but before the start of the official 70th Week, it is unclear that many will become believers once the "Tribulation" officially starts apart from Israel. Since it is extremely likely *the Rapture* causes many to come to faith finally realizing that it was real after all, then it is also equally likely that those believers are also killed fairly early on leaving primarily Israel and an unrepentant world (whose given over to a strong delusion) as the sole inhabitants of the earth.

Conclusion

We have seen the Church go through seven stages (mirroring the *Seven Letters in Revelation*) for the past two millennia. As important as the Reformation was, it did not go far enough primarily because it adopted the same Eschatology as the church it sought to reform from the Roman Catholic Church.

It was both the *Great Awakening* and subsequent *Dispensational* movement of the 18th and 19th centuries that saw the Church reach its peak in terms of biblical "authority" and knowledge. It was here that the great missionary movements were sent out to every nation, as well as men coming to about the best knowledge they could arrive at (this side of the Rapture). But during the 20th century, both began to wane as a lukewarmness swept across western Christendom.

Here is where I am inserting my own speculation. Some wonder why we spend so much time going on about the Rapture as we do. Aside from our curiosity and excitement about this coming event for our generation, it will also serve as evidence for those who are left behind. One second after the Rapture, the world will be cast into turmoil and chaos. It will remain in chaos until a system (the beast) rises up to take the reins of a global system (possibly ran by some form of *Artificial Intelligence*). It is in this system that a man (the little horn, the rider on the white horse, the man of sin) rises up to take control of the beast. He confirms some kind of covenant between Israel and the many (many gentile nations) that officially starts the beginning of the seven-year countdown.

How long that gap is between *the Rapture and the covenant* is anyone's guess. I believe it is anywhere from a few months, to a few years. But however long it is, it seems long enough for people to realize that this Rapture thing we crazy "Pre-Tribber's" have been going on and on

about was real. Because of the Rapture then, many come to faith in Christ, yet, they will not be sealed by the Holy Spirit in the same manner we are.

The reason they aren't is because Satan also has a seal (the Mark of the Beast-**Rev. 13:16-18**) and both systems cannot exist at the same time, because one preserves eternally, while the other damns eternally. If even one born-again Christian who was *sealed* by the Holy Spirit were somehow to take the Mark of the Beast, then "theoretically", Scripture could be broken. We know the 144K Jewish male virgins are marked by a seal on their foreheads, but what exactly that entails we do not know (**Ezekiel 9:4; Rev. 7:3**). If we assume they aren't sealed by the Holy Spirit, that doesn't mean God can't preserve them in some other way. We've seen all throughout the OT (Noah's Ark, Lot's early exit, parting the Red Sea, etc.) how God miraculously delivers His own. But overwhelmingly, these Tribulation martyrs are given over for slaughter by the Antichrist and his beast system (**Revelation 13:7**).

Lastly, while some may take issue with me placing believers in different categories, they shouldn't. There are different categories of animals, plants, heavenly bodies, angels, humans, etc. why shouldn't there be different categories of believers? Our diversity and differences will all be used by God to bring Himself glory, and that should be a great comfort to us.

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **Colossians 1:25-27**

The Rapture and 2017

Do you remember all the hype back in 2011 about the Rapture? Me too. The hype then was that if we added 70 years to 1948, we would then get the year 2018, which if we then subtracted seven years for the Tribulation, would bring us back to 2011. I remember this being a high-watch year for *the Rapture of the Church* and people were coming out of the woodwork with dreams and visions. The only problem with 2011 though, was that it did not coincide with any other combination of years, as they pertain to significant prophetic events or patterns.

For kicks, let's try some. If you added 50 years to 1967, you would still get 2017, but if you subtracted seven years, you'd go back to 2010, which cuts the tribulation short by one year making it six years (instead of seven) if you used 2011 as a benchmark. You could try this with any other year besides 2017, and you'd continually run into issues.

Still another high watch year was 2007, which you got if you added 40 years to 1967, which puts you back at the year 2007. Seeing as that time (and a subsequent seven-year tribulation) has come and gone and we are still here, clearly this could not be the case...unless perhaps you happen to be a hardcore *historical-preterist*. (JK) Other high watch years tended to be more symbolic than anything: 2012, 2000, 1999, 1988, etc. The truth is that Christ could have returned at any of those times, but He didn't. I mean, if Israel is the SUPERSIGN of the last days (which I hold that it is), then Israel has been back in her land since 1948. She has had control of Jerusalem since 1967. Why are we still in 2017 and the Lord has yet to return? What is He waiting on?

I don't think the Lord's patience is random or arbitrary. Neither do I think it is simply because He is longsuffering (He is). But if longsuffering were the driving prerogative, then God could wait until every last person alive today converts and becomes a believer. That would maximize longsuffering to its uttermost. So, we have two dilemmas; one which states that God is longsuffering and wants none to perish (this is true), and a Bible that states that the whole world (minus those redeemed) would both come against Israel and Christ at the 2nd Coming. Thus, we deduce that God's longsuffering, in regards to a Christ-rejecting world, has an expiration date.

2017's Significance Recap:

- 1897-2017=**120 years**, First Zionist Congress convenes
- 1917-2017=**100 years**, *Balfour Declaration*
- 1947-2017=**70 years**, Israel wins right for statehood-declares statehood, waits till May 14th, 1948 to declare its statehood.
- 1967-2017=**50 years**, Israel regains all of Jerusalem back in *Six Day War*
- 1977-2017=**40 years**, beginning of trials *Vis a Vis* "Land for Peace" beginning with the Camp David Accords
- 1987-2017=**30 years**, *Temple Mount Institute* founded

I won't belabor these points anymore, but there has been a great resurgence in the interest surrounding 2017 and the *Revelation 12 Sign*. But concerning 2017, there has been at least five different points that converge together at this particular year. Grouping them together, you have:

- The biblically significant years (As shown above)
- The Jubilees connection
- [Astronomical alignment](#) (only time in 6,000 years)
- Political: President Trump ends 40 years of constant pressure of land for peace, two state solution against Israel
- Geopolitical: Ezekiel 38, Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, etc.

In fact, no other year has so many signs pointing to it, or could be confused for any other. No other combination works. This leads me to three points: the first by the angel Gabriel (to Daniel), the second by Jesus, and the third by the apostle Paul.

Daniel

The [70 Weeks Prophecy](#) (as given to Daniel) would pinpoint the precise time period the Messiah would come by pointing out that He would be killed in the 483rd year (out of 490 years). This tells me two things:

1. God does not shrink away from telling us the future.
2. That if His people would pay attention, they would know without a shadow of a doubt, when the Messiah would be there.

Yet, only a handful of people were anticipating the Messiah's arrival at the correct time (Wise men from the east, Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and John the Baptist's parents). Jesus even remarked in [Luke 19:41-44](#) that they (the Jews and Jerusalem) should have recognized their day (Palm Sunday) was exactly 483 years to the day (173,880 days) since the obvious commandment as was given to the cupbearer Nehemiah in Nehemiah chapter 2.

Jesus

From Jesus, we understand there are around 16 general signs which were present in every generation, but would escalate in size, frequency, and intensity until they reach a culmination point (i.e....birth pangs). Then He gives an absolutely obvious, unmistakable sign that happens smack dab in the middle of the *70th Week* (or 3.5 years in) which is the *Abomination of Desolation* (Matt. 24:15).

So backwards planning from that event though, for their even to be an AoD, would first demand that a Jewish temple exists again. Remember He told them at the beginning of His Olivet Discourse that the Temple would be destroyed to the extent that one stone would not be left atop the other (Matt. 23:37-24:2). For a Jewish temple to exist again, would require Jews controlling Jerusalem, which would have to be back in the hands of a reborn nation of Israel. Clearly, the Arabs, Lebanese, Syrians, ISIS, or the Jordanians would not have any need or desire to rebuild a Jewish temple.

But the interesting thing Jesus stated (this after chastising the Pharisees for not recognizing the signs of the times), was that *no man could know the day or hour*, but only the Father would know when He would send His Son back to earth to fetch the Church. (Matt. 24:36) We know this is in reference to the Rapture, because once the Tribulation begins, it is clearly defined by two 3.5-

year halves of 42 months or 1,260 days. (Daniel 7:5; Revelation 12:6, 14, 13:5)

What I think this means is that it is impossible for men to know specifically when Christ would return. But because Jesus is being so specific here (day or hour), I believe this does not mean we can't know the *season* of His return. Consider the Jews who read and anticipated *Daniels 70 Weeks* prophecy. They knew the Messiah would die in the 483rd year (of the 490 years per verse 9:26), but what they didn't know was how old the Messiah would be when He died. Even the Wise Men had to follow a Star (an astronomical sign) to Bethlehem. So while they did not know exactly when the Messiah would be alive, they had a general idea. (See Daniel 2 for why I hold that view).

So for the better part of 2000 years, men, women, scholars, teachers and everyone else has wondered...when will Jesus' return? But the missing key to making this whole puzzle come unlocked, was the nation of Israel. Without Israel back in her land, there could be no AoD, because there would not have been a Jewish temple, which means that those aforementioned 16 general signs would have had not have had a *frame of reference*. We even have a saying now that coincides with this: WWI prepared the land (Israel) for the people (the Jews), and WWII prepared the people (the Jews) for the land (Israel). Without Israel, those general signs would have just kept flowing cyclically, both waxing and waning according to Satan's schemes and agenda.

Paul

The last reference is to the apostle Paul. He explains *the Rapture of the Church* to the Thessalonians and then (remember they didn't have chapter breaks back in the original texts) he states that they needn't fear, because they (we) would recognize the season. After the Rapture, there is immediately sudden destruction, and they (Non-believers) shall not escape. Read it altogether.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For *you* yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when *they* say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon *them*, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And *they* shall not escape. But *you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.* You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:5**

Conclusion

Just as the Pharisees refused to walk the 5 miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to see this new born *King of the Jews* ([Matt. 2:1-12](#)), so too are their modern day counterparts (the skeptical religious class) who are unwilling to recognize *the signs of the time*. They do so at their own

peril (at a minimum is loss of spiritual rewards) because they refuse to teach, watch, or listen to those who do wait for the Lords return.

Will Christ return in 2017? I believe all signs point to yes, but that's just me. Will my faith be shaken if He doesn't? No, because I know without a doubt we are in *The Season*, just not sure if that season is winter, spring, fall or summer. Does Christ's return have to align with a Biblical Feast Date like *the Feast of Trumpets*? From a historical and scriptural standpoint, it would seem logical...i.e., Christ fulfilled prophecies on the first three with the Church at Pentecost. But since I can't see into the future, I really do not know. So I put my speculator hat on and say, this seems like a good year to keep looking up.

We know this is *The Season* because Jesus stated that all these signs would occur within a single generation (Matt. 24:3-31). The closest we've been able to figure is that a single generation will not extend longer than between 70-80 years ([Psalm 90:10](#)) before they begin dying off. Interesting to me is that the only chapter Moses contributes to the Psalms is chapter 90, yet he himself lived to the ripe old age of 120 years.

When Jesus came the first time, it was at the *fullness of times* ([Gal. 4:4-5](#)). Are we at the fullness of times again? It would seem since Rome was the world power in Christ's first century and they were the epitome of judicial law, regional order and stability (*Pax Romana*), military might, common language, accumulated knowledge, and so forth, that was God's definition of the *fullness of times*.

Fast forward to today, where mankind has dominated every sector of life to include playing God. Man had been limited to the speed of horse up until the 19th century; the 20th saw him break the sound barrier, walk on the moon, and develop the ability to fly without an aircraft. Communication went from messenger or carrier pigeon, to the: telegraph, telephone, internet, and satellite communication. Man has discovered and figured out how to sequence, alter, add, and subtract to his DNA. Modern medicine continues to extend life beyond that which was prescribed to man. Man can control devices with his mind controlled devices, create robots and artificial intelligence. What we are witnessing now was foretold in **Daniel 12:4...**

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Even so, Maranatha!

The Last Hour

Throughout scripture, we take note of the different statements from Christ, the prophets, and the apostles regarding time in the last days. One could easily note that the prophets and apostles viewed themselves as being in the last days even in their day. This *nearness* (as we would call it) has been the cannon fodder for the skeptic, Preterist and Amillennialist alike and have used for centuries to try and beef up their eschatological positions. But seeing as how they (apostles and prophets) viewed themselves as being at the end of all things, how much closer to the Lord's return are we now than they were then?

Well for a minimum, 2,000 years closer. This then begs the question of how long the *last days* actually are in terms of bible prophecy. Here is a sampling of how the end-times are viewed in regards to time itself.

Jesus

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, *this generation* will by no means pass away till all these things take place. **Matt. 24:32-34**

And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until *the times of the Gentiles* are fulfilled...Now *when these things begin to happen*, look up and lift up your heads, because *your redemption draws near*." **Luke 21:24-28**

"And behold, *I am coming quickly*, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning* and *the End*, the First and the Last." **Revelation 22:12-13**

Peter

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive *until the times of restoration of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. **Acts 3:19-21**

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, *that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. **2 Peter 3:8-9**

Paul

But concerning *the times and the seasons*, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that *the day of the Lord* so comes as a *thief in*

the night. For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. **1**

Thessalonians 5:1-4

But *when the fullness of the time had come*, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. **Galatians 4:4-5**

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until *the fullness of the Gentiles* has come in. **Romans 11:25**

John

Little children, it is *the last hour*; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by *which we know that it is the last hour*. **1 John 2:18**

James

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, *for the coming of the Lord is at hand*.

James 5:7-8

Assessment

There should be several takeaways we see in reading this assortment of passages regarding time and our Lord’s return.

1. God does not view time as we do (i.e., linearly) but rather, in an all-encompassing manner. He sees past, present, and future simultaneously (ex. Isaiah 46:9-10). Since humans cannot do this, and God uses men to dictate His revelations (i.e., thoughts and intentions) via Scripture which they conveyed as impending or imminent.
2. God exists outside of time, but created time for man. Time then is measured by the sun, moon, stars, and seasons (Gen. 1:14). While we have a rough estimate of how long man has existed on earth (genealogical and historical calculations), we do not know how long Adam and Eve existed in the Garden of Eden prior to their fall from innocence. We *assume* 6,000 years, but man’s time on earth could be much longer.
3. If we regard the totality of man’s existence on the earth being six thousand years (from Adam until now), we, those of us who have lived after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (circa 1st century A.D.) have inhabited the last third of that 6,000 years.

4. Scripture records that God has had His plan for man's redemption, Israel, and the Church at, from, and before (respectively) the foundation of the world (Genesis 3:15, Matt. 25:34, Ephesians 1:4). This speaks to the longsuffering nature God and His desire to save as many as would be saved (2 Peter 3:8-9).
5. Christ's first coming was timed perfectly to arrive at critical juncture in time which would allow for the maximum exposure and opportunity for the Gospel to spread abroad (Gal. 4:4-5). His second coming return has been imminent, impending, and has only been held back by this same longsuffering God has toward mankind. According to Paul, there is a 'fullness' of the Gentiles that will one day be reached (Rom. 11:25) and will mark the final turning point of God from the Church back to the nation of Israel.

So if we have been in the last hour since John's day, and Christ's coming was at hand in James's day, how close is the Lord's return actually? We all know that *of that day and hour, no man knows* (Matt. 24:34), but we also know that both Jesus (Rev. 3:3) and Paul (Hebrews 10:25) told us to be watching as we see that day approaching. There are several points I would like to address in terms of knowing definitively when we are on God's time table. The first definitive marker that we can take note of, is something my good friend Matt Ward pointed out in his terrific [article](#) regarding technology and Revelation. There is a coming point in which man's ambitions exceed God's intentions;

The Bible talks of a time soon to come when there will be a one world economic and political system under one single ruler, as well as a time when each and every person on earth will be required to take a "mark" so that they can buy or sell; those without this "mark" will be excluded from all forms of commerce, even from the most basic survival food stuffs.

Mankind stands on the brink of a series of technological breakthroughs that will change this world dramatically and forever. These breakthroughs will begin to occur within the next decade, even the next few years. The problem, though, is that these future technologies predicted for just the end of the next decade seem to exceed the technology predicted in the book of Revelation. This can therefore only lead us to one logical conclusion; that the Tribulation period the Bible speaks so much of, the Time of Jacobs Trouble, lays just ahead, in the near future.

We are already making huge gains in technological breakthroughs in many areas: Artificial intelligence (which some hope [or fear] leads to the [singularity](#)), RFID chips and [genetic storage](#) for implantable tech, and gene-editing programs such as [CRISPR](#) technologies. This author believes that these breakthroughs are necessary for the *mark of the beast* program to be effectively implemented globally. But other things such as time travel, teleportation, space colonization, and super-soldiers seem to be beyond what the bible states is available at the end. However, there will be a resurgence of supernatural phenomenon as the dark spiritual forces descend upon a world without Restraint.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then* the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **2 Thess. 2:7-10**

The second point is with what John noted in his passage (1 Jn. 2:18) pertaining to the coming of the Antichrist. He states that *little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour*. Furthermore, he continues *they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us*. Think of how fractured Christianity has become over the past four centuries. How many have strayed from the simplicity of the gospel? How many sects, cults, and denominations have broken away to follow unorthodox and unbiblical teachings and traditions? How many have remained behind in Roman Catholicism which follows the teachings of men rather than *sola scriptura*? The one issue that Jesus reiterated repeatedly in the *Olivet Discourse* (Matt. 24:3-5, 24-25) was of false teachers and false messiahs.

...Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many...

...then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you beforehand.

Conclusion

There are numerous signs converging in our day that point to this coming *fullness of times*. Just as there was a fullness of time for Christ’s first advent ([Gal. 4:4-5](#)), so too will there be another fullness of times for Christ’s second.

Just as Christ’s first coming took the Jewish people by surprise, so too will His second appearing catch the world off-guard. Even many from within the Church will be caught off guard as they are not looking for His return ([Rev. 3:3](#)).

We are currently inhabiting a small window of time in which Christendom has become exactly as the Bible predicted it; weak, watered down, lukewarm, and ruled by everyone’s opinions ([Rev. 3:14-22](#)). Christendom is ripe for the coming apostasy that will sweep all the world’s religions into one giant melting pot whose nauseating fragrance reaches the heavens triggering increased judgment.

For the first time in human history, man now has the ability to destroy all life on the planet. But not to outdo ourselves, we have also developed the systems that will eventually allow one man (the coming Antichrist) to have complete power to rule over the world. No other leader has ever had that type of control at his disposal before. At the height of their power, Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and Hitler were never able to wield true global power and authority because they all lacked the same things: the technology to control all buying and selling, and the people's dependency on the same system to survive.

All the aforementioned leaders also lacked the key ingredient as it pertains to biblical eschatology, which is a revived and reborn nation of Israel back in her historic homeland. Psalm 83; Isaiah 17; Ezekiel 38-48; Zechariah 12, 14, Isaiah 2, 11, 66; Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21; 2 Thessalonians 2; and Revelation 6-19 all require a national Israel back in her land. Most of these passages also require a newly rebuilt third Jewish temple which is only possible if Israel is in control of Jerusalem, which is why the world has been so fervently trying to divide her capital for the past 40 years. All of these issues point to one inescapable fact, that if John was (according to the Holy Spirit's inspiration) in the last hour, we are in the last seconds of the last minute of that hour. So...

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all:

Watch! Mark 13:33-37

The Land of Milk, Honey, and a Very Heavy Stone

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” **Genesis 15:12-16**

The land of Israel was promised to the Jewish people (future descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) some **4,000 years ago**. At that time, the pagan peoples of the Amorites, Jebusites, Amalekites, Canaanites, Girgashites, etc., had occupied the land flowing with *milk and honey*. Around **3,600 years ago**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made good on His promise and delivered the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage and into the Promised Land (with a 40-year detour added).

3,000 years ago, King David founded the city which up until that point had been the Canaanite (Jebusite) cities of Jeru and Shalem. It is here that the angel of the Lord was in the process of destroying Jerusalem when God stopped his path of destruction near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24:16) and instructed Gad the Seer to tell King David to make the sacrifice there. Before doing that, King David bought the threshing floor and the bulls to do so. **2,000 years ago**, Jerusalem was the established capital in the Roman province of Judaea.

1,000 years ago, Jerusalem had been under the control of the Abbasid Dynasty (Muslim) and was about to be captured by the first Crusaders. **500 years ago**, the Ottoman Turks defeated the Mameluke forces and captured Jerusalem. **120 years ago**, Theodor Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. It was here that European Jews began planning to move back to their ancient homeland, which at that time, was still under the control of the Ottoman Turks. **100 years ago**, British forces liberated Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks (who had sided with the Central Powers in WWI). **70 years ago**, the Jews won their right for statehood on November 29th, 1947 at the United Nations with [Resolution 181](#).

50 years ago, the Jewish forces decisively defeated numerous Arab and Egyptian forces in the Six Day War in 1967 and recaptured the city of Jerusalem from the Jordanians in the process. **40 years ago**, US President Jimmy Carter along with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin began setting the stage for what would come to be known as the Camp David Accords. The Accords, which would set in place for the next forty years, the idea of “land for peace.” **30 years ago**, the Temple Institute was formed to make the third Jewish temple, become a reality. 22 years ago, the US Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which required the US to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem or be waived every six months.

Five days ago, US President Donald Trump didn't sign this waiver, and then officially announced Jerusalem as Israel's eternal, and undivided capital. He then instructed his State Department to begin moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He became the first US president to do so in 70 years.

Assessment

The significance of what Donald Trump just did should not be underestimated. Three previous US presidential administrations all promised during their respective campaigns to do something they probably had no intention of doing. When elected, they didn't do it because they thought they could use Jerusalem as leverage for any final peace deals. But since Trump broke ranks and did the right thing, what are we to make of our seemingly paradoxical situation? Will the US be blessed because of what he did, or will our misfortunes as a nation in moral freefall continue on the prophetic glide path towards last-days irrelevancy?

Now the LORD had said to Abram:

“Get out of your country,
from your family
and from your father's house,
to a land that I will show you.
I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
and make your name great;
and you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and I will curse him who curses you;
and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (**Gen. 12:1-3**)

To answer my recent question, I believe it will be both. We as a nation might have some respite from President Trump's decision on a geopolitical level, but I believe the blessing will be with him and those who supported his decision to officially recognize Jerusalem. He may be now viewed in the same category as the great Gentile leaders from antiquity like [Cyrus](#) or [Artaxerxes II](#) in assisting Israel's survival as a people and as a nation. (See here for [more](#))

In more recent times, he joins President Truman (the first world leader to recognize Israel as a nation) and President Nixon (who came to Israel's aid in her greatest hour of [need](#)). Both these presidents supported Israel despite tremendous opposition even from within their own administrations (compare with Ezra 4). To his credit, I believe Caroline Glick's [recent article](#) captures the essence of the Trump doctrine and how that will play out in the coming weeks, months, and years.

To sum up then, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Trump made clear that US support for Israel is not conditioned on anything. Israel, the Jewish state, is supported by the US because it deserves US support as an allied democracy. Trump strengthened himself against his political opponents by taking ownership

of a deeply popular foreign policy position. He took control of US foreign policy from a State Department that opposes his policies. He made reality, rather than the defiance of reality, the foundation of US Middle East policy. He put US allies and enemies on notice that he is calling the shots in US foreign policy. And he took a large step toward restoring US credibility as a superpower. Oh, and he accomplished all of these things without spending a dime. For his gift to Israel, Trump now enters the pantheon of Israel's friends in the annals of Jewish history. For his gifts to America he has taken his place among the most astute American statesmen. And for his political and economic mastery, he enters the ranks of the geniuses of American political history.

As to the relevancy of our nation in terms of the prophetic picture, we are still headed to the same exact place we were while under Barack Obama. Even though Cyrus and Artaxerxes II greatly aided Israel and are remembered in the annals of history for doing so, the mighty Persian Empire still fell to the rising Greek power of Philipp II and Alexander the Great. I believe God will bless President Trump's presidency, but I also still think that those who are the enemy of God and Israel, will continue to suffer at the hands of divine justice (Romans 1:16-32).

We still must contend with the reality that this world is currently under the management of Satan and his varied forces (Luke 4:5-7, 1 John 5:19). As long President Trump continues in office, he can expect intense pressure to reverse this decision. Even though Nixon aided Israel during the *Yom Kippur War*, that didn't prevent his impeachment because of Watergate. However, it was added to the righteous acts he performed in this life. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will protect Trump and his administration until his purposes at this stage of human history are complete. As to the United States, we are still heading to our appointed rendezvous with prophecy. Even we as a nation (if we are still a nation), will one day come against Israel as an enemy.

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very *heavy stone* for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. **Zechariah 12:2-3**

Conclusion

Like the iniquity of the Amorites, the fullness of the Gentiles is about run its course (Luke 21:24). The Pre-Tribulation (or pre-70th Week) Rapture will instantaneously remove all born-again believers from the earth. We know that according to Scripture, there is a final, Gentile kingdom coming that will dominate the earth for seven years (Rev. 13). According to the Prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), *the prince who is to come* is from the same people who destroyed the temple and Jerusalem in 70AD. This would make whoever the Antichrist is, come from somewhere within the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. Through the use of advanced technology (quantum computing, artificial technology, digital currency, etc.), and satanically-charged supernatural power, this *man of lawlessness* will ruthlessly rule the entire planet for a season. He starts his reign of terror with a covenant committed between Israel and the many nations (Isaiah 28:15, Dan. 9:27).

Although we don't know exactly what this covenant entails, we can reasonably assume it build off Trump's recent declaration and will probably deal with the final status of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, and the building of a new Jewish temple. We know there is a third temple because the Bible demands one to be rebuilt (Ezekiel 40-48, Matt. 24:15, 2 Thess. 2:4, Rev. 11:1-2). The world under Satan's influence has long desired to make Jerusalem an international city under the pretenses that it serves the world's three major religions. Each religion can claim some connection as Muslims and Christian's because both have conquered and held control over it for brief periods of time. In the coming weeks and months, Jerusalem will become an even greater cup of trembling as the nation's rage over this recent declaration (Zech. 12:2-3).

But what will really happen, is that this man Antichrist ([rider on the white horse](#)) will use peace as justification to take over Jerusalem maybe involved in allowing for the Jews to actually build their new temple. At the midway point of this seven years, this same man will desecrate the newly rebuilt Jewish temple by setting himself up as God-incarnate and his false prophet will demand all peoples worship him on pain of death. Jesus said that when the Jews in Jerusalem see this, they must flee Jerusalem and leave without even packing their things (Matt. 24:15-18). God will shepherd them and move them to a safe place to shelter them during the last half of Daniel's 70th Week (Isaiah 26:20-21, Rev. 12:13-17).

President Trump (like Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar) was selected by God for this appointed time, to at a minimum, do this appointed thing (recognize Jerusalem). We know that there is a spiritual conflict going on because Jerusalem is not strategically significant in any other manner than a religious one. Although the Jews as a people-group have been blinded to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at present (Romans 11:25-29), God's promises and calling to them are unchangeable (Jer. 31:35-37). After the Rapture and at a certain point during the Tribulation, they will realize that Jesus really was the Messiah, and they will call upon Him for salvation.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. **Zechariah 12:10**

Until then, pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122)

Maranatha!

The Hope of Glory

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **Colossians 1:24-27**

With September 23rd right around the corner, I found it necessary to write to you concerning the hype and the hope of the *Revelation 12 sign*. My intent here is not to curb your enthusiasm pertaining what may or may not be an event, but to guard it. First let me add my concern that on both sides, i.e., the militant supporters and cynical critics of this event, have wrought much division to the body of Christ. They have done this by remaining dogmatic in their opinions over a speculative event that may not pan out to be anything, or it may end up being everything. While one side lobs half-truths, the other returns fire with trolling and threats. I have tried to keep an open-mind concerning this and I would like to bring both the positive and negative points out concerning Revelation 12 and the attention it has recently gotten.

The Good

But let me begin with some positives concerning the Revelation 12 Sign “movement” if I can call it that. Anytime a passage of Scripture gets global attention, I think that is a good sign. It gets people asking questions about the Bible that they normally wouldn’t. Furthermore, it gets Christians back in their Bibles acting like they should have been, like Bereans. It also directs people’s attention to the return of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Inevitably, this will, even if unintentionally, wake some people up from the slumber this world has blinded them with. Lastly, much good scholarship concerning the doctrine of the Church, the Rapture, and timing in general has come because of this.

The Bad

The negatives than are that some will be convinced that something will absolutely have to happen on September 23rd. If September 23rd comes and goes without anything major or significant changing, many who planted all their hopes and dreams on that date will become disillusioned and drift away from the faith. Those who are not Christian’s will inevitably use this as simply one more thing they can pin on those “wacky” Christians who are waiting for a Messiah who will never come. I believe that Revelation 12 movement may only further validate the scoffing as found in [2 Peter 3:3-4](#) by fueling the skeptics to ask “*Where is the promise of His coming?*”

The Bottom Line

Pinning all of our Rapture credibility and our hopes on a specific date (for whatever reason) is both foolish and irresponsible. I understand that those serious about this date are not calling for a Rapture, but there are some who are. No matter how solid our evidence seems, our God sees the

end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10), so His ways may not seem logical to us at the present, no matter how much we want Him to conform to our patterns and logic. Secondly, relying on extra biblical sources cannot and should not be substituted for clear, biblical teachings on any given subject, no matter how compelling they may seem.

Assessment

So with those issues out of my way, there has been much said by both the proponents and opponents concerning the September 23rd Revelation 12 issue. Even though I am not a believer in this event per se, I find myself supporting its claims more than denying them, simply because there has been such poor scholarship done in critiquing it on the side of our prophecy ‘experts.’ Some of the false charges have been:

1. All supporters of the September 23rd event view this as the date of the Rapture
2. No legitimate bible scholars view Revelation 12 as a pre-tribulation passage
3. No man knows the day or hour, thus, the Revelation 12 proponents are all ‘false prophets’
4. Revelation 12 is in the middle of the book of Revelation, thus cannot point to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture passage
5. The child in Revelation can only be Christ

I would like to address these point by point (in the same order) to clarify some of the misconceptions put out there by well-meaning theologians, pastors, and media personalities.

1. None of the serious supporters of the Revelation 12 have stated that the Rapture will definitively happen on September 23rd or 24th. Some of them have added that the convergence of all the events together makes a strong case being then (or even in 2017), but none are telling folks to sell their things, move to the mountains, and wait for that day. That was what Harold Camping did, and I haven’t seen anyone in this group with any clout do that so far.
2. John N. Darby, Harry Ironside, Michael Svigel, Chuck Missler, and other bible scholars have held views that Revelation 12 is a strong Pre-Trib passage as well as the child also being the church. This view is not outside the mainstream.
3. While I agree with the general statement that “no man knows the day or hour,” I also have to balance that against another later statement by Jesus in [Revelation 3:3](#), in which He holds the Church accountable for knowing the hour of His coming.
 - a. In context, when Jesus explained the Olivet Discourse, He answered truthfully that ‘no man’ knew. At that point of time, in His incarnation, this was not yet revealed to Him.
 - b. We then see post-Calvary, resurrection, and ascension that the Father gave the Son the Revelation of things to come, which makes it all too reasonable to believe that Jesus was told the when and how ([Rev. 1:1](#)) because He is the ([Rev. 1:8](#)).
 - c. This, in my opinion, strengthens the argument for the seven churches of Revelation 2-3 representing the seven stages (or eras) the church would progress through.

4. Revelation 12 is nestled in the middle of Revelation. That does not, however, mean that all the events are nestled snugly in the middle of the 70th Week. Rev 12 (like Rev 11 and 13) are parenthetical insertions which span all or part of the entire seven years. Furthermore, Revelation 12 seems to be outlining events in a corporate manner that parallel Christ's first coming (which were singular). For instance:
 - a. The woman singularly was Mary. In Revelation 12, she is Israel corporately.
 - b. The child singularly was Christ. Corporately "he" is the Church (i.e., His head and body)
 - c. The dragon singularly was personified as Herod. Corporately it is Satan and his entities (or the beast system)

This appears to make much more sense in keeping with the "prophetic" or "future" nature of Revelation (Revelation 1:1, 3, 19, 4:1-2). In other words, this isn't simply a rehashing (or historical rendering) of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, but something much more intriguing.

5. Opponents of the Revelation 12 sign openly scoff at the notion that the Child/child in Revelation 12 could also represent the Church.
 - a. The child in Rev 12 is differentiated between huioi (masculine) to teknon (neuter) who did not ascend but was 'harpazo'. From my understanding of [Luke 24:51](#), Jesus was anapherō (carried up, not snatched up) to heaven.
 - b. If it was meant to convey Christ here in verse 12:5, why use harpazo if that is not what actually happened? This is why I believe John was told to use this particular phrasing.
 - c. The Church is also promised to rule with a 'rod of iron' ([Rev. 2:26-27](#)). And as Christ is the head, and the Church is the body, it is not inconceivable that we also will rule in some capacity as Scripture indicates.

Conclusion

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."
Matthew 24:36

This verse has been the champion of anti-date setters for millennia and for good cause. I believe it has tempered the tendencies of believers who are living through incredibly difficult times to not want to jump after every sign and symbol as their ticket out of here. My main issue with continuing to use this as the catch-all verse is that later, revelatory passages seem to conflict with it. Scripture as given to the Apostle Paul (the [mysteries](#) revealed) and even Jesus Himself seem to indicate that we should know the hour and the day.

But first, notice what Jesus doesn't say; "But of the day and hour no one knows *or will ever know*." The passage was written in the present-tense, and thus seems to indicate the truth of what was known at that point in time. In His human form, Jesus rightly stated that "no man knows" because, at that time (context here), He was both fully God and fully man. But in His humanity, He willingly and obediently limited Himself in His power of omniscience to trust fully in His Father's plan. Just as we humans can't see into the future, it stands to reason, that God becoming a man, would limit Himself in like-manner so as to be tested as we are in all things ([Hebrews](#)

[4:15](#)). Yet, He did it without sinning. Doubt is intricately tied to not knowing, which as **James 1:6** and **Hebrews 11:1** point out, destroys faith. Jesus demonstrated perfect faith in the Father, which would by necessity mean He limited Himself in what He knew if He were to be tested in every way as we mortals are.

But as indicated in Revelation 1:1, Jesus was given the Revelation at some point after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. This was what the Apostle John, imprisoned on the isle of Patmos in 95AD, was witness to. In His seven letters, Jesus tells the church at Sardis this:

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. **Revelation 3:3**

As [Robert Breaker](#) academically points out in his great YouTube videos, the opposite of not knowing what hour He will come, is knowing the hour He will come. This then supports [Hebrews 10:25](#) in that we will *see the Day approaching*. Well, if we truly had no way of knowing anything concerning our Lord's return, both **Rev. 3:3** and **Hebrews 10:25** couldn't be true. How can we see the Day approaching if we had no way of knowing what or when that Day was? The Apostle Paul includes a similar theme in **1st Thessalonians 5:1-6**:

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-6**

The Messiah (Jesus Christ) was prophesied in the Old Testament of having two comings. We know that in hindsight, but the first century Jew's mistakenly believed that it was only one coming. They also believed that when the Christ did come, He would immediately usher in the Kingdom in that same arrival. Even Jesus's disciples didn't fully understand this after all was said and done (Acts 1:6-7).

The First Coming was explicitly given to the Jews in the *70 Weeks of Daniel* prophecy. This narrowed it to the year of His entry into the city of Jerusalem to which we know as *Palm Sunday* ([Luke 19:41-44](#)). Were the Pharisees and Sadducees wrong for not recognizing the time of their visitation? Absolutely, Jesus held them accountable for not knowing (Matthew 16:1-4). Likewise, I believe, given the number of warnings and admonitions to watch and be ready in the New Testament, the Church will also be held responsible for being caught off guard. Why watch if we don't know what we are watching for? Watchfulness has both a singular and corporate application:

1. We as individuals don't know the time of our own death, so we must always be prepared to meet the Lord
2. We as a body of believers, must watch to recognize the season of our Lord's return

While it is impossible to know exactly when the Rapture will occur, I believe that the compounding nature of mankind's sin (there is a fullness coming), the convergence of prophetic

events, and the timing in relation to Israel's rebirth as a nation, all must be taking into account. I also believe that although we won't know the specific day of the Rapture, we should recognize the season. Furthermore, as Christ literally fulfilled the Spring Feasts in order, it stands to reason that He will also fulfill the Fall Feasts literally in order as well. How the feasts tie into the Church's departure, is up for debate.

To me, it would make sense that He either return for His Church in 2017 or 2018 at the latest, given the significance of the specific timing relating to Israel's return as a nation ([parable of the fig tree](#)). Then again, I am not God so His ways and thinking trump my understanding. He may have some other design that is more in keeping with the *fullness of time* than anything I can conceive. With that said, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, we should be excited about the soon return of our Lord. Given our current state of affairs both here and abroad, things will not continue on indefinitely. As Pastor J.D. Farag once noted, our world has a shelf-life.

So we temper our hope against the hype by staying in the word of God and testing everything by it. While the *Revelation 12 movement* has many positive aspects to it, like with everything else, we must put it to the test. And it may be that September 23rd comes and goes, but that should not diminish our hope in the Lord's soon return. My hope was never in a date, but in a Person, the God-Man Jesus Christ. The hope we have was made possible by Jesus Christ, who redeems us from sin and death. We are not simply being saved to be saved, *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 2:4-7)

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. **Luke 21:28**

The Grapes of Wrath

“The non-intervention of God bears very heavy interest, and He is greatly to be feared when He does nothing. He moves in long orbits, out of sight and sound. But He always arrives. Nothing can arrest the judgment of the Cross; nothing shake the judgment-seat of Christ” (PT Forsyth in *The Justification of God*)

Convergence has been a popular buzz-word within prophecy circles over the past few years and rightly so. With so many prophetically-charged events now running simultaneously, it has become increasingly difficult to keep track of them all. You’d think with so many signs ongoing, Christendom would be pulsing with the anticipation at the soon coming of our Lord. But it’s not. In fact, the chorus of legitimate *watchmen on the wall* is diminishing by the day. It is becoming exactly as Jesus contemplated regarding this moment in time when He asked...*nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*

But I wonder if commenting on *convergence* is more akin to looking at the symptoms rather than the cause of the issue, which is the *compounding* nature of sin. We note that in the **70th Week of Daniel** (what many commonly refer to as the seven year Tribulation), the 21 judgments that are doled out by God onto the earth and the earth-dwellers, are exacting punishments for sin built up over millennia. The Seal judgments (Rev. 6) usher in a government without God. The Trumpet judgments usher in increasingly painful punishments for things like idolatry and blasphemy. The Bowl judgments are even more increasingly severe than the Trumpet judgments. Each of these judgments has a very Old Testament, Exodus-era feel to them if we look back to the plagues exacted upon Egypt during the Israelites liberation from Egyptian bondage.

Man’s path toward self-enlightenment has become a steadily darkening journey into the abyss. If the entire race of mankind were a single body, consider sin’s initial at the Garden of Eden as that of a mosquito bite. Yet, that painless mosquito bite delivered a pathogen which has been steadily working its way throughout the body infecting limb and torso alike. Over time, that body starts to breakdown as the tale-tell symptoms of malaria or yellow fever causes one to begin to suffer from fever, vomiting, and headaches. And if left untreated, seizures, coma, or death will follow.

Yet, it all started from a single, painless, bite.

God’s remedy for man’s fatal illness was Jesus Christ. Because God’s perfect justice demands innocent blood to be shed to atone for man’s failures, a system was set in place to temporarily sustain the nation of Israel until their Messiah could come and permanently provide the cure to man’s mortality and corruption. God knew they (Israel) would reject their Messiah and so Jesus was betrayed and crucified in keeping with the prophecies already outlined in the Old Testament scripture.

There was also a four hundred year buffer (the silent years) in which the nation of Israel could contemplate and await their coming Redeemer. In fact, there was an approximate [timeline](#) as given to the prophet Daniel, but this too was ignored. Instead of contemplation and anticipation,

what came to be was disillusionment and apathy. This was because the religious leadership of their day (first century Pharisees and Sadducees) became grossly engaged in promoting the religion over the One in whom that religion pointed towards...Jesus of Nazareth. The sad truth is that they knew better, but they promoted a lie to keep themselves in power. Hence the reason for the severity and fierceness of Jesus's rebukes whom He reserved exclusively for the Jewish clergy.

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red*'; and in the morning, '*It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening*.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

Matthew 16:1-4

Assessment

Imagine all the lies ever told and believed. Even a small lie will grow over time and spread like a cancer through a person's body. Before long, that cancer spreads to the brain and begins impacting critical thought and motor-skills alike. We know that the first lie ever told was by Satan, and it had to do with man becoming like God ([Genesis 3:1-5](#)). Since then, this lie has been repackaged over and over so many times that it has infected almost every facet of our world. Just think of every single philosophy, institution, or concept ever put forth that either remove Jesus Christ from the solution or substitutes someone (or something) else in His place. The world has become grossly anti-Christ, and in keeping with this, the Bible states that in the last days, men and women would lose their ability to reason primarily because of the compounding nature of sin.

...And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (See **Romans 1:18-32**)

So we have now arrived at this generation who has been so thoroughly corrupted on a global scale, that this antichrist spirit has so saturated every facet of our generation. Education, religion, philosophy, science, government, politics, military, and economics have all become corrupted. Mankind is again reaching that point where they are so mentally, morally, and spiritually bankrupt that they are unable to reason any longer. This breakdown can be clearly evidenced just by turning on the news or reading the day's headlines. But there is still a remnant of society who are the blood-bought redeemed and cannot be tainted, this being the Church.

Abraham once pleaded with God on Lot's behalf that He should spare Sodom from destruction on account of the righteous that still lived there (Gen. 18:16-33). In Gen. 18:23, Abraham puts forth a biblically foundational question by asking God... *Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*

After much bargaining, God finally settles on a number with Abraham in which if they found ten righteous persons residing in those cities, God would withhold judgment. They parted ways and a period of time passed in which God's judgment was withheld. But when judgment did come, God honored His commitment to Abraham by removing Lot and his family before enacting His wrath upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of [temptations](#) and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment... 2 Peter 2:4-11

Conclusion

There is an interesting correlation between man's progressive sin nature and God's progressive judgment in dealing with that nature. It is almost like the law of diminishing returns, in which there is less and less good that comes from man's extended stay on this planet. Within 1,650 years of Adam and Eve's fall, man had become so sinful, wicked, and genetically corrupt that God had to destroy the world with a flood sparing only eight persons. In Lot's day (around 2,000 years from Adam's fall), the cities of the plains surrounding Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed with fire sparing only Lot and his two daughters (not counting the salted wife). From then until Christ (2,000 years later), numerous nations and empires rose and fell allowing for the conditions to be exactly perfect (fullness of time) for the arrival of the first coming of the Messiah ([Gal. 4:4-5](#)).

As previously mentioned, the number of those who are still waiting for the Lord to return is diminishing number. Out of the seven and a half billion people alive on the planet today, only two billion claims some form of the Christian faith (about half Protestant, half Catholic). Out of the two billion 'Christians,' only around one billion believe that Jesus will ever physically return to the earth. Out of the one billion, perhaps only 10% of that believe Christ will come back in their lifetime. Of that number (100,000,000), perhaps 15% (15,000,000) believe that Christ's return is imminent. So 15M out of 7.5B is about .2% of the total global population believe Christ's return is imminent. Not a lot of people when you look at it from that perspective.

According to a [2010 Pew Research poll](#), only 41% of Americans believe that Jesus will return within the next forty years. Another 41% say He will not return until after 2050. Of **US Christians**, only [47%](#) believe Christ will come back at all. Not encouraging numbers at all and probably less so today. But remember the Bible only mentions a couple of people actively anticipating Christ's first coming (Simeon, Anna, and Gentile wise men) as well as the shepherds who were in the fields that night who were prompted to witness the arrival of their Messiah by the angelic host. There was no great anticipation or expectation then that the Messiah would ever come. Were it so; we would know the exact date of Christ's birth because that day would be celebrated as a holiday, rather than the day we've historically settled on (Christmas).

The same will be true about Christ's return for His Church at the *harpazo* (the Rapture) in which the world will be going about its day to day activities desensitized to the prophetic markers heralding Christ's soon return.

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all...Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **Luke 17:26-30**

Just as the Jews awaited the arrival of their Messiah in the 400 *silent years*, we (the Church) have been waiting for 2,000 silent years awaiting His return. Not that it means anything concretely, but 400 goes into 2,000 five times. The number [five](#) in scripture symbolizes God's *grace* and goodness towards man. 400 years was also the number of years that God prophesied over Abraham in His covenant (Genesis 15:16-21) in which Abrahams descendants would be in bondage and wait until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete. Then God would use the Israelites as the mechanism of His judgment against the Amorites for their compounded sinfulness.

Since God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9), He has allowed this extended period of time for the Gentiles to receive this *grace upon grace* (John 1:16) which has now come to be 2,000 years. But this grace period will NOT continue indefinitely. There will come again a *fullness of time* in which the conditions are perfect for the Son to return to receive back His bride the Church (John 14:1-3). But after the Rapture, God's [common grace](#) towards mankind will come to an end as they are given over to a strong delusion (2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12). God's eternal gaze returns solely to disciplining His covenant nation of Israel and making a full end to all the nations she had been scattered to (Jer. 30:7-11).

While we do not see instant justice exacted for all the wrong doings in this world, our hope and trust lies in God who has and will not let one single error slip through the cracks. All of the blood ever spilled on the earth will be judged. All the evil things done in the thick of darkness will be brought to light. All of the injustices ever wrought by man upon man will be accounted for. The [grapes of God's wrath](#) will be pressed and the winepress found overflowing. So while we see a world today that is currently upside down and reeling to and fro like a drunkard drunk on sin, Jesus Himself will put an end to man and Satan's wickedness once and for all as He establishes His never ending kingdom on the earth and throughout eternity. But first, in keeping with Abraham's question, God will remove His own before He unleashes His wrath upon a world ripe for judgment.

For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me:
"Take this wine cup of fury from My hand,
and cause all the nations, to whom I send you,
to drink it. And they will drink and stagger
and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them..."

...The Lord will roar from on high,
And utter His voice from His holy habitation;
He will roar mightily against His fold.
He will give a shout, as those who tread *the grapes*,
Against all the inhabitants of the earth.

A noise will come to the ends of the earth—
For the Lord has a controversy with the nations;
He will plead His case with all flesh.
He will give those *who are* wicked to the sword,' says the Lord.”

Jeremiah 25:15-16, 30-31

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown

As we enjoy this Christmas Season, it is fitting for Christian households and churches to focus on the first coming of Jesus Christ. In times past, and perhaps not so much anymore, one could see the manger scenes in town squares and in front of churches of all denominations. Christmas cards bearing the Star or the three Wisemen are passed amongst believers during this season. Preachers preach predominantly from Matthew 1-2, churches hold cantatas and the sounds of “peace on earth, good will toward men” fill the ears of believers round the world. Bethlehem, Israel becomes the focus of world stage once again, as Christian’s flock to the *Church of the Nativity*, which is currently held hostage by the Palestinian movement.

The Cradle

Perhaps people like to focus on Christ as an innocent baby or focus on the role of parenthood as Mary and Joseph cared for this child who came about supernaturally. The virgin birth of Christ and the role of Mary figures largely in Catholic circles and also in liberal and secular circles where the possibility of a virgin birth is denied. Thus Christmas, as to its true meaning (unto you is born a Savior), is controversial.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the
adoption as sons. **Galatians 4:4-5**

When *the fullness of time had come*...is a phrase so packed with meaning that it would not be possible to break it all down in the limited space (or ability) I have at my disposal. But it speaks to the eternal purpose of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind, and of all created order. It speaks to the specific moments on man’s timeline, when God would intervene, in a supernatural and visible way, to put feet to His plan.

Dr. Andy Wood’s makes much use of this phrase in his teachings, and really brought to my mind, the preciseness and purpose for why God chose that particular time frame for Christ’s first coming. Consider these points:

1. Since Alexander the Great, Koine Greek became the predominant common language in the Mediterranean. Koine Greek is a very precise language which is perfect for capturing the original intent and meaning of the Scriptures...no matter which language they get translated into in the future.
2. The [Roman](#) republic form of government ends under Julius Caesar and he creates a total dynastic dictatorship under what would become the rule of the Caesars. Christ was born and dies under the reign of a Caesar, and will return one day when another Caesar (Antichrist) who has set his empire up over the whole world.
3. The Roman’s perfected the creation of the road networks, which spanned the boundaries of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Europe, and even up into Britain.

4. Israel remained under the subjugation of Gentile powers (as described in Daniel 2:31-45, 7, 8, & 11) which had played out from the time of their exile to Babylon (605-539BC)

So looking at it from a holistic point of view, there was a common language (Koine Greek), an advanced network for travel (all roads lead to Rome), dominant pagan world power (fertile fields no doubt), and Israel in the final years before her diaspora. Unknown exactly which year Christ was born in, or rather, is much in dispute to the exact year, we know when He was born the nation of Israel wasn't expecting it. We know from the world's perspective, the birth of the Christ in some backwater province of the Roman Empire, didn't even register a blip on their geo-political radar. We know Christ lived up unto the age of 30 virtually as an unknown, before exploding onto the scene to present the world with 3 ½ years of God in the flesh, ministry. At the end of that, He managed to make the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots mad enough to trump up false charges and have Him brought before the Sanhedrin to be tried as a political prisoner.

The Cross

In Genesis 49, Jacob was blessing his sons, who would become the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. When Jacob came to bless Judah, he gave him an interesting prophecy;

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

Also, in Numbers 24:17, the prophet Balaam prophesied that this same scepter would be accompanied by a Star, by which the wise men (Matt. 2:2) would know where this One born King of the Jews would be.

"I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy all the sons of tumult

Modern Jewish scholars today will refute that Christ is the Messiah because their argument is that the 'scepter' departed from Judah back in 605BC when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Furthermore, that from then, until 1948, the Jewish nation had been under some form of Gentile domination. All that is true. But what is also true is that the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans allowed the Jews to have a semi-autonomous rule (Zerubbabel, Ezra, Maccabeus) over themselves, up until King Herod Archelaus was removed from power by Julius Caesar in 6AD (Josephus, Antiquities 17:13). That's when the Jews lost any remaining semblance of autonomy and were subject to a series of Roman procurators with Pontius Pilate being one.

Since Jews were either not anticipating the coming of their Messiah, or had largely ignored the literal fulfillment of the prophecies pertaining to Christ's first coming, they thought they had lost

their right to wield capital punishment on Him, which is why they had to turn it over to Pilate for the official sentence. Now, that didn't stop them previously from trying to stone Him to death on a couple prior occasions when they were riled up, but He always managed to allude them. ([John 8:58-59, 10:30-33](#)) They (the Sanhedrin) didn't want to crucify Him on Passover because of the negative publicity, but again, the timing was such that God orchestrated everything to coincide with exactly the Passover Feast. ([Mark 14:1-2](#); 1 Cor. 2:6-8)

The victory at the Cross represented something much more significant than a literal kingdom on earth (which is still yet to come), but that Christ conquered death and hell. ([Rev. 1:18](#)) Because Christ had to be a man to die for the rest of mankind as our Kinsman Redeemer, Christ willingly endured the joy set before Him, in order to pay the price for OUR salvation. (Lev. 25; Heb. 12:2; [Rev. 5:6-10](#)) It would be equivalent to God rigging a game that placed all the burden and rules against Himself so that by His losing, we win. Christ trading His own perfect holiness, for our sinful and corrupted lives, is oft referred to as the most lopsided trade in all of recorded history...yet, that is exactly what transpired. We don't think about it this way, but God the Son, traded His former estate, to take on forever, that of God in a [glorified human body](#).

The Crown

I've often heard Amillennialists and Preterists state emphatically, that Christ will not return to rule and reign on earth because they say that we are now in the Kingdom. I couldn't disagree more. The Scriptures tell us, that this world, is under the sway and control of Satan himself. (Luke 4:5-6; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 2:13) As much as these might wish, the Cross didn't usher in some Edenic age where lambs lay down with wolves, children play with cobras, and nations beat their swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2:4, 11:2-8). Any interpretation that detracts from the actuality that God Himself will right the wrongs, and restore nature back to its original order. Anything less than that is to depart from the plain reading of the text into allegorical folly.

It was to King David that God said, "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom." (1 Chron. 17:11) God states over and over, that the Kingdom Come is not established by man or by earthly efforts, but by God Himself (Dan. 2:44-45; Psalm 2; Rev. 19:11-16). There is the idea that the Kingdom is purely spiritual, and is argued that the Kingdom is now in play, only in the heavenly realms, this by taking several texts out of context. (Luke 17:20-22; Romans 14:17) If those who deny the literal coming Millennial Kingdom on earth had their way;

Christ would only come to earth to die, and not to reign; for Christ to be born 'King of the Jews', but to not actually become "King of the Jews"; for Him to ride a donkey, but not a white horse; for Christ to be spat on, beaten, and hang naked upon a cross of shame, but not to return in triumphal glory coming on the clouds with the armies of heaven behind Him. If Christ doesn't return, then He remains defeated on the earth that He spoke into existence, that God's word does not mean what it says, and that God can break unbreakable promises.

The reason that men and women promote these heterodox teachings, is because of man-made religion, whether it be Roman Catholic or Protestant, have become too invested in the things of this world. They want life to continue on, or maybe they just see life continuing on and on, in some endless cycle of man rising and falling (2 Peter 3). They have to depart from a plain sense reading of the text and insert their own interpretation, which supplants God's promise to return in victory and claim what is rightfully His. And not only to claim what is His, but that every knee should bow, whether it is in heaven, on earth, under the earth, throughout all of creation, and confess that Jesus Christ is King (Philippians 2:9-11). Are these folk saying that Christ is free to rule everywhere, but the earth?

The Christ-rejecting world as well as those Christians who have fallen into spiritual slumber, will be astonished in that Day, when Christ comes for His Church. Because that Day, opens the window of time, for the Tribulation to begin. It doesn't begin the Tribulation, but the Church has to be removed prior to the start of that final week of years, in which at some point afterward (days, weeks, months, years), the seven year Tribulation will begin just as it is noted in [Daniel 9:27](#). The final seven-years will be the most horrific, violent, and devastating period of time humanity has ever seen ([Matt. 24:21-22](#)). God will accomplish two things by it; first, He disciplines Israel, and second, He destroys all the Gentile nations round about her, by bringing the whole Babylonian system crashing to the ground ([Jer. 30:7-11](#)).

It is noted in the Prophets, that THAT DAY will begin in unimaginable calamity, perhaps masking the Church's departure. The prophet Joel records... "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord." Paul writes that "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when **they** say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon **them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And **they** shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." **1 Thess. 5:2-4**

Make no mistake that the Lord will return and will come with the clouds and in great power and glory. Christ will come and reclaim that which was lost with Adam. He has the title deed to the earth. He no longer wears the crown of thorns, but now wears 'many crowns', meaning He has ALL authority. When the holy prophet Isaiah saw the throne room, he was [undone](#). When the holy prophet Daniel sees the throne room, he was [shaken](#). When John sees the glorified Christ in all His splendor, he [falls](#) over as dead. How much more traumatized will an unrepentant, Christ-rejecting world be when it sees the sky splitting open and Christ returning in power and glory? The whole world will mourn ([Rev. 1:7](#)). The world at this moment doesn't care. The religionists try to minimize or explain-away His soon coming with fanciful wordsmithing. Those actively opposed to Christ, who loathe Him and are filled with vengeance because this age is coming to an end, are ramping up evil in these final moments...

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until

our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. **1 Timothy 6:11-16**

First published December 1st, 2014

The 'Church of Christ' in the Last Days

In Defense of the Faith
Monday, December 30, 2013
Pete Garcia

Chances are, if you belong to a *Church of Christ* (non-instrumental), you probably wouldn't be reading the Omega Letter in the first place. But I have met enough people along the way who were or know people who are that I thought this warranted writing.

I was born and raised Southern Baptist, but married into a five generation-strong *Church of Christ* family. Having attended almost a dozen different *Churches of Christ* in three different states, I have come to notice similarities and differences amongst all these different churches. But there is one common thread in all of the ones we have attended.

Churches of Christ pride themselves in following the early church model as found in the book of Acts, and not falling underneath any type of hierarchical structure of a higher organization, such as the Southern Baptist do with their SBC Convention or how the Vatican does with the Roman Catholic churches. Each *Church of Christ* is an independent island of believers rooted together in common faith. But this is also why there have been so many different types of *Churches of Christ* who have branched out or split apart since the [Stone-Campbell movement](#) in the 1800's.

Recently, I attended a Wednesday night bible study at the local *Church of Christ* and was entreated to a class that could for all intents and purposes be called "the Dangers of Dispensationalism" or "why futurism is a faulty view," as I think that ultimately this was at the heart of his teaching. The preacher teaching the class began to hit some rapid fire points right off the bat to include a clip from the *Left Behind* movie that came out in 2000.

1. Dispensationalism began in the 1800's with John Nelson Darby---thus can't be trusted.
2. Israel uprooted the local population in 1948 and thus has become much of the problem in the Middle East
3. American politics and churches are overwhelmingly Dispensational which is why we are so 'pro-Israel' which of course is dangerous
4. You cannot take the book of Revelation literally or chronologically as it is "Apocalyptic literature", thus in its "own" special kind of category.

Not knowing what was being taught that night and being a Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist, I of course took exception too much of the discussion. I spoke up politely because much of what was being taught simply wasn't true. This of course didn't sit well with the preacher who probably didn't anticipate being challenged on any of his prescribed views and led to my early self-dismissal from the class. But this experience got me thinking.

Question: If *Churches of Christ* are supposed to be stand-alone churches (not bound by creeds or indoctrinated by some higher organization), why do they all tend to hold to the same Eschatological view? [See [Revelation 19:10](#)]

The How and Why

After this class, I began to research this more in depth and came across an article released through Pepperdine University (in the January 2000 edition of *Leaven* magazine) by a Dr. Lynn Mitchell entitled [*Eschatology: Essential, Yet Essentially Ignored*](#). The author belongs to the *Church of Christ*, and was writing essentially to ask the same question I am asking here now 14 years later. He makes some interesting points that seem common across the *Churches of Christ*. He notes two interesting points in the history of the *Church of Christ's* eschatological understanding. The first he chronicles how it happened:

“Eschatology died as a living concern among our churches because of at least four related developments:

- (1) The acceptance of the church-kingdom identity fostered by Tolbert Fanning and like-minded sectarians;
- (2) The powerful and brutal assault on millennial modes of thought and millennial thinkers, particularly premillennial, by the Foy E. Wallace Jr. cadre of de-eschatologizers;
- (3) The subsequent ruthlessly enforced triumph of Amillennialism and the dogma of church-kingdom identity; and
- (4) The filling of the vacuum in eschatological thinking with inane, hybridized life-after-death language uninformed by biblical or systematic theology.”

Dr. Mitchell succinctly sums up the end result of such theological witch-hunts within the Churches of Christ in his essay:

"All we have left is ah-millennialism."

"We are neither passionately radical nor invigoratingly hopeful."

As to [Foy E. Wallace Jr.](#), history records he made it his personal mission to stomp out Pre-Millennialism single handedly if need be:

In October 1935 Wallace founded the *Gospel Guardian* as a monthly magazine primarily to combat the views of the premillennialists. The *Gospel Guardian* ended in June 1936 and merged with the [Firm Foundation](#). In 1937 Wallace was the front-page writer for the *Firm Foundation*. In 1938 Wallace founded the *Bible Banner*, initially also dedicated to the defeat of premillennial doctrine.

By the early 1940s, every significant paper and college associated with Churches of Christ took the [amillennial](#) position, often, like Wallace, never using the terms *amillennial* or *Amillennialism*. By 1949, when Wallace ceased publishing the *Bible Banner*, this campaign had been so effective that fewer than a hundred congregations

adhered to the premillennial view, and those generally isolated from the mainline, as they remained for decades.

Dr. Mitchell does a decent job of showing why the modern *Church of Christ* churches and universities promote the Amillennial eschatological view over all the others. I pointed out on that fateful Wednesday night that it was to the credit of Augustine of Hippo (circa-5th century A.D.) that Amillennialism even existed. Augustine wrote and developed much of what the Roman Catholic Church adheres to as doctrine and dogma. This revelation went over like a wet blanket on a cold night.

In all the discussions I've had with *Church of Christ* elders, deacons, preachers, and church members over the years, there is a general consensus that Eschatology is best left to the experts, and the "experts" all hold to either an Amillennial, Pan-millennial (it will all pan out in the end), or [Preterist](#) view of Bible prophecy.

If the conversation continued long enough, the unanimous conclusion drawn from my counterpart is almost always "why does Eschatology even matter for the here and now?"

So why does it matter? I've stated in previous articles that how one views the end, will largely shape how one views the here and now. Would it matter if you don't believe in God or an afterlife? Would it matter if you believed that you were THE kingdom come here on earth now? Would it matter if you believed that life will just go on and on until the end of time when God one day just pulls up the curtains and says 'That's All, Folks!' Would it matter if you believed that Christ could return at any moment?

"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
Luke 12:40

Aside from the historical origins of Amillennialism, accepting this view comes with some significant theological challenges. First of which, is the amount of prophetic scriptures one has to either dismiss as "apocalyptic literature" or has to allegorize to such an extent that it could mean anything. That would mean about 30 % of your Bible (both Old and New) were now up for grabs.

The Critics

[German Higher Criticism](#) came about around the 18th century promoting and attempting to answer the inerrancy claims of the Scriptures from a philosophical and rationalist perspective. It was birthed in Europe, but soon moved to the American seminaries as many of these clergy departed Europe for the New World. One of the products of their teachings was developing a Lower Criticism and a Higher Criticism. The lower dealt with the actual physical translations and texts (or how they came together over the centuries) and the Higher dealt with the actual content of the messages.

The Maccabean Jews had first coined the term "apocalyptic literature". But since they (nor Judaism) accepted the New Testament, this term would later be co-opted by the critics who used

it in describing the Revelation and other text that fell into this category. It seemingly gave license to teachers and preachers to either dismiss or allegorize the prophetic text. At the very least, “apocalyptic literature” would not receive the same theological weight as say the Gospels or the Epistles.

Question: What happened to the Holy Spirit being the true Author of Scriptures? [See [2 Tim 3:16-17](#), [Hebrews 4:12-13](#)]

The term “apocalyptic literature” soon became a catchall phrase for all the passages of scripture that seemingly argued against Amillennialism. The main problem with this is that one cannot hold to a **consistent** view of Scriptures and simultaneously promote Higher Criticism at the same time because they work against each other.

For example, higher critics would argue that half of Daniel (chapters 7-12) was written in the 2nd century B.C., because it too accurately predicted the rise and fall of nations that came to pass from Daniel’s time (5th-6th century BC) to the time of Christ. They neglect the truth that the true author of Scripture was not Daniel, but God.

There is a danger to this type of ‘higher criticism’ thinking. **Almost** every *Church of Christ* elder or preacher that I have spoken too on this topic have no issue with all the prophecies that foretold the first coming of Christ...of which around [108 prophecies](#) were **literally** fulfilled. Yet, they tend to dismiss the next 300 or so prophecies concerning Christ’s Second Coming as ‘apocalyptic literature.’ The Pharisees of Jesus’s day applied this same type of dismissive reasoning to His first coming. Think about that for a second.

When the wise men (Magi from the East) came to worship Christ, notice how King Herod’s chief priests and scribes all knew about the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, but none of them really believed it or they would have already been searching Him out. At the very least, they would have travelled the five miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem with the Wise men to see for themselves. But they didn’t. [See [Matthew 2](#)]

One last point that I heard reiterated from time to time in C of C churches is that prophecy is based on the Hebraic Mindset, and that prophecy is pattern, and not to be taken chronologically as laid out in the book of Revelation. That is true to an extent, but that is not the whole truth. Jesus responds to His disciple’s questions about the last days sequentially in the Olivet Discourse ([Matt. 24](#), [Mark 13](#), [Luke 21](#))...of which [Revelation 6-19](#) is merely an expansion on.

Question: Was Jesus using Hebraic reasoning that spoke in patterns as ‘apocalyptic literature’ in the Olivet Discourse, or was He, as God, answering sequentially the question that His disciples asked Him about the last days?

Assessment

The hour is too late and the day too far gone to spend your time either not knowing or deliberately ignoring what God has to say about our immediate future. There is nothing wrong with taking a literal understanding of the Bible. Yes there are different types of speech contained

in Scripture: Parables, euphemisms, figures of speech, symbolism, metaphors, etc. But just using a commonsense approach to Scriptures solves a lot of these differences. Having a literal understanding, doesn't have to be "wooden" or rigid as some would say, it's totally based on the understanding that God instructed men what to write, and God is not bound to time like we are. 'He declares the end from the beginning' ([Isaiah 46:9-10](#)) and what He says will come to pass.

You don't have to believe what I write, but be a [Berean](#) and search these things out for yourself. Don't just take what a guy in the pulpit tells you because he went to seminary and you didn't. As believers, we all belong to the body of Christ and we all received the same Holy Spirit who will reveal to you these things you seek out. I'll close with a warning by Jesus to a church that no longer concerned themselves about watching for His return. We too should take heed, since Jesus ends this (as He does with all the others) by saying 'He who has an ear, let him hear'...

"Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you." **Revelation 3:3**

Stranger Things

America 2017 could not be a weirder time to be alive. I know you see it too. It is as if *the spirit of lawlessness* had suddenly decided to manifest itself in a very real and tangible way. The century's long battle over American ideology has finally come to a head, and the results are not pretty. But adding to the rapid and widespread increase of wickedness, something equally diabolical was/is afoot; the hijacking of the information age. By hijacking, I mean there is as much misinformation as there is real information mixed in with what we call the mainstream news today.

When people don't know what to believe or trust anymore, it causes them to either mentally check-out or go into full-blown panic mode. The mainstream news (people and organizations) are overwhelmingly leftist (progressive) in their political and ideological worldviews, and they want to drive the national narrative. The reason they had to hijack the narrative, is that *objective truth* (what is) is lethal to their left-wing ideological pattern of *subjective reasoning* (the agenda). So if truth can't be destroyed, the only options left for the left, is to either silence (by force) those who oppose their view, or to sow as much confusion into what is real, that the truth becomes completely obscured.

Clearly, this has been going on for some time now. How *the spirit of lawlessness* has become visible in 2017, is that we've actually moved beyond obfuscation. We are now to the point where truth has become irrelevant.

A Spiritual Vacuum

I do not have the time or space to rehash four centuries worth of spiritual movements, awakenings, and revivals throughout America's history. But I do want to touch on a weird, brief, flirtation Americans (and Europeans) had at the turn of the previous century. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the world briefly flirted with [spiritualism](#) (secret societies, Theosophy, séances, mediums, Aleister Crowley, magicians, Spiritism, cults, etc.) before shifting hard into decades of "science" based human-secularism. That ideological shift resulted in the deaths of hundreds of millions of people who were subjugated to militant atheism backed by the political auspices of communism, socialism, and fascism that ran strong from the 1920's through the 1970's.

But that ideological shift away from atheism toward spiritualism began in the 1960s and generally stayed the pattern through to the early 2000's. This was largely due to the popularization of rock (rap/country/etc.) music, free love, recreational drugs, and Eastern Mysticism. People were desperately trying to find a meaning for life apart from Biblical truth. What we are witnessing today is the swing away from sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll (hedonism), into the incorporation of music, occultic and Eastern spiritualism, but infused with technology (via the Internet, virtual reality, robotics, artificial intelligence), and pharmaceutical enhancements.

Truth v. Fiction

Objective truth is as popular now, as acne was when you were a teenager. 2017 has become a watershed year where subjective reasoning and people's feelings finally trump reality. We are to the point now where the government is actually [mandating](#) many of these things, for example:

- Men can identify as women.
- Women can identify as men.
- Men and women can identify as either, or neither.
- Physically healthy people can identify as disabled.
- Adults can identify as toddlers or babies or animals.
- Babies are no longer human.
- Human overpopulation is the world's second greatest problem.
- The world's first great problem, (whether anyone admits it or not) is that Israel exists again.
- Borders and walls are bad.
- Unchecked immigration is good.
- Islam equals peace.
- Christianity equals hate.
- The American Constitution no longer matters.
- Socialism is in.
- Capitalism is now fascism.

The sad thing is that if you disagree with any of the above, you are labeled a hater, homophobe, Islamophobe, racist, bigot, fascist, etc. While this is troubling, stranger things than this are on the horizon. Truth is violently being redefined to mean whatever the hearer wants it to mean. This spirit of lawlessness has demonic fingerprints all over it. And it stands to reason that if evil spirits could use drugs, music, and the occult as gateways into demonic possession and oppression, the same could be done with technology and the abandonment of truth. All of these then are simply mechanisms (tools) that dark forces use to ensnare people into a web of lies that deadens discernment and even the ability to reason. For this reason then...*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...* ([Romans 1:18-32](#)).

If we look at what the Bible says the future looks like, it becomes apparent that the supernatural world is bubbling back to the forefront and is being fused with drugs ([Pharmakeia](#)) and technology to provide a worldwide deception for people who willingly abandoned the truth.

The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. **2 Thess. 2:9-12**

A Brief History

Although many today would consider it a time without equal, we have in certain ways, found ourselves eerily paralleling two other periods of human history. On a cultural level, we are living

in a time as described by Jesus is as being as it was “[in the days of Noah](#).” Geopolitically speaking, I would liken our world in 2017 to pre-World War I Europe.

Between the years 1890 and 1914 (this being the same period of the spiritual interest in the occult), the *zeitgeist* in Europe was a volatile mixture of competing philosophies (economic and governmental), rapidly developing technologies, and ever-increasing political tension. The political instability caused the leaders of the European aristocracy to begin ramping up their militaries in the potential that *something* would eventually happen. They didn’t know what that “something” was, or how it would manifest itself, but it was in the air. They could sense it. By the time they could see it (the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria), it was too late. Things were in motion that could not be undone. And as the writer Anatole Kaletsky once noted, things went *straight from impossible to inevitable — without ever passing through improbable*.

The Change Agent

If the world (in its current form) were going to be here decades from now, people then would view the election of President Donald J. Trump as probably the single greatest disruption to American politics since Abraham Lincoln. A complete political outsider with enough connections, resources, and political-moxie to run and soundly beat the anointed successor (H.R.C.). His victory stunned the elites and derailed their globalist agenda. Since day one, he (Trump) has been fighting multiple running gun-battles with: A hostile media, deep-state bureaucracies (shadow government), Democrat and Republican aristocrats, pop culture, the NFL, Mexicans, and angry millennials...and those are just within our borders.

Outside the U.S., the sea of nations is restlessly churning and turning. The “civilized” world is angry that Trump pulled out of the *Paris Climate Accords*, as well as moving away from the *Iranian Nuclear Agreement*. Both of these were the previous administration’s attempts to ensnare the US into ever-increasing international entanglements.

Russia and China are making major moves in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and in the Pacific. North Korea and Iran’s nuclear ambitions are forcing the West into either one of two uncomfortable scenarios, either we capitulate and accept them as nuclear powers, or we exact military force to stop them. There no longer is a third option available to us. It wouldn’t be so bad if it were just North Korea and Iran. The reality is that both Iran (Russia) and North Korea (China) have powerful benefactors who would almost invariably side with them in the event of military conflict.

Israel is inching closer to bombing Syria back into the proverbial Stone Age. She simply cannot afford (existentially speaking here) to allow Iran to be imported into what used to be Syria any more than she already has. But by doing so, Israel risks bringing even more unwanted military attention from the likes of Iran, Russia, and now Turkey. This would also incur a quick reaction from the counterfeit *Palestinian* militants, who will undoubtedly use that as an opportunity to launch missiles and attacks against Israeli cities and communities.

The Iraqi Kurd's recent bid for independence has begun another Mid-East conflict. Traditionally speaking, the US has sided with the Kurds, and we are in a bit of a bind now since the threat of ISIS has all but dissipated in Iraq. A national Kurdistan presents a huge threat to the post-WWI boundaries of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey and they simply will not allow Kurdistan to become a reality.

All of these issues (just to name a few) have become a geo-political mine-field for the President. Any of these are ready to explode if even a single misstep occurs. Even though they are not all necessarily connected per se, you can bet that if any of them kick off, they all could.

So where do things go from here?

Conclusion

When you add up the inability to reason (subjective reasoning replacing objective truth), demonic influence, political instability/military positioning, and a powerful change agent, you have the real potential for a world that is already unhinged, to fully go off the rails.

I believe that God divinely appointed President Trump to win the 2016 presidential election for a reason (Daniel 4:17; Romans 13:1). I don't pretend to know exactly why, but my guess is that it has to do with setting the prophetic stage. According to Scripture, when the Antichrist (man of sin, son of perdition, the rider on the white horse, etc.) arrives on the scene, he does so at an unprecedented time of crisis and upheaval. A world clamoring for peace and security doesn't do so if it already has peace and security in place (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

This *man of sin* disguises his political ambitions under the false banner of peace (Daniel 7:8, 8:24, 11:36; Rev. 6:1-2). But in order for there to be a global demand for peace, there first needs to be a global crisis, instability, and war.

Think about it this way.

Why do we even know the names of men like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.? Well, they were great peacemakers who rose up in a period of great injustice. If there hadn't been an injustice to begin with, they wouldn't have felt the compulsion to do something about it. But because there was a great injustice, they did rise up, and their message was heard, and it did resonate with the masses, thus propelling them into historical greatness.

This is why I believe President Trump is prophetically significant. He is a leader who has watched the world moving in the wrong direction for a long time and feels compelled to do something about it. For decades, previous American leaders have allowed the crisis we see today to fester and go unchecked. In turn, it has created a world where the options for peaceful resolutions have become all but non-existent. This is very much the same way that the pre-World War II European leaders refused to deal with Adolph Hitler until they were forced to deal with him.

The only options left to us now in regards to both Iran and North Korea is war and war brings instability to the world order. Decades of *lessons-learned* (failed attempts) prove both that our economic embargoes and diplomacy have repeatedly and gloriously failed. But out of war and

instability will come a world who demands peace and security above all else. Let us not forget that in the aftermath of both WWI and WWII, came serious and concerted efforts to create globalist organizations (League of Nations, United Nations) that would unite the global order into one. After the next World War will be when the man Antichrist rises up.

“What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the alliances of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man, and be he god or devil, we will receive him.” Henri Spaak circa 1957-1960 Secretary General of NATO

The geopolitical situation will allow the opportunity for a man such as this to arise on the political stage. This man who comes on the white horse of false peace, will take advantage of the advancements in technology along with the supernatural backing of his satanic benefactor to impose his iron-fisted will over the entire world. He will capitalize on the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of a world that had been “left behind” to deceive them. These are they who had not received a love of the truth.

The stage has already been set. The actors are in place. What we are about to witness now, is the curtain rise and the prologue to begin. While the Church is promised by Christ Himself to not enter into the [70th Week](#) (John 14:1-3; Rev. 3:10), what we are witnessing now is the first act of things to come before we are supernaturally *caught up* to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you do not know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, do not hesitate even one second longer.

Admit you're a sinner and need God (Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection as sufficient payment for your sins (John 3:16)

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-13)

If you've done this with a sincere heart, then the Bible states that you are sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14) and that you will be redeemed before the 70th Week of Daniel. This is the time when God's wrath is poured out upon the unbelieving earth.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. **1 Thess. 5:9-11**

SIGNS

As we draw closer to the end of the age, there will inevitably be more and more signs and wonders becoming increasingly evident to those who are paying attention. After all, isn't the convergence all about the coalescing of signs and wonders all heralding the end of our age? But what are signs? Are signs the event themselves, or are they markers which point to some prescribed event forthcoming?

Revelation vs. Illumination

These days, there is an almost instinctive knee-jerk dismissal of anything outside the eschatological norm (i.e., within our community's current echo-chamber). This rejection is usually conducted so quickly and with such finality, that little to no verification is actually done any more to see if what is being put forth is true. This seems to indicate two things;

- a. That progressive illumination is no longer possible,

And

- b. That all new information is false.

The current dilemma of deciphering signs seems eerily similar to that of Christendom's confusion between salvation and sanctification when talking about the *eternal security* of the believer. So, for clarification purposes, let me explain the difference between *revelation* and *illumination*.

Biblically speaking, anything spoken by God to the prophets, apostles and writers of Scripture, was by *divine revelation* (ex. thus sayeth the Lord...). Anything recorded as canon in our Bible is there because the Holy Spirit moved men to write what they either saw, heard, thought, or were instructed too ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)). Over time, this *revelation* became progressive as God revealed more and more of Himself and His program to His people. The Apostle Paul's understanding (as revealed to him) was far greater than say John the Baptist's or even the other Apostles ([Gal. 1:11-12](#), [2 Peter 3:14-16](#)). This *progressive revelation* spanned from Adam to the Apostle John (and all there in-between) and is recorded as our Bible.

Progressive illumination on the other hand, comes from our understanding of that divine revelation over time as God's plan unfolds. This illumination has been ongoing since the closing of the New Testament canon from 95AD, unto our present day. This knowledge then becomes accumulative as we build off of what was discovered by previous generations. For example, Martin Luther did not invent *sola scriptura* or *sola gratia*, but simply rediscovered what was already in Scripture. The same thing could be said about John N. Darby. He didn't invent dispensationalism, but by simply returning to a literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of Scripture (to include the prophetic texts of the Bible), he rediscovered what was always there. From these individuals (and others), our understanding of Scripture expands exponentially because we are shown things in a new light. Thus, at the right time, God moves men and women

in our Church age to understand things in a certain light that gives new life and meaning to what Scripture has already declared.

Transition

I believe the issue today is that many are confusing new revelation, with new illumination. This could be said concerning the Revelation 12 sign, Joel 2, Luke 21, or other passages that speak explicitly about signs in our day and age. We are coming back into the *age of signs*, primarily because the super-sign (Israel) is back in her land. We are currently living through what amounts to be a transition period between the final moments of the Church Age (dispensation of grace) and the coming 70th Week of Daniel (see [Daniel's 70 Weeks](#)). The 70th Week is a 'closing the loop' of the *dispensation of law* that was a predetermined and specific amount of time for Israel and Jerusalem. This last week of years (seven years) was postponed (or put on pause) when first century Israel rejected and then executed her promised Messiah.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1 Corinthians 2:6-8

I can already hear the Covenant and Reformed Theologians hyperventilating, so let me clarify what I am saying. It's not that Law will return again and be in effect for salvation purposes, because Christ has already accomplished what was necessary to fulfill that once for all, perfect sacrifice ([Matt. 5:17](#), [Hebrews 10:11-14](#)) at the cross. Rather, they (Israel) will reinstitute the law in their new temple because they think that is what is necessary to bring the messiah. Unfortunately, this opens the door for the man Antichrist to come in and pretend to be this messiah ([Dan. 9:27](#), [John 5:43](#)). But for unregenerate Israel, it is this return to the Law that will ultimately culminate in judgment that will bring her to understand that Jesus Christ was her promised Messiah all along ([Zechariah 12:10-14](#)). The prophet Jeremiah records how this will come about in the last days;

⁷Alas! For that day *is* great,
So that none *is* like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it....
¹¹For I *am* with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you;
Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you,
Yet I will not make a complete end of you.
But I will correct you in justice,
And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'

Jeremiah 30:7, 11

It then stands to reason that if 69 of the 70 weeks of years (483 years) were from Nehemiah's day up unto the death of Christ on the Cross, then this all occurred under the *dispensation of Law*. That last week (the 70th) will be a culmination (completing) of the *dispensation of Law*,

albeit, with a slew of both new revelation (the New Testament) and illumination (the rebirth of Israel, confederated Europe, Gog and Magog, the Rapture) thrown in as evidence to Israel.

This illumination, in my estimation, has in about the last 40-50 years begun to move more from the academic arena, to the supernatural. Israel is coming up on her 70th year as a nation again, and to date, has not come to the realization that Christ is their Messiah. Granted, there are more Messianic Jews alive today than at any point in history, but nationally speaking, Judaism is still the main religion. What is required for Israel to believe, will be overwhelming signs ([Ezekiel 38:18-23](#); [1 Cor. 1:22](#)).

If the Gentiles seek after wisdom (they do), have we not obtained about the best understanding we could (this side of the veil) with the Dispensationalist movement for the past two centuries? What could be better than returning to a literal, grammatical, and historical understanding of all Scripture without the Catholic and Protestant biases and dogmas clouding our understanding? This is why prophetically speaking, we have plateaued academically in terms of illumination. In the face of the collapse of Western society, knowledge is no longer enough to pierce the increasingly hardened hearts of an unrepentant world.

Assessment

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” **Daniel 12:4**

There seems to be a discrimination (intentional or not) in our community over the validity of what constitutes a sign which unfortunately creates bias in our understanding. This bias exists primarily in the West where knowledge is placed at a premium and the supernatural is relegated to the fringe. But in the rest of the world, where knowledge has lacked (due to a variety of reasons), the supernatural is primary. Let me provide two examples:

If a geopolitical event unfolds in the Middle East where Russia puts troops in or near Israel, or Israel strikes a weapons depot in Syria, we have no issue prophetically relating it to Isaiah 17 or Ezekiel 38 because many desperately want our newspaper to confirm what our Bible says (i.e., newspaper eisegesis). But if something happens in the heavens (celestially), those same folks are quick to dismiss any prophetic correlation.

Another example is the [star of Bethlehem](#) heralding the arrival of Christ's first coming at His birth. We don't typically think of Christ's birth as prophetically explosive, because relatively few people even knew what was happening. But concerning the star itself, was it only the Wise Men from the east who saw this, or was that star visible to anyone who happened to look into the sky? I'm willing to bet that many, many people saw that star but thought little of it. Yet, that star represented the greatest moment in all of human history where the Divine became flesh and would make salvation available for all mankind.

To be clear, Bible prophecy is unfolding in just about every sector we can define: Technologically, economically, militarily, religiously, and culturally have all seen a convergence

(in varying degrees). In nature, we have seen and are seeing an increased “groaning” via earthquakes, volcanos, hurricanes, etc., which we can also point at as evidence of the ‘birth pains.’ Yet, if we experience four ‘blood’ moons in a row (all on biblical feast days), as well as a full solar eclipse crossing the United States, with another projected to cross the opposite direction seven years later...well, that couldn’t be Joel 2:30-31 because that is just crazy.

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:

Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Concerning the *September 23rd/Revelation 12 proponents*, a predictable kneejerk-reaction came from the traditional talking heads (many of whom are respected prophecy experts). While I am appreciative of their past and even present contributions to our shrinking community, I was somewhat put-off by their apparent lack of scholarship in ‘earnestly contending’ for the truth. It’s easy to simply label someone a date-setter and move on, but becomes a little more challenging when they actually have to ‘see if these things be so’ ([Acts 17:11](#)). The fact is they didn’t bother or they simply honed in on the fringe elements of the group as evidence. Isn’t that the same thing we decry about our own detractors (skeptics, main stream media, etc.) do to us concerning Bible prophecy? Nevertheless, it reminded me of something a wise man once said,

He who answers a matter before he hears *it*,

It is folly and shame to him. **Proverbs 18:13**

Instead, what the “Pre-Trib Establishment” did rather, was to go on record condemning without confirming, and then claiming if the rapture was going to happen, it wouldn’t happen on that day. Not claiming something would happen on September 23rd is in my opinion, just as egregious and audacious as claiming something will. The fact the respectable types chose not to actually contend with the reasoned-voices (as opposed to the kooks), is what I found disappointing. It is possible that this particular astronomical alignment has meaning, we just don’t know what it is yet.

Conclusion

The late Cris Putnam wrote an excellent book entitled *The Supernatural Worldview* in which he discussed the overwhelming neglect the supernatural aspect of our faith has suffered during the ‘age of reason.’ During this period, the church attempted to distance itself from its supernatural nature all while trying to validate itself almost exclusively from just a moral, ethical, and scientific standpoint. While the Christian faith can do both, what happened then was a lopsided, desensitization process that effectively deadened the mainstream denominations.

In the Middle East and other places, dreams and visions have become increasingly common place where the Gospel has all been shut out. Once North Korea opens up due to its coming regime change, I imagine we will hear all about how God used dreams and visions in that

country to reach the North Korean people. I'm also willing to bet that many Christians will be equally dismissive of these since they don't fall into some scientifically verifiable category.

Going back to my original point, shouldn't we expect to see more signs as we draw closer to the end? I mean, isn't the purpose of signs? Signs are meant to be discovered, talked about, and to serve as warnings. We are commanded to watch and be ready ([Matthew 24:43-44](#)). I understand being ready, because Rapture or not, any of us could breathe our last breath at any time. None of us are guaranteed tomorrow. But if signs can't be known, why are we commanded to watch for them? Watch what?

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." **Matthew 12:39**

This verse is often quoted (or misquoted rather) in an attempt to debunk anyone who thinks the signs of the time are pointing to the soon return of Jesus Christ. But if we look at the context of the passage, we see that Jesus was pointing explicitly to that generation present in His midst. They dismissed the signs and prophecies concerning His coming, which resulted in them not knowing the time of their visitation (Luke 19:41-44, Matt 16:1-4, 23:1-39).

I understand that as a community of Christ loving, sign-watching 'watchmen on the wall' types, we have become somewhat jaded with all the previous false predictions about our Lord's return. William Miller (1844-45), the Jehovah Witnesses (numerous times), Edgar Whisenant (1988-89), Harold Camping (1994, 2011) and many [more](#) false claims have been made to make the point. My point is not to defend the September 23rd proponents. My opinion was the 2017 seemed a likely year (given the significance of her [timeline](#)), but we can't know for sure.

What we can know, is that Christ's return (as of 23 September 2017) has all but been made a punchline for jokes and movies. What I can say though for sure, is that if there is only one sign we can hang our hats on (given the current climate), is that **2 Peter 3:3-4** is in full effect with an intensity and frequency not seen for millennia.

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."

Post-MAGA, Pre-Apocalypse

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity...*

With the surprising election of President Trump last November, many within the Christian community thought that the days of social and political marginalization were finally over. The days of anti-Christian legislation and heavy-handed political correctness were finally going to get their comeuppance. Trump's victory was proof-positive that God had postponed His judgment upon the wayward United States and was giving her one more chance to turn things around.

Perhaps. Perhaps not.

What I fear though is that we are not eyewitnesses to some grand, global revival, but rather, a dark and malevolent reaction against it. As I've stated in previous briefs, it's not that God needs Trump to make the US better, but God is undoubtedly the cause of Trump being in office ([Daniel 2:20-23](#)) at this time and place in history. To what ends I am not entirely certain. But he plays a role in this final drama of mankind. We know that the Bible states that the conditions on earth will continue to wax worse and worse until reaching a time similar to the days of Noah and Lot. Both of these periods of time were wrought with violence, wickedness, sexual depravity, greed, and a majority who have been given over to their basest natures (Matt. 24:3-14; Luke 17:26-30; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 2 Peter 3:3-7).

Events today are spinning faster and faster out of control. Unlike times past where one could point to the troubled shores of Europe and say...war is coming, today there are no safe harbors anymore. There isn't a place on earth today that isn't racked by violence, war, crime, depravity, or corruption. We don't even have the luxury of pointing to some impending sign and say, "it" is coming.

It is already here. We are already in it. We are in the birth pangs leading up to the time known as Daniel's 70th Week. The only luxury the Church has today is the knowledge that we will not be here to see when things turn really bad. The Lord has promised His Church that He will remove them before the first Seal is opened (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Revelation 3:10). How do I know this definitively?

Well, the [Seal Judgments](#) begin the period of time commonly referred to as The Tribulation. This title is something of a misnomer though because the real name is *the time of Jacob (Israel's) Trouble* or *Daniel's 70th Week*. It lasts seven years (or a week of years) and has two purposes:

How awful that day will be!
No other will be like it.
It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be saved out of it...
...I am with you and will save you,'
declares the Lord.
'Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only in due measure;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

Jeremiah 30:7, 11

Jacob here is referring to the nation of Israel in the corporate sense. Since there are still nations on the earth today and given the context of the rest of the passage, one could easily deduce that this event is yet future. But some out there are still confused about whose wrath this belongs too...so God clarifies this for our benefit to ensure that there is no confusion over who is doing and who is receiving as **Revelation 6:16-17** makes so abundantly clear:

They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"

A quick check on learning:

- Who opens the Seals?
 - Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the executor of the wrath. It is His wrath He unleashes.
- Upon whom do the Seal Judgment's affect?
 - Those who dwell on the earth are the recipients of said wrath.
- What does the last Seal Judgment do?
 - It triggers the first Trumpet Judgment.

Assessment

As mentioned in a previous article [here](#), I proposed that President Trump would have an even tougher time from the start than President Bush did in his last few remaining years in office. I look at the world through a particular worldview, and I speculate based on both perfect and incomplete knowledge. The perfect knowledge is God's word. The incomplete knowledge is my understanding of the timing of how things play out. So to my imperfect knowledge, there are four seemingly paradoxical situations to contemplate when considering where we are in light of our Lord's return for the Church:

1. Because there would be a sense of normalcy on earth, His coming would catch the world and many within the Church by surprise (1 Thess. 5:1-5; Mark 13:32, Luke 12:30, Rev. 3:3, etc.)
2. But the convergence of so many prophetic events is forcing many to wake up to the possibility that our Lord's return could be near. Even the non-Christian world is anticipating some major event in the next few years.
3. Imminence, in the sense that our Lord's return is unknowable and could be at any moment, is quickly moving from unknowable to inevitable.
4. This goes back to my first point in that the normalcy bias is beginning to wear off. (At an hour you think not...)

As a watching believer in these final moments of human history, how are we to proceed? I've often stated that we can't know precisely, but we should generally know when our Lord will return. I did on two separate occasions see President Trump being selected both as the nominee and as the President. I am no prophet, but just made an educated guess based off of where I see things heading. What I misjudged, or perhaps underestimated, is the contempt, vitriol, and violence that would ensue. We had two very "populist" and "nationalist" movements take place in quick succession: BREXIT and the Trump election.

This was quickly followed by three major defeats for both populism and nationalism, which was the electoral defeats of Geert Wilders (Holland), Marine La Pen (France), and Theresa May (United Kingdom). These troubles include a never-ending witch hunt against the Trump administration for any whiff of Russian collusion and obstructionism. Adding to this the incessant attacks by a majority of the media, academia, and Hollywood that are relentlessly calling for resistance (aka...revolution). The icing on the cake is the left's continual refusal to let the swamp be drained.

What I believe happened is that the Left (democrats, liberals, socialists, communists, and globalists) got lazy and comfortable during the Obama years. Both BREXIT and Trump caught them by surprise and have now woken up their vocal minority of left-fringe lunatics in a way that nothing else could have. They are agitated and dangerous, like caged animals being dragged out of their darkened caves into the light of day. They sense change coming and are furiously fighting against what is coming, spurred on by unseen demonic forces which are guiding their blind hatred.

Conclusion

If it *seems* like this world is spinning out of control. It *seems* like evil is getting the upper hand and that good people are getting trampled underfoot by the onslaught of negativism, corruption, and just sheer wickedness. But beloved, it only "seems" that way because God has not allowed us to see what He is currently doing behind the curtain. He is moving and positioning the people and events to fall into place exactly as He sees fit.

God wanted President Trump to win the 2016 election. Not because He wanted Trump to *Make America Great Again*, but because it would accelerate the hardening of those who rejoice in evil. That may seem overdramatic to say, but considering that one of our two major political parties has the wholesale slaughter of the unborn as a key political platform. If that isn't evil, I don't know what is.

I believe that President Trump still has some role yet to play in this grand drama. That role is somehow intricately tied to the nation of Israel. How and why we do not yet know, but God does. And God is allowing the left to be enraged and violent as ones being 'given over' to a debased mind and a seared conscious. This is described in **Romans 1:18-32** and God allows evil men and women to be given over to their sins. It is not that He doesn't want to save them, but He is allowing them to act upon their free will, and by so doing, [harden](#) their own hearts just as Pharaoh did his before the exodus.

The old saying is that World War I prepared the land (Israel) for the people, and World War II prepared the people (the Jews) for the land. The Jews have a saying now, 'never again.' What is happening now is like that but in reverse. These final moments of the *Age of Grace* are preparing the people (the unrepentant) for the Tribulation by allowing them to harden their hearts. Once the Rapture happens, and the Restrainer (the Holy Spirit through the Church) is removed, they will be doomed and damned entering into this final week of years. Paul states that God will send a strong delusion that they will willingly believe, and will be condemned forever (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

Juxtaposed to this, is the great swell of tribulation saints from around the world who no man could count that come to faith in Christ and are killed for that faith. We are witnessing a foreshadowing of that now in the Far and the Middle East and Africa, where hundreds and thousands are being killed for the faith in Jesus Christ by groups like ISIS, Al Shabaab, Al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, etc. After the Rapture and to whatever covenant is signed (Dan. 9:27), there will be a final world system that will systematically hunt down and kill all those who do not have *the Mark of the Beast*.

If anything, what Trump's America represents is that final audacious hardening of the unrepentant before God pours out His wrath on a world in open rebellion against Israel, against His anointed, and His authority. But if the unbelieving world can sense calamity coming, then why can't the church? (Rev. 3:3) It is time to wake up and sound the alarm while there is still light. But if you think things are bad now, one second after the Rapture, the world will enter into a period that Jesus said would be worse than any other in human history. *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened* (Matt. 24:21-22).

*...Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi*

*Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

(W.B. Yeats, *the Second Coming*, 1919)

Move Out, Draw Fire

What is destined to be one of my more unpopular articles ever is centered on the idea that we should be cautiously optimistic about 2017. The key word being...cautiously. Since I began writing for the *Omega Letter* back in 2011, I've tried my best to follow Jack's sage counsel. I was probably only 40 articles when I had a bad case of writers-block. I had even considered giving up writing because I felt like I wasn't contributing anything of value to the collective conversation. I told him that every topic that I wanted to write about had already been written about sixteen different ways by people way smarter than I am. I asked Jack how do I get over this, and he gave me the best advice any writer could give to another writer. He said, *yes, every topic you want to write about has already been talked about. But it's never been told by you until you write it.* From then until now (with almost 300 articles published) I've never looked back.

With that said, I want to throw a few things together and hope they come out smelling like a sweet aroma of praise and fellowship to our heavenly Father concerning the signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

September 23, 2017

I've tried my best not to throw the baby out with the bathwater concerning the events surrounding [September 2017](#). Like most watchers, when I first heard about the September 23rd 2017 alignment, I approached it with an abundance of caution. I mean, haven't we already danced this kabuki dance several times over the last few years?

Why I am cautiously optimistic concerning this coming *Feast of Trumpets*, is not so much centered on *Revelation 12 Sign*, nor even the convergence of years and Jubilees for 2017. But when you take them in all together, that for me was just too much to ignore. Could 2017 turn out to be a fizzle-dud year? Sure, it could. As I've said in the past, my hope is still a [blessed hope](#) and while I may get the timing wrong, God's timing is not. This leaves me with the mental hurdle I can't quite seem to jump over.

If 2017 is a fizz-dud year, why are so many things seemingly pointing at it?

I don't know.

But what I do know is that none of us who study eschatology, are islands unto ourselves. We all stand on the shoulders of the giants who came before us (Darby, Larkin, Scofield, Pember, Bullinger, Anderson, Ironside, Walvoord, Lindsey, Missler, etc.) and build off the things God had opened in their understanding during their day. And I'm fairly certain they all didn't agree lock, stock, and barrel on every issue either.

So, it is with the new group of scholars, thinkers, writers, teachers, and pastors who aren't afraid to go out on a limb on certain topics. I applaud men like Daymond Duck, Randy Nettles, Chuck Missler, [Gary](#), and [Scott](#) (to name a few) for their deep dives into Scripture, history, and astronomy while at the same time not being dogmatic about what they have found when it

approaches the realm of speculation. IF we are being honest with ourselves, anytime we teach Scripture, we all, to varying degrees, speculate. We speculate because none of us can see thousands of years into the past, so we will take certain liberties with filling in the blanks. Nor can we see into the future, that still remains God's domain. The Bible gives us a broad outline and some specifics on things to come, but it usually doesn't specify when or how. God keeps those details to Himself.

The important thing to remember is that if we do speculate, we call it for what it is and do so in a forthcoming manner so as not to lead anyone astray if we are wrong. It's not wrong to speculate. However, it is wrong when you expect others to treat your speculation as infallible.

And if we are really being honest with ourselves, we would realize that 99% of the world thinks we Christians are already crazy for even believing in the Bible in the first place, and to an even greater degree, *the Rapture*. Why then are many respected prophecy teachers, experts, commentators, and pastors so quick to form a circular firing squad on our own at the first whisper of something they don't understand? As Chuck Missler was fond of quoting....

He who answers a matter before he hears *it*, It is folly and shame to him. **Proverbs 18:13**

When I say they "don't understand it", what I mean is I don't think they have really taken the time to study it. It is either dismissed out of hand or studied so superficially, that when they come out against it, they do more damage to their own reputation than what it is they are trying to refute. There are probably many reasons why they come out against it, but at least one of those reasons is that it challenges a long-held view they don't want to admit they got wrong.

And I will admit that with as much as I thought I knew, I am still learning a thing or two (or more) that surprises me. I am by no means the expert on Scripture or Prophecy, but I do consider myself fairly well read. So the same guy who really got the internet abuzz with the *Revelation 12 Sign*, is the same guy who opened my eyes to some things I had always taken for granted as being what everyone else was parroting. This put **Acts 2** and **Revelation 12** in a whole new light that tweaked and peaked my understanding of everything else. Consider the following logic:

1. The Church was not "born" at Pentecost. But rather, was conceived. (I had mislabeled this for a long time)
2. If the Church is the body of Christ (we are), then we should be modeled after the birth of Christ. If this is true, then Jesus wasn't born the moment the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary. She went through the normal pregnancy timeframe until He was born in Bethlehem. (She conceived in Nazareth, delivered in Bethlehem)
3. The giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost then is simply a corporate representation of that singular moment with Mary's [Immaculate Conception](#).
4. Both Israel and the Church are often referred to in both the singular and corporate sense throughout scripture. The Church is referred to both in the male sense (we are members of His body), and figuratively as a chaste virgin or *like* a bride.

5. If 1, 2, 3, 4 are correct, then [Revelation 12](#) is simply following that same model of singular/corporate representation in its symbolism. No crazy conspiracy or wild theological reconstruction. It is simply staying consistent with our hermeneutics.

Woman	Male Child	Dragon
Mary/Israel	Christ/Church	Satan/Beast system

Some of the eschatological greats of the 19th and 20th centuries like Darby, Blackstone, and Ironside also believed that Revelation 12 supported the Pre-Tribulation Rapture position. [Michael Svigel](#), who is being presented here as one who brought this position back into the mainstream states this about chapter 12:

So, to sum up, the catching up of the male child and the resulting war in heaven both take place at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation. The war in heaven and casting down of Satan, followed by the earthly invasion, attempted attack on Israel, and the flight of the woman, all take place in the first three-and-a-half years. Then the reign of the Beast take place in the second half of the tribulation. Therefore, the catching up of the male child (the rapture) takes place *before* the seven-year tribulation.

For my sense of well-being, if men like John Darby and H.A. Ironside could hold this view, and I have tremendous respect for their biblical knowledge and understanding, why is it so difficult for others to do the same? Is it because chapter 12 is nestled snugly in the middle of chapters 6-19, to which many Pre-Tribulation scholars, pastors, and even I, have cordoned off as “tribulation territory?”

Dr. Andy Woods once called the veranda views within Revelation as *non-chronological, parenthetical insertions*, and likened them to scenic views along the way a hiker would stop at to enjoy the view of the mountain he was climbing. Revelation 12 then is simply a one chapter overview of the entire seven-year Tribulation from God’s perspective as much as chapter 13 is from a human perspective. We see this in Daniel’s book when comparing man’s view (the multi-metallic statue) with God’s perspective (the chimera animals). They both represent the same thing.

Conclusion

Have many within the Watcher community guilty of becoming the very things we so often rail against? Are we becoming like the skeptics and mockers out there who ridicule everything they don’t understand? Nobody who is seriously discussing 23 September is saying the Rapture is happening on that day. What they are definitively saying, is that sign will appear on that date, which happens to fall on the Feast of Trumpets. So what does that mean? Nobody knows. None of us can see into the future. What does it mean for me?

I look at all the convergence of historical events, this astronomical anomaly and I am admittedly curious. But I am not quitting my job or telling my boss to take a hike whilst simultaneously moving me and the family to the top of a mountain...that I am NOT doing. For me, I will keep doing what I have been doing...occupy until He comes. I am going to do what I feel the Lord has

called me to do, first and foremost, is to be a Godly, loving, husband and father. I will keep writing. I will keep teaching and preaching. I will keep being used wherever and to whomever, God puts in my path. In the military we call this *moving out and drawing fire*.

The question then becomes, what are YOU going to do?

If the Rapture happens on 21, 22, 23, 24 September...AWESOME! It could happen before or after that time. All I know, is that with all the significant events surrounding this year and next, something will happen. President Trump, Israel, Russia, Iran, North Korea, CERN, etc. etc...too many wheels are spinning for these not to be significant prophetic years.

Let me conclude by saying this...and I hope you share my sentiment. My hope is and will always be, that Christ WILL return. My hope is not in WHEN He will return. There is a long, long list of [failed dates](#) from every religious and secular group out there that predicts every kind of doomsday or apocalypse imaginable. Failed dates are not just unique to Edgar Whisenant or Harold Camping. Just ask Al Gore. I think he said the US was supposed to be underwater last year. In the meantime, I'm not committing friendly fire without first doing a topic or subject its due diligence. Let's not do the circular firing squad routine again. Yes, there will be teachings that stretch our understanding. But until we be [Bereans](#), and see if these things be true...well, don't take my word for, just read **Proverbs 18:13** again.

Maranatha!

Men of Renown

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. **Luke 17:26-27**

Much discussion has been made about the Nephilim over the past twenty years by many from within evangelical Christianity. Most I'd wager would agree to disagree on the specifics of the who what, when, where, and why of what that actually looks like, but most would agree that they are coming. Personally, I think we need look no further than our current crop of movies to get a glimmer of things to come.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe, or MCU, exploded into movie theaters beginning with the 2008 theatrical release of *Iron Man*, starring Robert Downey Jr. Previous attempts at superhero movies tended to be more misses than hits, but the bar was raised with this release because of the right recipe of timing/cast/technological advancements and direction which made this movie a box office hit, garnering \$585M around the world. But more than that, was the character himself (Tony Stark/Iron Man). People loved the comics long before the movie came out because it told the story of an ordinary man (albeit wealthy and intelligent) who fought evil by overcoming his lack of supernatural powers by harnessing the power of his technological prowess.

Not soon after came the 'god' of thunder *Thor*, dovetailing into the MCU with the visitors from outer-space. It explored the notion that beings from other 'realms' could come to earth because man had finally "evolved into a higher form of warfare" (quoting Thor from the *Avengers*). Next came *Captain America*, played by the all-American Chris Evans, who introduced the real-life super-soldier into our world. But, with the success of *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Captain America*, and the *Avengers*, Marvel had cracked the right formula and now possessed the technological know-how to build the Marvel Comic powerhouse into what it has become today. All told we love a movie where an ordinary person can become extraordinary. Given the lack of real magic in the world, who doesn't want an occasional escape from the daily grind into one where good and evil really do wear uniforms...even "spangly" ones.

Assessment

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, *men of renown*. **Genesis 6:4**

The world we live in now is not the way it has always been. That is a difficult reality for most people to accept. What we today would identify as 'pre-history', was known as the 'Golden Age' to the ancient world. Those who lived in the 'Golden Age' are they whom the Greeks and Romans believed lived for centuries, were exceedingly tall and strong, and generally lived a life of bliss. Supposedly, this was in the land known as [Hyperborea](#). Granted there isn't complete consensus on where exactly Hyperborea was as some thought it where Siberia is today, while others thought it in the British Isles. Either way, what the ancient Greeks were in agreement about, was that these people were from the far north and powerful. One other interesting note

about ancient mythologies, is that they generally all share the same back story in that...these super people, originally came down as 'gods'. As far as ancient civilizations go, the generally accepted timeline is as follows:

1. Sumerians
2. Chaldeans
3. Egyptians
4. Assyrians
5. Babylonians
6. Persians
7. Greeks
8. Romans

Even to the ancient Greek historians and scholars like Sophocles, Herodotus, and Hecataeus of Abdera (all 5th-4th BC), the '*Golden Age*' was considered very ancient. Much in the same way we look back to the first century AD as ancient, the '*Golden Age*' to them would have just as far removed back in time. It was a magical time that spoke of gods, demigods, and those ancient 'superheroes' and 'men of renown' that roamed the earth. Interestingly, the bible makes note of just such a time prior to the Flood of Noah.

Genesis 5 lists the accounts of the genealogies from Adam and Eve. The descendants of Adam lived for hundreds of years with Methuselah living to the ripe old age of 969 years. The long life span began to dwindle after Noah's flood, but even Job and Abraham lived supernaturally long lives as compared to our standards today. Assumptions can be made that the veil between our natural world and the spiritual supernatural world was either non-existent (God physically walked with Adam in the Garden) or far different than we have today. We could also deduce that the world (earth and atmosphere) was vastly different before and afterward the flood. For the curious, the non-biblical accounts from the [Book of I Enoch](#) and [Jasher](#) fill in the blanks of what life was like back then.

The Enoch account states that fallen angels came down and settled on Mt. Hermon (now modern day Lebanon) and comingled with human women. Genesis 6 affirms such accounts that resulted in the [Nephilim](#) (means 'fallen ones' and translated gigantes in Latin to giants when Anglicized). Not to get bogged down on too much familiar territory, but the Nephilim would be the physical descendants of the unnatural sexual relations between fallen angels and human women (Gen. 6). Not only this, but they taught humans things that mankind shouldn't have known about then (weaponry, warfare, astrology, conjuring potions and incantations).

So follow my logic on this; since almost every known culture records some type of mythos pertaining to a superior race of beings, the most likely reason is that they (we) can all trace their stories back to a common event that was known to mankind prior to Babel (Gen. 11). It couldn't have been after that, because God separated mankind linguistically, genetically, and geographically at [Babel](#)-hence no more shared history. Remember, part of the motivation for defying God in the first place was **not** to be scattered around the world.

And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

(Gen. 11:4)

After the flood subsided and Noah and company departed the ark. Two generations would transpire before the Tower of Babel judgment. Thus we can conclude that the world before Babel all spoke the same language and lived in a region known as Mesopotamia. This is key because at some point either during or after the flood in [Peleg's day](#), the earth's continents separated. The scientific theory of Pangea is one in which the landmasses were all together before separating along their respective tectonic plates. It's also a reasonable conclusion based on the Genesis 1:9 passage in which God collected all the waters (below the firmament) together in one location.

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.

Yet despite the separation which existed until today, most (if not all) cultures across the planet share similar ancient mythologies about a large or global flood and that of ‘demi-gods’ reigning upon the earth. Most ancient cultures tell tales of giants. If none of these were true, where did the ideas come from? There would have had to be some truth to their myths or they would have never lasted as long as they did. The ‘gods’ never really changed, just their names.

How long would Judaism have lasted if Moses hadn't been called, the plagues never took place, or the Exodus stalled out at the Red Sea? How long would Christianity have survived had Christ not come? There has to be some signs and supernatural activities (Elijah calling fire down, Jesus raising the dead and of His own resurrection, and the miracles of the Apostles, etc.) in order for Christianity to have presented itself as a form of real power.

Conclusion

A nation's pop-culture reflects what's on the hearts and minds of that generation. Simply look back to the American 1950's to see who they held up as heroes. Our generation on the other hand is fixated on violence and loosening sexual proclivities of every kind. Thus the success of the MCU, Science Fiction genre, and the occult likewise consume man's obsession on to evolving to that next level. Just like the old saying goes, ‘if you can dream it, you can do it’.

An idea is birthed in the minds of fallen men. That idea then gives legs to conceptual design, and then onto analytical research. That research begins to find solutions to the things man is lacking until a breakthrough occurs. What modern man lacks today is a race of fallen angels physically guiding them on how to create hybrid humans. What modern man now has is the technological knowhow to circumvent that through quantum computing, artificial intelligence, bio-engineering via genetic manipulation. What once took decades, is now down to years. Pretty soon those years will turn into months, and then man will achieve the very things he has set his mind towards.

People may scoff at the return of the supernatural and fantastic. People may scoff at the idea that ‘Captain America’ and ‘Iron Man’ people might become the norm. Remember, people use to scoff at the idea of planes and cars, or that the mile could be ran in under four minutes. People

scoffed at the idea of sending a man (men) to the moon. Yet, nobody's scoffing at those things anymore are they? What was it that God once said?

And the Lord said, "Indeed the people *are one* and they *all have one language*, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. **Genesis 11:6**

When man becomes united in a single purpose, we have a pretty good track record of doing that thing. If CERN is intent on opening portals to other dimensions, you can pretty much guarantee that they will (barring God's intervention). If man becomes intent on creating a sentient, self-aware artificial intelligence system that is billions of times smarter than the smartest person, you can pretty much bet man will ultimately achieve it. If man becomes intent on creating hybrid humans (whether trans-human or biologically altered), you can pretty much bet man will achieve that thing.

My understanding has developed somewhat regarding my understanding of the *Dispensation of the Church* (which was from [Pentecost](#) until today). Rather than calling the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the 'birth of the Church', I now understand that it is actually the 'conception of the Church'. This is akin to the outcome of the Holy Spirit [overshadowing](#) Mary at the *Immaculate Conception*, of which she didn't give birth right then, but rather became pregnant. Likewise, the Church wasn't born at Pentecost, but rather was conceived and has entered into this 2,000 year gestation period, in which believers are being added daily into the body of Christ. (Romans 11:25)

The reason for my departure into the topic of the Church age dispensation, is that once we are complete, we are then birthed into our perfect, incorruptible bodies at the Rapture. We will be translated from mortal to immortal and from corruptible to incorruptible. Our departure, which coincides with the removal as the Restrainer (Holy Spirit empowers us to be salt and light), allows for darkness to ascend and allow the age of lying signs and wonders to once again take hold of the earth. (Romans 8:22-23, 1st Thess. 4:13-18, 2 Thess. 2:9-12, 1st Cor. 15:51-56)

The return of the days of the supernatural are not farfetched. This correlates with what will be coming during *Daniel's 70th Week*...which then is a continuation of the Dispensation of the Law, which saw the Red Sea parted, the Exodus plagues, giants ([Anakim](#)), fire from the heavens, etc. Further corroborating this idea, is the return of the Two Witnesses, who this author believes to be Moses and Elijah which perform signs and wonders as both a judgment on those who reject God and a witness to the Jews. ([Rev. 11:1-14](#), Malachi 4:5-6, Jude 1:9, Matt. 17:2-4)

Does this current obsession with the fantasy and the occult feed into the 'strong delusion' that God allows to happen once He removes His Spirit-filled Church at the Rapture? It would seem so. 1st Corinthians 1:22 states that the Jews (God's chosen) seek after a sign, to which Daniel's 70th Week promises to be the likes man has never seen.

Last Day's Madness?

The greatest pandemic to ever hit this world wasn't the Plague, the Spanish Flu, or any other biological agent, but a spiritual pathogen we know as sin. Sin has infected every human (save One) and has manifested itself through satanic, demonic, and human efforts since the dawn of time. One powerful expression of it is with the twisting of the truth. It began when Satan (the serpent) asked Eve the first question in the Bible, "...yeah hath God said?" Since then, the truth has continually been twisted and warped to accommodate the fallen motivation and ambitions of both men and darker entities.

One of the more sinister aspects to truth-twisting is [liberalism](#). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as (emphasis mine):

1. the quality or state of being [liberal](#)
2. a movement in modern Protestantism emphasizing [intellectual liberty](#) and the spiritual and ethical content of Christianity
3. a theory in economics emphasizing [individual freedom](#) from restraint and usually based on free competition, the self-regulating market, and the gold standard (see [gold standard](#))
4. a political philosophy based on belief in progress, [the essential goodness of the human race](#), and the autonomy (see [autonomy](#) 2) of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties; *specifically* : such a philosophy that considers government as a crucial instrument for amelioration of social inequities (such as those involving race, gender, or class)

Liberalism takes many forms but it generally (when applied in philosophical and theological terms), means a departure from the literal interpretation to more of a subjective one (i.e., intellectual liberty). If we hold that God's word is divinely inspired and God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16), then applying our own, fallen interpretation to it, we are bound to depart from truth to something else. With ample amounts of liberalism applied, the truth then can become all things to all people.

Assessment

The rising tide of liberalism swept across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries like a powerful philosophical tsunami destroying every ideological, theological and economic pillar in its path. Liberalism swept aside objective truth for subjective reasoning at every turning point in a society, leaving nothing but rubble in its wake. Nothing was safe and nothing was sacred. Every society ever given over to its alluring charm has suffered the consequences of the same corrosive effects: Eroding family structure, collapsing ethical and moral standards, and the generational implosion of a post-modern era.

In more recent times, the ideological destruction began with European seminaries embracing the literal departure from a literal interpretation of Scripture. With objective and eternal truth

muddled, the confusion it generated permeated out through the rest of the societal fabric. From there it moved westward to the American seminaries. The mainline denomination pulpits began self-censoring so as not to offend their congregants.

As large sections of society were still church-going folk, the influence of questioning even basic, fundamental Christian doctrines began to divide the Church and weaken its influence in society. In the vacuum, human secularism rushed in to fill the gap in the schools and universities with atheism and moral relativism. From the universities out to the government sanctioned public school system where the next generation of teachers would come from, “progressives” continued their lemming-like march to the left. Skepticism and historical revisioning were then carried by the political-left and fueled by pop culture like gas to a flame.

The *Sexual Revolution* was the first salvo. Next came the *Feminist Movement*. Followed quickly by *abortion on demand*. A subsequent result of these was the explosion of divorce (now made easy) by the American government. The homosexual agenda became the newest rallying cry. The lefts relentless attack on the basic building block of society (the family unit), was almost complete.

With a government-approved redefinition of marriage (to mean that people should be able to marry whoever or whatever they want to) the law of the land, the attack on the family unit was complete. By 2017, Western elites even became uncomfortable assigning gender identities to themselves or others as the whole idea of it somehow became offensive. To them, changing genders should be as fluid as changing clothes. This, at the same time they dogmatically and hypocritically force-fed Darwinian evolution as scientific fact to kids in school. This while ignoring the absolute biological truth of gender identity and life’s start at conception.

The left’s blind hatred of Christianity finally surfaced because it represents the ultimate objective truth. This blinding has allowed the left to defend Islamic terrorism by coddling it. The left’s blinding has allowed it to create academic “safe-spaces” while at the same time condoning street violence. Meanwhile, freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the right to bear arms, and the consent of the governed are (all of which made the American experiment successful) currently on the chopping block. Simultaneous to our erosion of rights is the redefinition of Christianity being a form of far-right extremism while Islam is being championed as the “religion of peace.” This, despite the fact that the overwhelming number of terrorist attacks for the past forty years were and are accompanied by the exuberant shouts of “[allahu akbar](#).”

Adding insult to injury, if anyone dares oppose this rising tide of this liberal lunacy they are met with violence, harassment, financial and/or legal bullying, and outright dismissal. In other words, if you disagree with this type of abstract reasoning being championed by the media, pop-culture, politicians, religious leaders, and even to some extent, the military, you will be bludgeoned. The silence of the governed began with the removal of God from schools and will culminate in the complete eradication of Christianity from the marketplace of ideas. Unless done as a form of mockery, the name of Jesus has become the most taboo subject in any public platform.

Here is the rub: If society gets to the point where men and women are free to decide what gender they are, not by biological truth, but through subjective reasoning, or which bathroom

they should use, or whether Islam presents a greater threat than Christianity, then you can be absolutely sure that the church of said society is going to have serious “truth” issues within its own walls.

Assessment

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said...?” (Gen 3:1)

If we take the *way-back-when* machine to 1999, Gary DeMar (a Partial [or inconsistent] Preterist) published his book entitled *Last Day's Madness*. He did so as means to mock and counter what was then considered the dominant view of Christian eschatology, i.e., the Pre-Millennial view. I say “then dominant” as I am not sure where the church is today in its eschatology. But not to be outdone in the scoffing business, Hank Hanegraaff (the Bible “Answer” Man and now Greek Orthodox [convert](#)) decided to cash in and publish his 2007 book entitled *The Apocalypse Code: Find out What the Bible Really says about the End Times and Why It Matters Today*. Neither of the aforementioned books actually offered any explanations for our current state of affairs. Rather, they simply attacked Dispensationalism rehearsed the same-old tired arguments about how all (or most) of biblical eschatology was completed in the first century with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem circa AD70.

Both men hold to a form of *Dominion Theology* known as Reconstructionism (versus the more extreme ‘Kingdom Now’ variant). Looking at these gentleman’s authored book list, it is fair to say both seem content in promoting the *anti-blessed hope* corner of the market. Sadly, in a post-Christian nation such as America circa 2017, these two are not alone in the skepticism business. Other preterists such as David Chilton, R.C. Sproul, and Kenneth Gentry have chimed in as well with their own myopic interpretations of how biblical eschatology is not relevant to our world today.

From GotQuestions.org

Dominion theology refers to a line of theological interpretation and thought with regard to the role of the church in contemporary society. Dominion theology is also known as Christian Reconstructionism and theonomy. Dominion theology states that biblical Christianity will rule all areas of society, personal and corporate. Christian Reconstructionism reasons that society will be reconstructed by the Law of God as preached in the gospel and the Great Commission.

Those who hold these views believe that it is the duty of Christians to create a worldwide kingdom patterned after the Mosaic Law. They believe that Christ will not return to earth until such a kingdom has been established. The principal goal, then, of dominion theology and Christian Reconstructionism is political and religious domination of the world through the implementation of the moral laws, and subsequent punishments, of the Old Testament (the sacrificial and ceremonial laws having been fulfilled in the New Testament). This is not a government

system ruled by the church, but rather a government conformed to the Law of God.

Conclusion

In a struggle to find its relevance, a growing majority of post-modern, post-Christian American churches have increasingly become divergent in their orthodoxy and orthopraxy. They do this to accommodate an increasingly diverse congregations. Many churches have increasingly turned away from and/or watered down core doctrines of the Christian faith, i.e., (the Gospel [salvation by grace through faith], the deity of Christ, the inerrancy of Scripture, and the monotheistic reality of our triune God [one God in three persons]) as to not offend their congregations.

Instead of being *e Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one), we have become *Unum de Multis* (out of one, many). Instead of believers from all walks of life, ethnicities, backgrounds, etc. coming together in a common faith, believers in the common faith are diverging along numerous paths that lead them away from the Scriptural truth. The same reasoning that got sincere adults questioning what their sexual identity is, or which bathroom they should use, or how they could serve in the military while pretending to be the other gender, is the same type of reasoning that questions whether the bible really means what it says. That reasoning begins with applying a liberal approach to hermeneutics which allows the reader to decide and make up its own definitions of what Scripture actually says...regardless of whether that is defining sin or defining prophecy.

Prior to World War I, Dominionism (in the form of Post-Millennialism) was very popular. But the realities of the *Great War* dashed the hope that mankind was on the mend. The reason I mentioned the preterist books and their authors, was that if what they were selling were true (that Christians will ultimately conquer the world for Christ thus ushering in the Kingdom Age), shouldn't we be closer now than we were 10, 18, or even 100 years ago?

The same could be said for today. Instead of a world getting better through the vigorous application of Christian Reconstructionism, what we see is the exact opposite. Mankind is becoming hopelessly confused and in even more bondage to satanic deception.

When you take a literal, grammatical, and historical rendering of Scripture, you plainly see that the world will continue to wax worse and worse until *the Rapture of the Church*. Then, the world will enter a freefall period culminating in the most horrific, violent, and evil time mankind has ever known (Matt. 24:21-22). It might be convenient to want to blame all of our recent turmoil on Obama, Saul Alinsky, or George Soros, but the real problems have a much darker origin than just the leftists who want to impose their socialist ideologies on the world at large.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

We know that Satan is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. He predates every evil man or woman who has ever lived. He influences mankind to resort to their basest nature and to reject God, reject His Son, and to reject salvation by imposing any number of ideologies

that prevent man from coming to the knowledge of the truth. Imposing a false eschatology is just one of his many tools he uses generously and to great effect. It is now to the point, that at a time when the Church should be the most awake (prophetically speaking), they are either passed out in pews with drool pooling at their feet or wasting their time trying to change a world that is currently passing away.

Much to the Dominionist's chagrin, the church is not going to rise up and become the "church militant" to conquer the world for Christ; that ship sailed with the Dark Ages. Jesus stated that the last phase of the church age would be dominated by both a dead church, and a nauseating church who was lukewarm, self-absorbed, and unaware that their God is outside the door knocking so as to be invited in (Rev. 3:1-6, 14-22).

Obviously, the skeptics out there will poo-poo anything that the Bible has to say. But if I can posit one verse (written 2,000 years ago) by Jesus about what the world would be like in the last days, and compare that with ANY other religion, eschatology, philosophy, or anything else to see who is more accurate. Describing the last days, Jesus says...

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. **Matthew 24:9-12**

Does this not sound like today? We have groups like Islamic State, Al Qaeda, and Boko Haram killing Christians by the thousands in the Middle East and Africa. We have people in the West seemingly tolerating anything and everything *except* Jesus Christ and Christianity. We have many, many false prophets, cults, and false religions leading many astray. We have large sections of society (both in and out of the church) asleep and disconnected from what is going on in the world. The world has become angry, bitter, and increasingly hostile.

The church militant will not conquer the world for Christ; that is something only He can do (Dan. 2:44). In fact, the world will mourn at His appearing at the Second Coming (Rev. 1:7) which is how we know the Church isn't present on the earth at that point but returning triumphantly with Him at His coming. We do not mourn His appearing, but long for it (Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:21-22).

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

2 Tim. 4:8

Is the US in Bible Prophecy?

There has been much discussion as of late on whether or not the United States is found in Bible prophecy. How does the world's most powerful, Christian, and Israel-friendly nation not warrant a mention as a key player in the last days? If the US is in Bible prophecy, what role does she play? If she is not, then why not? What happens to her vast natural resources, advanced technology, military arsenal, and able-bodied citizens? Considering these questions, there are biblically sound and astute teachers on both sides of the issue who either believe that the US is *Mystery Babylon*, or that we are not in the picture at all.

Those in the camp of us being Babylon (mystery or otherwise), seem to make good points for that case (see [here](#)). Probably the strongest reason why we could be is that the Jew's are told to come out of her. As of 2017, the largest concentration of Jewish people outside of Israel is in the United States. While at the same time, there are practically no Jews in what was traditional Babylon (Iraq) thanks to the likes of Al Qaeda, ISIS, and other militant Islamic groups. So how could they come out of her (Babylon), if they are not in there, to begin with?

Those in the camp who believe we are not in the prophetic picture at all (see [here](#)) believe so for a variety of reasons. The most obvious reason for saying the US is not in Bible prophecy is that there is no explicit mention of any nation (in the geopolitical sense) that matches our description in the prophetic texts concerning the last days. While a number of doomsday scenarios could pose an existential threat to the United States, none (in my opinion) threaten to so suddenly upend the traditional global order as *the Rapture of the Church*. The threat has been gravely underestimated in books like the "Left Behind" series and other popular eschatological material.

Underestimated not because of the percentage of how many American's are raptured up, but by what immediately follows.

Assessment

Speculation abounds as to what the percentage will be for those believers who will be caught up. Some think as low as one percent while others think as high as twenty-five percent. The percentage then has become sort of a measuring stick by which we could determine whether or not the US survives the Rapture event and go on to play a major role in the *70th Week of Daniel*. I tend to think around ten percent of the US population will be raptured, but even then that means around thirty million Americans (by current population standards) would instantaneously disappear. But regardless, the *how* is less important than the *why* in regards to our potential role in the *Tribulation*.

What is of utmost importance is realizing that once the Rapture does occur, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is also removed ([2 Thess. 2:6-8](#)).

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit disappears from the earth altogether. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent and cannot, not be everywhere. The Holy Spirit was on the earth prior to the day of Pentecost and He will be here after the Rapture event. What it means is that the *mystery of*

iniquity (or lawlessness) that is active in the world today, is at the same time actively being hindered by God's power through His people. We are salt and light to a world that will quickly be engulfed in darkness once the Rapture occurs. But after the Rapture, lawlessness will no longer be hindered. Lawlessness will go unchecked and the world will quickly move in one accord under the direction of Satan who will rapidly form that final world system.

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." **Luke 4:5-7**

The idea that the world first experiences the Rapture then sees the unleashing of the four horsemen matches perfectly with what Paul is shown concerning the order of events. The *man of sin* cannot be revealed until we (the body of Christ) is removed. This is why we see John record the Revelation in the manner which he does (Rev. 1:19):

- the vision-the things John has seen
- the seven letters to the seven churches-the things which are in John's day until now
- the heavenly throne room and subsequent events-the things after this (after the churches)

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. **Revelation 6:1-2**

The first horse out of the gate is the *man of sin* riding the white horse. He seemingly takes advantage of a crisis already in progress. How long the crisis lasts between the Rapture and his arrival is unknown. We know that the actual 70th Week does not start at the Rapture, but with a covenant that is signed between Israel and the nations (Dan. 9:27) which he will ultimately violate halfway through. The *man of sin* will then become the *son of perdition* once Satan physically possesses him at the midway point. At present time, it is impossible for us to know who this man will be. We only know what the Bible says about him. However, his arrival likely comes at a point of great turmoil. So if the world's agenda is currently being hindered by God the Holy Spirit through the body of Christ on the earth, what does our removal then signify?

A total lack of restraint. Unchecked restraint will result in turmoil and conflict and crisis.

It should mean that the floodgates of hell are opened and there will be a short period of chaos immediately following the removal of the body of Christ (the Church) from the earth. This will force the power structures of the former world-order (pre-rapture) to realign themselves post-rapture. The old saying is that *nature abhors a vacuum*, and will fill itself with anything to avoid a vacuum. If the church's removal provides this vacuum, you can guarantee that something will fill this void. This is where I believe the *spirit of antichrist* becomes the strong delusion that sweeps over the world.

Logically what comes with turmoil and change, is conflict. If we look back at World War 1 or World War 2, we see that the geopolitical realities changed significantly before and after each of these events. After the Rapture will be no different. The world will be forced to realign itself. IF the US is not impacted at all by the Rapture, then the current power structure (or the world order) will not need to change. But we do see great change coming because the next horse unleashed is the rider on the red horse.

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Rev. 6:3-4

As I’ve stated in a previous brief’s, that any belief system outside of true, orthodox Christianity, is from Satan. While the varying religions and worldviews may have different angles, forms of worship, terminology, etc., they are all varying corruptions of the truth. The reality then is that there is only one God, who is expressed in three Persons, who are all of the same divine essence and being, co-equal in power, and willingly submitting to each other to eternally be in one accord, according to Scripture. Anything that deviates from that is from Satan.

In other words, it could have just as easily been Hinduism or Shintoism that was violently rampaging across the Middle East and Europe as it is Islam. Any view that is not true biblical Christianity, is fiercely (when confronted) opposed to the truth because of what it reveals about its corrupted nature. Without the Holy Spirit to keep the world at bay, the world will tear itself apart trying to establish a new dominant religious position.

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine. **Rev. 6:5-6**

When peace is taken from the earth, what naturally follows is economic disparity and starvation. The rich and powerful have the means to keep their wealth and sustenance, while the rest do not. With starvation comes death and pestilence.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. **Rev. 6:7-8**

The world population is currently at 7.5 billion people. While we can’t know the percentage of those taken up at the Rapture of the Church, we can know (roughly) how many perish during the first four Seal judgments. A fourth of that is around 1.875B people. This is an unprecedented number and aside from the Noahic flood, we don’t have anything else that can really compare to a number that large perishing in such a short period of time. That number alone will force major geopolitical alignments that will bring about the final world system headed by the Antichrist.

Conclusion

I think that the biblically reasonable answer to the question of whether the United States is in Bible prophecy is that we are, but not in the way we hoped or expected. Although we are not *Mystery Babylon*, we will be essential to its creation. Every gentile power that has come about ultimately befriends and then betrays either the nation of Israel (and Judah) or the Jewish people. The nations will have to answer for this as well (Matt. 25:31-46). After the Rapture, the US will cease to look or be anything of like what it is today. I expect the US to become exceedingly anti-Semitic much the same way Europe rapidly became anti-Semitic in the early 20th century.

The Jews will have to flee the United States back to Israel just as they did Europe between WWI and WWII. This is because the antichrist spirit will feed that supernatural hatred to a people who have been given over to a strong delusion. Satan's intent then is to gather the Jews into one place so to set a snare for destruction (Matt. 24:15-21, 2 Thess. 2:3-4). If Satan can destroy Israel, Jerusalem, the temple, and kill the Jews, then God's prophetic word will fail thus nullifying God's plan for Satan. At least, that is his plan it seems.

Likewise, if the US ceases to be the world superpower, some other nation(s) will rise up to fill that void such as the revived Roman Empire. What's left of the US will be incorporated into that final world system. Without the constraints of the Judeo-Christian constitution, the US will dissolve relatively quickly. It would seem that either some catastrophic event occurs before Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39), or after the Rapture, the US sees no intrinsic need to come to the aid of Israel. Either way, we are not willing to come to her aid.

The antichrist and the false prophet simply do not have enough time left to build the world forces it needs to dominate the planet in only seven years. They will have to rely on taking from what's left of the major world powers through some advanced digital system (AI perhaps) to impose its iron-fisted will over the entire planet. Granted, even that time will be very brief as the forces from the east will eventually rise up to challenge his (antichrist's) authority (Rev. 16:12).

Unfortunately, the US will be amongst the nations who finally assemble at the Valley of Megiddo and try to challenge the physical return of Jesus to the earth (Zech. 12:3). Their nations armies are quickly and effortlessly destroyed as Jesus brings His armies from heaven to watch Him single-handedly destroy the world's system (Dan. 2:44-45). Unlike earthly empires and kingdoms, Jesus does not have any weaknesses. He is the infinite source of all wealth, all power, and does not rely on consensus to conduct His will, because He and the Father, and the Spirit are One in purpose. To this, **Revelation 19:15-16** states-

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

Even so, *Maranatha!*

House of Cards

Although it could be said that the old *paradigms of power* are shifting, they could more aptly be described as crumbling. Powerful men and women in industries once thought untouchable, are now being exposed for a variety of crimes, hypocrisy, and corruption with increasing frequency. Terrible crimes done in the dark and behind the scenes, are now being brought to light with an uncomfortable doggedness that has the pillars of power shaking. If the powers that be are already in the process of falling apart, and we haven't even made it into the 70th week, how well do you reckon the US does once the Rapture takes place?

Hollywood is reeling (no pun intended) from the collapse of its once [powerful patriarchy](#) as victims of their sexual assaults are now coming out of the woodwork. Victims once intimidated into silence or paid off, are now speaking out and have a willing audience to listen. Their stories of abuse and cover-up by some of the most powerful, liberal progressives in the industry, make it doubly hypocritical as the Hollywood left overwhelmingly support Democrats who continually accuse Republicans of waging a 'war on women.' Yet, after a century of suffering in silence, many in Hollywood are finally now empowered to speak out at what really goes on behind the glitz and the glamour of tinsel-town.

The National Football League is still suffering from *low-rating and empty-stadium* [syndrome](#). Their unwillingness to rein in on-field political protests by pouty millionaires has seemingly turned the stomach of the average American. While not in complete collapse, it's been a downward trend for the past few years as more and more millennials become less and less enthused with football in general. If America had the time left, the NFL would be on life support within a decade, asking for their own bailouts from the federal government.

The Rock-n-Roll legends of the 20th century are markedly aged and dying off. What's left of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin, etc., are dried husks of men who used to be relevant. Rock stardom for that matter is no longer measured anymore by albums and tours but in downloadable "hit" songs. Another way to put that is that today's rock stars have a much shorter shelf life than at any time previous. Rapidly advancing technology is driving the world's entertainment platform, and as it continues to evolve, the movie and rock stars today, probably won't be tomorrow.

The self-righteous ones, such as [Bono](#), who has long preached to the world that we must do more to help the needy, are having their own financial secrets exposed for personally using island tax havens while their "charity" foundations give only a fraction to the actual charity. That fraction would be around 1% of all the funds they raise. But, Bono is probably not alone in this. Progressive movements are usually long on campaigning and short on actual giving. Not to single out Bono, but he's supposed to be one of the legit 'people's champion,' and even he can't stay pure.

For most of the year, Hollywood is taking a beating from a continual slump in ticket sales. A movie that costs \$50-100M to make, is lucky today to break even these days. With the exception of super-hero flicks from the likes of Marvel and D.C. Comics, most in the movie industry are

struggling. Television is contending with the likes of streaming services such as Netflix, Vudu, Hulu, and Amazon, and are not faring that much better.

On September 27th, 2017, Hugh Hefner, founder of Playboy and the last of the old-school 20th century hedonists, passed on into eternity. So intricately linked to the idea of hedonism was Hefner, that if there were a picture in the dictionary next to “20th-Century Hedonism,” it would have been his. Yet, for all of his decades of lavish parties, beautiful women, and high-rolling lifestyle, there was one passage of scripture that continually came to my mind...even before he died. Matthew 16:26 says *for what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

All in all, it seems that the age of entertainment royalty is coming to its own inglorious ending.

While it's easy to comment on the who's who of the American drama story, the entertainment and politics business have become accustomed to living in the limelight. What they don't like, is the spotlight. Los Angeles on the left coast used to wield significant cultural and popular sway, while Washington D.C. on the right coast makes the laws and steers the direction of the country. Democrat pundit Paul Begala once stated that *Washington is Hollywood for ugly people*. If true, then it seems the country is caged in on both coasts with people who are ugly both inside and out.

The D.C. swamp or deep state is the bureaucratic underground that supposedly keeps the centers of power going in our nations' capitol. These are the career politicians, the federal employees, lobbyists, political machinery for both Democrat and Republicans, retired generals, spooks, spies, and a million other entities that operate behind the scenes. A currency even more powerful than money, is influence and who has it. With decades and decades of power being built up, the swamp's worst nightmare is for someone like Donald Trump, a political outsider (or at least outside the Beltway), to come in and shake the rugs and open the curtains.

Political cronyism on the left is finally getting the lid pulled back to expose the rotting mold that undergirds the democrat party's platform. You can forget all the Trump-Russia collusion brouhaha, at worst Special Counsel Robert Mueller frames Robert Flynn and Paul Manafort for past crimes that will be unrelated to the campaign itself.

At best, Mueller could be being used to conduct a sting operation against the real colluders: the Podesta's, George Soros, the Clinton Crime Syndicate, along with the rest of the movers and shakers in those circles. Hard to say which way this is going at present, but it *seems* (and I use that word cautiously) that the swamp is vomiting up Hillary and the Podesta's as token sacrifices on the altar of political convenience. Old blood out, new blood in. Either way, their unwanted attention for past crimes and schemes at the very least, moves them having significant influence (Obama-esque), down to just marginal or negligible influence (Jimmy Carter-esque).

Wall Street is continuing its year of high riding earnings, yet we all know in the back of our minds that the law of gravity requires that what goes up, must come down. Will that mean a new depression or just a cascading financial collapse of certain industries? Whatever it is, you can bet that a new batch of bank executives will continue their Lemming-like plunge out of office

building windows for no apparent reason. What new bail out (if any) does the American public have to wait to swallow? Will President Trump be pressured to resuscitate some aging industry to keep America Great, or will he let nature take its course?

Numerous states are now seeking ways to [secede](#) from the union. States are seeking to break apart (California). Federal judges have now become activist judges seeking to stop any and everything President Trump is trying to do, regardless of legality. The US is facing more and diverse geopolitical and existential challenges than at any point in our history. The news can't be trusted. The politicians can't be trusted. Our military is overworked and underpaid. Our healthcare, national debt, and social security systems won't survive another ten years as is. The challenges seem insurmountable.

Conclusion

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **Luke 21:25-26**

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Revelation 13:1

So given what we know now at the end of 2017, what do we make of all this? The titans of American industry are falling like dominos. Our American constitutional federal republic way of life, with rich agriculture and booming industry, once so multifaceted and strong, now seems like a flimsy house of cards. Do these crumbling American strongholds strengthen Satan's agenda for global governance? Is it just a form of divine judgment coming upon our land? Or both?

According to Scripture (Daniel 9:26), a man known as *the prince who is to come* arises from somewhere within the confines of the old Roman Empire. At first, he will come on the scene as an insignificant person, but then he rises to power rather quickly (Daniel 7:8). He will be a deceiver and will mask his true intentions by pretending to be a deliverer and a great-peacemaker (Daniel 8:25, 9:27; Revelation 6:1-2), but ends up triggering global war (Rev. 6:3-4). From the beginning to the mid-point, he is the *man of lawlessness*. At the mid-point, he becomes indwelt by Satan himself and becomes the *son of perdition*.

If (not when) the old Roman Empire is to take the stage again as a global superpower, then that by necessity means the current superpower (the United States) must abdicate the throne. Could it be that our collapse comes as a necessity in order to allow the EU to fill the vacuum the demise of the US leaves behind? This isn't a new topic or even a new spin on old speculation, but it seems that the foundations of our global strength is cracking.

It is not clear what exactly causes the US to collapse (Rapture or some other cataclysmic event), something does. While the shuddering of the above industries doesn't pinpoint our demise specifically, neither does it strengthen the idea that the US is somehow *Mystery Babylon* or that we play some significant role in the last days. Our current state of affairs is most aptly aligned

with that of the Roman Empire circa [fifth century](#) AD. Our currency is depreciated (as was the Roman denarius), we have barbarians at the gates, and we are overcome with political intrigue, conspiracy, and corruption. But I'm not the only who sees this as a possibility. From [thenation.com](#) back in 2010;

As US power recedes, the past offers a spectrum of possibilities for a future world order. At one end of this spectrum, the rise of a new global superpower, however unlikely, cannot be ruled out. Yet both China and Russia evince self-referential cultures, recondite non-roman scripts, regional defense strategies, and underdeveloped legal systems, denying them key instruments for global dominion. At the moment then, no single superpower seems to be on the horizon likely to succeed the US.

In a dark, dystopian version of our global future, a coalition of transnational corporations, multilateral forces like NATO, and an international financial elite could conceivably forge a single, possibly unstable, supra-national nexus that would make it no longer meaningful to speak of national empires at all. While denationalized corporations and multinational elites would assumedly rule such a world from secure urban enclaves, the multitudes would be relegated to urban and rural wastelands.

Of interest is the idea (many were posited here) that a single, supranational government arises since neither China nor Russia seem capable at present. Not to say that either doesn't have the ambition, but neither lacks the ability to project their power like the US does. If a secular source cites the potential for a single world system coming online, then why are so many denominations and churches quick to dismiss Revelation 13 as allegory or spiritual metaphor?

While we can't know the specifics about what comes after the rapture, and how soon, we discuss, we share, we talk, we warn, and we plead with those who will not heed the message of turning and believing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ's and His soon return. Trust me, you do not want to be here one second after the Rapture.

Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. **Luke 21:36**

Heaven Can Wait?

Is the *Doctrine of Imminence* still relevant?

Part I

One would think that a key tenet of our faith in which all Christians could rally around, would be the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. After all, isn't that what it means to be Christian? Or do we profess faith in a God we have no desire to ever meet? As mind boggling as it may seem, there are large sections of professing Christians who do not teach, preach, write, or even talk about our Lord's soon return.

The conundrum in our current reality, is that our Lord's return has become a *controversial* and even *taboo* topic most churches refuse to discuss openly. This seeming hostility towards the Lord's return is not accidental though but by design. On the spectrum of things hated, Satan's hatred of this topic is infinitely more visceral than even the most diehard leftist liberal's hatred of President Trump.

So if we divide Eschatology (the study of last things) into two major sections, there would be the macro (large) view and the micro (small) view. One would think something as innocuous as the *doctrine of imminence* would be fairly non-controversial, given the abundant warnings laid out in Scripture to be ready. As is the situation with the macro-views of eschatology (Premillennial, Amillennial, and Post-Millennial), which divide over where Christ returns in relation to the Millennium, this doctrine of imminence most sharply divides amongst the micro-views within the Premillennial camp itself. It is the benchmark by which the Pre-Tribulation view distinguishes itself from the other premillennial rapture views such as Pre-Wrath, Mid-Trib, and Post-Tribulation Rapture. It is of imminence that the late Dr. John Walvoord writes,

The central feature of pretribulationism, the doctrine of imminency, is, however, a prominent feature of the doctrine of the early church ... [which] lived in constant expectation of the coming of the Lord for His church.

In his seminal research [article](#) speaking exhaustively about the issues surrounding the *doctrine of imminence* (i.e., any moment return of Christ at the Rapture), Dr. Gerald Stanton (contributing to the Pre-Trib Research Center) has done the yeoman's job of putting all the historical and current issues together of this topic. But because imminence is a pillar by which the Pre-Tribulation Rapture position distinguishes itself from other premillennial views, it has as of late, become controversial. To which, this article you now read will quote from research by Dr. Stanton for reference to compare. Quoting from the source document:

It is generally agreed that the Christian Church of the first three centuries was Premillennial, although the common term used was Chiliasm, from the Greek *chiliad* meaning "thousand." It is less clear when the concept of Christ's soon return was first explicitly stated as *imminent* which is a theological word rather than a Biblical. Richard Reiter has traced it to the Niagara Bible Conference of 1878, and more specifically to the five resolutions of the first general American Bible and prophetic conference held in New

York City the same year. Article 3 stated: "This second coming of the Lord is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as imminent, and may occur at any moment." [5] However, among the Niagara delegates arose three different definitions of *imminent* (1) Christ may appear at any moment, but this will be understood only by the final generation of the Church (A. J. Gordon). (2) Christ could return within the lifetime of any individual generation of believers (Samuel H. Kellogg). (3) "Imminent" requires "the coming of Christ *for* his saints as possible any hour" (Arthur T. Pierson).

I believe that we are most likely aligned to option number one and because of that, the concept of imminence went through roughly four stages:

Part I

- Post-Ascension Imminence
- True Imminence

Part II

- Transitional Imminence
- Limited Imminence

To be clear, I am not proposing that the four mentioned above change the capacity for Christ to have returned at any moment, but only in our understanding of it. Seeing as we are still here some two-thousand years after Christ's ascension, clearly, there is more to this topic than just simply labeling it *imminence* and moving on. I propose that if we break down these time periods, we should be able to better understand how imminence has impacted all the many generations since the time Christ walked the earth in His First Advent.

Post-Ascension Imminence: 33-100AD

After the resurrection and just prior to Christ's ascension, His disciples approached Him and asked if, at this time, He would now restore the Kingdom to Israel. They did not ask when the Rapture would occur, as that had not yet been revealed through the Apostle Paul. Christ's response to their question then was...

...It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **Acts 1:6-8**

At a minimum, Christ knew that His return would not precede the deliverance of *the Revelation* as given to John in 95AD which is why He addressed them as such in Acts 1. But from there, we also know that the Gospel did, in fact, begin to spread throughout the Roman Empire. It went as far East to India and China, and spread north and south of Judea both to the European and African continents. We also know that at the height of the Roman Empire, there were only around 200 million persons on the earth at that time.

The Apostles Peter, James, John, and Paul, along with Luke, Matthew, Mark, and Jude, contributed their writings under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to construct what we call the New Testament canon. Their expectation as believers in the first century was that since Christ

had been in their lifetime so too should they should expect to see His return. There are two considerations to this I would like to include in this discussion:

1. The New Testament was written by men under the influence and direction by the Holy Spirit. As such, their message was meant to be as applicable to their generation as it would be to any future one.
2. Their understanding, particularly Paul's, was such that he included himself in holding to the *blessed hope* of which was a new mystery being revealed, the Rapture (Harpazo-Greek) or *catching up* of the Church unto Christ.

But what wasn't known to them was what would be later revealed to the then, elderly and sole remaining Apostle, John, on the isle of Patmos in/around 95-96AD. What was revealed to John then was not even revealed to Christ in His humanity...namely, that *no man knows the day or hour, but the Father only*. To this, Clarence Larkin writes:

When Jesus was asked just before His death, when the things that He had prophesied against Jerusalem should come to pass (Mark 13:1-31), He replied in verse 32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, **neither (NOT YET) the Son, but the FATHER.**" But after His Ascension He received from the Father the information that the Disciples asked for, and before the close of the first century, while at least one of those Disciples was still living, the beloved John, He sent an angel messenger to impart to him, and through him to the Churches, the information that is "unveiled" in this Book of Revelation. Thus we see that the canon of Scripture would be incomplete without this message from Jesus to His Church after His return to Heaven. ([Source](#)) (Emphasis his)

Summary: Since their proximity in time to Christ and the events surrounding His crucifixion, resurrection, and conception of the church at Pentecost, it is only natural that they would cling tightly to the idea of a soon return of Christ. For example, our current generation is quickly passing away and those that lived through the atrocities of World War I and II, still remember in vivid detail the events of life during those times. But as their generation passes, the immediacy and first-hand knowledge of experience pass with it. As the memory of it fades, what remains is the writings and teachings that are continued long after the last eyewitness passes into eternity.

True Imminence: 100-1917 AD

From 100AD to the early 20th century, mankind truly had no idea of where they were on God's timeline. In 70AD, the Roman General Titus conquered and destroyed the city of Jerusalem along with its Jewish temple. In 135AD, the Roman Emperor Hadrian quelled another rebellion in what remained of Jerusalem, ushering in what we now call the *Diaspora*. Hadrian attempted to put the final nail in the coffin of the city, the people, and even the name of Israel. By the time John had been imprisoned on the isle of Patmos, Jerusalem as he had known it, hadn't existed for at least 25 years.

Seeing as he was there on the *Mount of Olives* when Jesus gave His discourse on the things to come, this destruction of Jerusalem wasn't a mystery to him. It may have been a shock perhaps

watching it unfold, but it was not a mystery since Jesus had already said it would happen (Matt. 23:37-24:2; Mark 13:23; Luke 19:41-44). But with John, the last of the apostles passing into eternity, the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem long since destroyed and the Jewish people scattered, the Gospel began to flourish amongst the gentile communities who had no historical connections to the land itself. They had no remembrance of Christ personally, nor even now the apostles who walked with Christ. What remained of them were the *disciples of the apostles* of whom would become the early church fathers.

As such, from 100-430AD, the early church was largely premillennial. It wouldn't be until Augustine's book, "The City of God" was published and became part of the theological foundation for the newly developing *Roman Catholic Church*. While it contained many things (it was twelve books) and dealt with a myriad of topics, the one that may have had the most and lasting impact was the idea of *Amillennialism*. This taught that there would be no physical return of Christ to the earth, but that His Kingdom was spiritual, it was now, and it was in heaven. This promoted among other things, spiritual triumphalism and the necessity for God to rule through men. Needless to say, this deadened the idea of imminence amongst the lay people and the clergy. They no longer looked for Christ to return but rather, that they would be part of building the kingdom here on earth. Aside from the license to do much wrong in the name of God (Crusades, Inquisitions, papal abuses, etc.), people truly were in the dark ages about understanding where they were on God's timeline.

These eschatological dark ages would continue even through the *Protestant Reformation* as these new movements simply carried over the same eschatological teachings they had received while under the Roman Catholic system. It wouldn't be until the late 1600-early 1700s that teachers, pastors and the like began openly preaching and teaching about the return of Christ. The same could be said for the early *Dispensationalist movement* amongst the Plymouth Brethren in the early 19th century. As men began to return to a literal interpretation of scripture instead of being filtered through a denominational creed or Roman Catholic lenses, men and women began to earnestly look for the return of Christ. They did this because that is what a literal interpretation of Scripture points one towards. At the same time, there was an explosion of false Christian cults, sects, and other movements exploding upon the scene. As soon as Dispensationalism began to grow, along comes Joseph Smith and his "Latter Day Saints", the Seventh Day Adventists (which came out of the Millerites), Christian Science, Jehovah Witnesses, etc.

Summary: The church had largely forgotten the relevance of Israel, and began changing their focus to a "kingdom now" mentality. Those combined obscured man's ability to know when and where they were on God's timeline. But as men and women began to return to a literal interpretation, the imminence factor began to come into play once again. Countering that, Satan introduces a flood of false teachings and movements to confuse mankind on just how close they were getting to the end.

To be continued.

Heaven Can Wait?

Does the *Doctrine of Imminence* Still Stand?

Part II

While it is sometimes difficult to discuss timelines with certain believers due to the sensitivity some have regarding our Lord's return, nevertheless, it is an important topic and one worth investigating. Understandably, the cause for said sensitivity is because many false teachers and "prophets" have gone out misleading many on when Christ would return only to have hearts and minds disillusioned and hopes dashed. The intent here is not to put a date on the calendar and say "He returns here!" but rather, to show that the window for our Lords return is rapidly closing. And because that window is rapidly closing, the concept of imminence is also shrinking. In other words, we are running out of reasons why we can't know. Again, no man knows the day or hour, but we will recognize the season.

The world may have entered into the modern age with its instant information and advancements in every field of science, medicine, travel, communications, and other technologies, but life here on earth has become more dystopic than utopic. The world may have improved technologically, but the Bible said that things would get worse, not better. In fact, more people have died in the last century, than all the previous twenty centuries combined. Since the Bible said that certain events would have to happen, scriptural logic leads one to understand that events rarely just happen instantaneously. There is an unfolding of related events which make something not only likely, but inevitable. For example it is unlikely that Israel would become a nation again without World War I and II happening. Could God have rebirthed Israel back into the table of nations without major global wars? Sure, but that is not how things have transpired.

With that stated up front, while we cannot know the day or hour, we can know the season. How long that season has been, is up for debate. It is at a minimum 70 years this year. We will have to wait and see how much longer things will play out.

Transitional Imminence: 1917-1948

Israel, as John Nelson Darby had taught it, was God's timepiece. If that is the case, then Israel's entire history going back to Abraham should be the most chronicled and detailed of any people who ever existed (it is). Darby's support for the return of the Jews back to what was then a province of the Ottoman Empire became influential amongst other Dispensationalists. Many of whom had come out of the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations to make up the Plymouth Brethren. Their influence in part helped later shape [Lord Balfour](#) to instruct England's position on the rightful return of the Jews back to what was then called Palestine. As World War I began drawing to a close, it was clear that the Ottoman Turks were in no position to continue to rule over the Middle East, thus European powers began to drawing lines in the sand to mark boundaries and set nations again.

With England's support for the now growing European Zionist movement, teachers and preachers of Dispensationalism were witnessing God's word being fulfilled. Men like C.I.

Scofield, [Clarence Larkin](#), and others wrote decades before 1948, that the Jews would be a nation again just as the Bible predicted it (Jeremiah 31:35-36, Ezekiel 37, Amos 9:15, Isaiah 2, 11), and so it was. This declaration encouraged and renewed the literal view of scriptural interpretation, and they began to understand that as Israel goes, so goes God's clock for the world. Watching the progress of Israel becoming a nation, meant to them that the *fullness of the Gentiles* and the *time of the Gentiles* would soon be drawing to a close. They didn't know when exactly, but they could see God moving people and nations according to His will and purposes to make this become a reality.

Limited Imminence: 1948-Present

While we will never know *the day or hour*, both Jesus and Paul instructed us to watch, be ready, and that we would know or recognize the season of His return. With Israel established as a nation again in 1948, we know without a shadow of a doubt that God has begun bringing mankind's run on this world to a close. Furthermore, we have the luxury of hindsight, so that we may look back upon history and archeology with the vast tools of the digital information age at our disposal. We can see and know with relative certainty, how the ages have unfolded.

Jesus's last teachings and instruction were given to John via an Angelic messenger, upon which had been given to him by Jesus, who had received it from the Father. Revelation 5:1-4 states that Christ was the only One worthy, either in heaven or on earth, and under the earth to open the scrolls that He took from the Father's hand. He was the only worthy One because He is both Man (a kinsman redeemer) and God. Fully man and fully God. This constitutes the book of the Revelation which firmly attached at the end of our Bibles as a bookend. In this Revelation, Jesus addressed *Seven Letters to Seven Churches*. We understand that these were real, literal, historical churches in what was then Asia-Minor in whom John was familiar too. We also know there are other applications in these letters because of how they are constructed and arranged.

- They were real, historical churches
- They had a corporate application (admonitory to all churches). He who hath an ear, let him hear...
- They had a singular and personal application (admonitory and challenge to the believer)
- The order of their arrangement had a prophetic application.

Let us say hypothetically that the letter to the church at *Laodicea* (still a real church at the same time as Ephesus or Smyrna) were placed anywhere other than at the end of the letters, then this prophetic application wouldn't make sense. But because it is at the end, we can see a progression that matches what we know from church history. The Church ages (or epochs) can clearly be seen when we review how Christendom has waxed and waned around the world over these last two thousand years.

Critics (Reformed and Covenant theology, Roman Catholics, liberals, cults, etc.) will argue that this couldn't be for x, y, z reasons. They are entitled to their opinions and equally entitled to be wrong. While it is not necessary to hold to Seven Letter-seven epochs as the gospel truth, it is

noted that throughout church history, one type of church tends to be the dominant face of Christendom. Now while the first three letters of Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum are believed to have passed, we know that church congregations around the world today are still under the thumb of persecution. So while this model works in some regards, it is not completely without question.

At the very least, the last four letters to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are all still in play. Since the 1960's, the West has rapidly moved into antichristian territory with the advent of the Sexual Revolution, the emergence of Eastern mysticism, embracement of socialism, and rapid increases in violence and the occult in entertainment. All of these have weakened societies around the world and have enforced a compromise-or-die type of mentality upon western churches in particular. Thus, we have the compromised church at the end, who is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm.

All that to say this, that if these churches are in fact chronicles heralding the stages the church would go through, then it is equally reasonable to assume that they had to play out first, in order for Christ to return for His church. It is not until the conclusion of this last Laodicean church, that John see's the door in heaven open, and hears a voice as a trumpet call from there "Come up here!", and thus the rest of the Revelation is viewed from heaven's perspective.

Conclusion

The idea that imminence can be said to be limited might sound odd to the reader, but what is implied is that our window for Christ's return is rapidly shrinking, thus limiting our concept of imminence being completely unknowable. We can't know the day or hour, but we will recognize the season. We know this because when Jesus gave His *Olivet Discourse*...He added a comment about convergence that matches up with the revelation that was given to Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and John.

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. So you also, when you see **all these things**, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. **Matthew 24:32-34**

We know from the rapid advancements in the past century with technology, communications, warfare, digital currencies, medicine, natural and manmade disasters, that it is quickly placing us in a time that matches exactly what is possible in the seven-year window known as *Daniel's 70th week*. That along with the geopolitical arrangements with nations aligning themselves as they are (EU, Russia, Iran, Turkey, etc.) these too also point toward the world in which final day events play out. On top of that, we see Christianity in the West failing in a variety of ways, primarily because they are willing to compromise on both the essentials and non-essentials in an attempt to remain relevant to cultures who are in their death throes. On top of all these, is the world's attempt to divide and destroy tiny Israel. All of these (a convergence) point to the conditions in which Jesus called a period 'birth pangs'.

As one with many children and having witnessed pregnancy many times, birth pangs do not go on forever...they will come to an end point, which results in the birth. This writer's belief is that while blind imminence may have been a valid assumption for the first portion of the last two millennia, it is quickly becoming something we can't hide behind for much longer. Too many events are pointing to too many signs for Christian's to simply shrug their shoulders' and say who knows or who cares? It should be a call for us to wake up and wake up our brothers and sisters in Christ and to put on a sense of urgency that our "blessed hope" is about to be realized.

Even so, Maranatha!

Everafter

I know I know...I'm supposed to write a Christmas article because it's the Monday before Christmas and that's what's on everyone's mind. And I will...I promise, but in more of a roundabout way. As ironic as it seems, in the season when everyone focuses on the birth that changed history forever, I find myself thinking about death.

According to the Bible, human beings can only exist in two states of being, either life or death (2 Cor. 5:6-8). But as Christians, we understand that death for the believer is not the end, but more like a stepping-off point where we enter into the real and infinitely more permanent state of existence. It is moving from one realm of existence into another without any hesitation or delay. In other words, death is not the termination of consciousness, but rather, an immediate transition from one reality to another separated only by a heartbeat.

For those of us who have lost someone close, understand, that their existence now is more real than ours is presently. They are in a greater state of being and consciousness than even the smartest person(s) who have ever lived in this life. They understand everything.

The world we live in was designed to accommodate our temporary existence. This means that the current world is also temporary and fading away (1 John 2:17). The world we enter into at death is permanent and eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18). So in one sense, our current world is very much like *the Matrix*, in that it is merely a copy or a façade of the corresponding spiritual reality. Our world and the next is not separated by distance, but by dimensionality. During certain periods of time, the veil between our world and the spiritual realm was either very thin or non-existent (ex. before Adam and Eve's fall). During other periods, the veil was impermeable and marked by its opaqueness. The Apostle Paul notes...

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. **1 Cor. 13:12**

Assessment

When someone passes away, the common and socially respectful thing to say in acknowledgment to that, is either "they're in a better place now" or "rest in peace." Truth be told, we don't know if either is true unless we knew whether that person was a born-again believer in Jesus Christ. We say what we say because it would be considered rude and inconsiderate to do otherwise.

It has become vogue in the military to respond with "till Valhalla" as a means to acknowledge a fellow soldiers' passing. They say that since Valhalla was the place (according to Nordic mythology) where warriors supposedly went to after they died. The trip to Valhalla required the winged-escort by the famed Valkyries (women warriors) to the great hall. The great hall was where the immortals joined the eternal party marked with copious amounts of drinking, fighting, revelry, and more drinking for all eternity.

From a purely fleshly standpoint, that sounds like a lot of fun.

But then I got to thinking...at what point, in that particular version of eternity, does Valhalla go from being fun to not being fun.

I mean, if you did the same thing over and over and over for all eternity....at what point does that become hell in and of itself? I mean, after a thousand years of fighting, drinking, and revelry, you've only just begun. Now repeat that same scenario times infinity, and I can't see how that remains interesting or entertaining unless you existed in some type of perpetual time-loop like the *Groundhog Day* movie.

The same could be said for Islam's version of the afterlife. On the surface, a *paradise world with 70 virgins* sounds fantastic? Especially if you grew up in the Middle East where all you knew was hot dusty deserts, fighting and violence, poverty, and brutality. But let's say for the sake of argument, even if their version of the afterlife were true, and each virgin was absolutely stunning, the food was the best eternity could offer, and the atmosphere was completely serene...at what point does even that Islamic paradise quit being fun? At what point does their version of paradise become hell?

Let's be honest, as sentient beings, we can't do the same thing over and over and over without repetition killing our enthusiasm.

Buddhism and Hinduism vary slightly as compared to the above scenarios because of their views on reincarnation, but the premise remains the same. If you keep having to come back to this reality to "get it right," at what point does that repetition turn into a living hell? Even if one made it into Nirvana and had complete enlightenment, and 'oneness' with the universe, at what point does even that become old, and eventually, torturous? After a million years? A hundred million years?

And yet, eternity drones on.

Likewise, Mormonism teaches a form of this for those who have dutifully followed the Mormon faith. Those who have, are promised to enter into the highest form of existence ([celestial](#)) where they are promised to be creators (and gods in their own right) with their own worlds. Now add infinity on to this. This creates a huge dilemma for the Mormon's, as they now have the conundrum of [eternal-progression](#), but I digress.

The reason I mention all of the above examples is that eternity is forever. I might have just sounded like *Captain Obvious* here, but we mortals have no real way of dealing with the topic of eternality since we can't fathom something existing without an end-point. We can't wrap our finite minds around the subject because it exceeds any known, tangible example we could render as comparable. Even to the most hardened atheist, the universe and all its mysteries had a beginning (i.e...the Big Bang) and will likewise have an end at some unknown future point.

Since we can't conceptualize eternity into anything tangible, we use analogies that help to understand the gravitas of the subject. Jack Kinsella once put it this way when speaking about the death of Osama Bin Laden.

Suppose a seagull were to take a grain of sand from the East Coast and drop it off on the West Coast. Every ten thousand years, our seagull would transport another grain of sand from the East Coast to the West Coast. When every grain of sand on every beach on the entire East Coast has been transferred to the West Coast (one grain at a time, every ten thousand years), Osama's eternity will be just getting started. [From Here to Eternity](#)

The Bible describes only two potential realities for those who enter into eternity. We either go to be with our Creator God, or we are separated from Him forever. Those who die without placing their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ's atoning work on the Cross will forever be separated from God (John 3:36, Hebrews 9:26-28). That might sound overly exclusive, but Jesus Himself said this of salvation, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* **John 14:6**

Truth be told, even if hell was not the biblical definition of a place where final judgment consisted of: Eternal separation from God, darkness, pain, fire, brimstone, lake of fire, etc., doing the same thing over and over for all eternity (no matter what it was) would inevitably become a living and torturous hell. This is why every religion and belief system apart from biblical Christianity, are equal in their inability to deal with the concept of eternity and the afterlife.

But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

1 Cor. 2:9

As one who personally saw it with his own eyes (2 Cor. 12:1-5), Paul had no way to put what he saw into words. This should validate and distinguish Christianity from any other, since only Christianity truly deals with man's inadequacy for dealing with something far outside his scope of comprehension. Furthermore, what Paul quotes here (Isaiah 64) still can only describe God's attributes in how it interacts with our physical world. In other words, as indescribable is God's Being is as a Being (He is the Becoming One), so too is the realm in which He physically dwells.

Conclusion

A popular misconception people have about heaven is that it will be one, long, extended church service. If that were true, even that would become hellish if we were allowed to retain who we are as sentient beings. Simply put, we weren't wired to do the same thing over and over forever. Will we worship in heaven? Absolutely. I'm sure even the most spirit-filled and inspiring worship we have here, will absolutely pale in comparison to the ones there. But I do not believe that is all there is to heaven.

We finite beings cannot comprehend the things which God has in store for our eternity-future, thus we default to compare it to what we think Christianity consists of today, which primarily centers on the church. Since the Bible acknowledges that we cannot comprehend heaven in any

meaningful sense, it is of comfort to me since anything we try and contribute to it simply can not do it justice.

Another popular misconception is to view all eternity in light of what the Bible says about the Kingdom Age (Isaiah 2, 11, 66, Rev. 20, etc.). The truth is, the Bible only hints at what is beyond the millennial (1,000 years) reign of Christ on the earth. Only Revelation chapters 21-22 mentions what comes AFTER the Kingdom (or Millennial) Age.

But if God was able to speak our universe into existence in a matter of days, how much more could He do in two-thousand years? Some will argue that to God, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years, a day (Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8), and thus it's only been two-thousand years (or two days) since Christ ascended. But Moses tells us in **Exodus 24:11** that God created our existence in six literal 24-hour days. If God used our measurement of time to show us how He did it, how much more could He do in two-thousand years (John 14:1-3)? After all, Our God is a Creator by His very nature. But not only is He a Creator, but also a Sustainer. Jesus is the *Word of God* and through Him, every molecule in the universe is held together by Him (Col. 1:27).

A Bit of Speculation

I think the problem we have with thinking that God can't create any new beings in eternity future, is since Christ has come once to pay for sins (Hebrews 9:26-28), any new sentient creations would be outside the realm of redemption. However, if Satan and his influencers were no longer a factor in corrupting said future-race, they may not need it. Free will (or what was allowed to us) may also not be available as it was for us in the future eternity. Those beings (if there are new beings) will have their own operating system they fall under, perhaps some perpetual state of innocence whereby we (the redeemed from our ages), were finally deemed worthy to co-rule with Christ in their future history.

Final Thought

Lastly, if we can fall so easily in love (or at least fascination) with the things of this life, how much more will we be when given glorified bodies that are the perfect, incorruptible, versions of ourselves that will never age, sicken, or die, all the while presiding with our God and Creator for all of eternity? This is the same God who left the glory of heaven and all of its indescribable attributes and wonders, to be born in a lowly manger, to an unknown family, with only the angels and a few shepherds as fanfare. He did all of that, so He could redeem us from being eternally separated from Himself. God is good.

So in that light, *Merry Christmas and Maranatha!*

East Meets West

21st century Americans don't give much thought to *Columbus Day* anymore. For many, it's just another federal holiday. Others as of late are highly offended by something that happened 525 years ago and yet, are only here to complain about it because of being direct beneficiaries of it.

On March 31st of 1492, the Catholic monarchs King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain issued the now infamous [*Alhambra Decree*](#). This decree (also called the decree of expulsion) set July of 1492 as the no-later-than date for Jews to be gone from Spain. Angered by false (albeit forced) conversions and centuries of Muslim domination of their Iberian Peninsula, the monarchs sought to solidify their control by ridding their empire of any non-Roman Catholics. Any Jews remaining after July, or anyone found sheltering them, risked having all their possessions and wealth confiscated by the state. Of note, the Spanish Inquisition was still in its infancy but would be remembered for its unjust imprisonments, unbelievably brutal torture methods, and being burnt at the stake.

But as July 1492 loomed, Sephardic Jews would once again find themselves being uprooted from their homes and moved away. The Old Testament prophets such as Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel recorded how their descendants would be a people scattered about the earth and on the move as a continuation of the divine chastisement for their disobedience. Thus, the entirety of the 1,878 years of Jewish Diaspora would be one marked by expulsion and exile.

Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. **Deuteronomy 28:64-65**

Yet, as if by divine providence, August 3rd of 1492 would be a day that would change the world forever. This was the day that an Italian (some say even Jewish) explorer named Christopher Columbus set sail to find a new western trade route to India. Christopher Columbus has since been largely hailed as opening up the New World to European colonization. It would seem, that the notoriously violent pagan empires of the Aztecs and Mayan's, finally got their own version of a comeuppance. Many disagree as to whether this was beneficial or not to the then-current inhabitants of the new continents, but regardless, we are here and that is history.

But as Spain, England, and other European and Middle Eastern nations were in varying stages of turning against their Jewish citizens, God was busy preparing another way. The America's would become a safe haven for the Jewish people for the next four centuries. Granted, it wasn't perfect, but we developed a Constitution based on Judeo-Christian ideals that offered Jews' about the best opportunity to thrive when the rest of the world was becoming overly Anti-Semitic.

Assessment

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. **Galatians 4:4-5**

Reading through the New Testament, we often get the picture that even though Rome was the overarching power structure of the day, it wasn't "that bad." The Romans brought in roads, aqueducts, a common language and currency, and relative stability. What we fail to see, is that for the previous three centuries, Rome was a steamroller busy conquering anyone and everyone they turned their iron-fisted gaze towards. At about the same time, there were more Jews living outside of Judah/Israel (according to Roman historian Theodor Mommsen) than there were inside its traditional, geographic boundaries.

Jewish populations still existed in Babylon, Asia-Minor, Alexandria, and other places that were under the Roman thumb. This is why during the major religious holidays such as Passover, Jerusalem would be filled to the brim with Jews from within the Empire. After Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, it was here that the disciples would take this message of the Gospel back with them to their homes once the feast date was over. This allowed the gospel to spread rapidly across the Roman Empire. Hence, 'at the fullness of times' means that this was the most advantageous time for God to share the message of salvation to the most amount of people.

So from 33AD until 70AD, Jerusalem was the theological center of Christianity. It was here also that the Christian faith was the most attacked. The tension for those subsequent decades after the Resurrection was increasingly palpable. It would eventually come to a head (not with Christians) but with Rome in which the reality would change. Rome began dealing with the revolt in 67AD and concluded with the siege of Jerusalem in 70AD. Flavius Josephus records that around a million Jews died as well as the Second Temple being destroyed in the siege by Roman General Titus. Another rebellion in 135AD cemented the Diaspora when then Emperor Hadrian forbade the Jews from returning to the land.

And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. **Luke 21:24**

The miraculous happened in June 1967 when "Six Day War" resulted in the Jews reuniting their capital city for the first time in almost 2,000 years. Having returned to the land in 1947, established as a nation in 1948, the Jews were reclaiming more and more of their ancient homeland with each subsequent war. We are again at a point in time when the Jews are the most militarily and economically powerful nations in the world. The United States, having been a safe haven for the Jews for the first four centuries of American history, and now Israel's greatest benefactor, seems to have run its course.

Conclusion

This author firmly believes that the rash of both natural and man-made disasters that have seemingly plagued the Trump Administration thus far is largely due to an un-kept promise that was made during the campaign trail of moving our embassy to the capital of Israel. Aside from an *Isaiah 17* or *Ezekiel 38* scenario, the next logical step in cementing Israel's bonafides is

having the most powerful nation in the world put her embassy in Israel's capital city of Jerusalem. This would seemingly squash any attempt to further divide the nation's capital once and for all.

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate. **Daniel 9:27**

However, we know that according to Scripture, there is a [man](#) coming who will ultimately enter into some kind of treaty not just with Israel, but with the 'many' (nations?) that presumably surrounds Israel. Whether the new temple is already standing at this point is up for much debate, but seeing as the nation of Israel (thanks to the Temple Mount Faithful and other groups) has everything pretty much ready to go. It would seem that all that needs to happen is the right crisis. That crisis could come in the form of war or something that removes the benefactor status away from the United States. That could be *the Rapture of the Church*, or we could suffer some major calamity that removes us from any significant role for the time being. Ultimately, the third Temple will stand again, and it will be here that this man Antichrist uses as a bargaining chip to put the Jews back in his crosshairs.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. **Zechariah 12:10**

The last seven years of Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy concludes as the seventieth. It is this week that God pours out His judgments on a Christ-rejecting world. 21-plus hellish judgments are unleashed upon the world, wiping out most of its seven billion inhabitants. Although most of the world is destroyed, God uses this as the chastisement to bring Israel [back to the point](#) that they finally realize that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ after all. As to the nations...

I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. **Joel 3:2**

But for all the travail and troubles the world has poured out on the Hebrews/Israelites/Jews over the course of man's history going back to Abraham, God will finally avenge in a single battle all the egregious crimes ever committed against her, particularly the hopeless times spent in exile, diaspora, and the holocaust. The Jew has survived because God is merciful and He keeps His word. And although God used Columbus to provide a safe-haven to His chosen people, the Jew, the ultimate 'east meets west' will come at Christ's Second Coming...

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. **Matthew 24:27**

Even So, Maranatha!

The Theory of Unity (E Pluribus Unum)

According to Revelation 13, the whole world will one day come under the authority of one man, one religion, and one economic system. We know the economic system is extremely successful because when it is destroyed in Revelation 18, the world is in deep mourning over it. But that scenario seems so distant from today's world. Currently, we are as divided a race as we have ever been. We are divided by country, culture, and ethnicity, economic, financial, religious and philosophical persuasions so vast it would be impossible to count. How does the world go from many diverse and divided nations to a world united under one system? Well, as Rahm Emmanuel once infamously quipped, *you never let a serious crisis go to waste*.

Political Entanglement

For the past forty years, the world has seemingly been on the edge of a perpetually changing global climate disaster. First, it was global freezing. Then it was global warming. Then, because the facts kept refuting the obvious, it just became the catch all *climate change*. The obvious truth now with hindsight is that the world powers (i.e....globalist organizations such as the United Nations and its subsidiaries) want total control and are willing to use climate change as that guise. They want global taxes on carbon output and stringent bureaucratic laws on virtually every industry.

They need a global crisis to implement sweeping changes in order to usurp national sovereignty. What is hampering them from this, of course, is its largest benefactor, the United States. Due to our Constitution, the US limits the amount of authority the politicians can hand over to another entity due primarily to its political checks and balances. So for the past 72 years, the world has been at an impasse for true global governance. In other words, as of right now, they have global governance in name only. I mean, who's afraid of seeing the light blue helmets of the United Nations troops show up anywhere?

So while the stalwart US remains reluctant to give up its sovereignty (this fluctuates between political administrations), the world is increasingly having problems that are "global" in nature. The problems seemingly demand global leadership. One of these "problems," is the Palestinian/Israeli "crisis" that has been ongoing now for the past forty years. The *land for peace* deals that began in 1977 with the Camp David Accords has been the unsolvable problem every president since Carter has tried to tackle...and failed. Hard to find a solution when one side (Israel) wants peace, the other side (Palestinians) wants Israel's destruction.

Economic Entanglement

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Rev. 13:16-18

But while current political power and authority may have been stalled over the issue of sovereignty, the economic markets have marched lock step into the each other's arms....becoming impossibly entangled in a web that has only become more interdependent since the advent of the *World Wide Web*. Almost every major business organization is international. All banking systems to one degree or another, have become transnational. Communication networks and their mediums have become global. The only thing that has not become international is the actual American government entities themselves...even though they have become increasingly beholden to global interest groups.

Economically speaking, the world is currently racing toward three technologies that will make a one world political and economic system possible. These are the things to watch for in the coming weeks, months, and years (if the Lord tarries).

1. [Quantum Computing](#). This will allow for the lightning quick speed and processing power required to handle the enormous amount of data it will be required to process and control all the information in the world. It also provides unbreakable encryption of data the likes the world has never seen. IBM, Google, the NSA, and other entities have made vast strides in developing this technology.
2. [Global Identification](#). The UN and other globalist groups have realized that there are too many people in the world without biometrically linked identification numbers. Enter [ID2020](#). This provides the platform and the framework for the creation of a global identification number for every person on the planet.
3. [Blockchain technology](#). The Blockchain is digitizing currency and increasing banking transactions at an incredible rate. But with advancements in quantum computing (which has could easily crack the security Blockchain provides), it is not a stretch to see how eventually the two technologies will be [combined](#) to provide an unbreakable financial system.

In summary, when you combine the three, you have the ability to secure encrypted data onto a microchip or possibly even into our DNA, which has the room, the power and security you (the consumer) would need to use in everyday life. Note the potential storage capacity of the human body:

Researchers at ETH Zurich, in Switzerland, believe the answer may lie in the data storage system that exists in every living cell: DNA. So compact and complex are its strands that just 1 gram of DNA is theoretically capable of containing all the data of internet giants such as Google and Facebook, with room to spare. In data storage terms, that gram would be capable of holding 455 exabytes, where one exabyte is equivalent to a billion gigabytes. ([Source](#))

All of your personal and financial data into a chip in your hand (or head) that will prevent identity theft, data hacking, and provide the ultimate in financial ease and security. As we see more frequently, companies both in the US and abroad are offering to chip their employees for varying reasons. While these current examples are not the “mark of the Beast,” they are however,

desensitizing the public for the general acceptance of what will eventually come. The same scoffers denote how no one will take this technology even if it does become available. But I offer an example of how quickly people will take it.

Imagine tomorrow that Jeff Bezos (Amazon CEO) offers anyone who switches exclusively to Amazon to purchase all of their material needs, could use his account so long as they were a US citizen and didn't purchase anything (non-perishable goods) from anyone else. How quickly would people abandon Target or Wal-Mart? Well, if Bezos had the ability to deliver the goods and not bankrupt himself in the process, he'd probably do it.

He could put much of his competition out of business relatively quickly. He'd also have to have a way to know if people were honoring their end of it. But people, predictably, would not spend their own money on things they could get for free at Amazon. Thus, he would have both the incentive of reward and risk (if violators shopped elsewhere) of losing their golden ticket.

I believe the "mark of the Beast" will operate in much the same fashion with one exception. There will be no other competitors. Everyone will use this system, so either you have it, or you starve and do without. Total loyalty is rewarded by usage of this new digital currency system that could be placed in the customer, who willingly sacrifices privacy for convenience. For those who resist, the option is death by execution or starvation. While this reality may not seem possible in our current day, all this technology needs, is the right crisis.

Assessment- The Perfect Global Crisis

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. **1 Thess. 4:16-18**

Skeptics of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture (both religious and secular) scoff and openly mock at the idea that we are in the last days. They look at the world the way it is today and see it as impossible. Yet, they forget that after the Rapture, Satan's attempts to unite the world under a single, global government will no longer be hampered by the [Restrainer](#). Going back to the days of Nimrod and the [Tower of Babel](#), Satan began to unite the world under a single system he controlled. He even attempted to get all of Christianity under one system (via the Roman Catholic Church) and used every attempt to include grafting in paganism, massacring non-Catholic converts (Lollards, Albigensians, Waldensians, etc.), the Crusades, and the Inquisitions. But God separated man at *Babel* and has kept the world divided on purpose to prevent this from being possible.

The fact that the world keeps perpetuating this false narrative of *land for peace* means that it will not concede to the existence of a Jewish state. It can't. The reborn nation of Israel is the [prophetic validation](#) of what was in Scripture for thousands of years. Yet, the Trump Administration has begun back door negotiations in the promise to finally break the impasse that has embroiled every political administration since Truman. How do you bring peace to a region that vehemently hates and wants to destroy Israel? While we may applaud our current

administration's attempts at finally bringing legitimate peace to a decades (really millennia) old problem, it cannot be solved until one final piece of the puzzle is brought to bear. That being the *Rapture of the Church*.

Whatever these problems are (economic, political, religious) and however insurmountable they seem at present, will quickly be set aside to deal with the almost instantaneous global realignment of power the world has ever seen immediately after the Rapture. Not only that, but the world will be given over to some form of delusion (2 Thess. 2:11-12), and they will be unified in this aberration. This lie (whatever it may be) will allow the world to set aside their differences just as it did briefly at the end of World Wars I and II.

For those nations who still aren't willing to join in the Rider on the White Horse's (Antichrist) peace agenda and crisis action plan, will suffer under the Red Horse's banner of war (**Revelation 6:1-4**). In other words, join peacefully, or you will be forced to on pain of death. I believe these two horses and their riders will act swiftly in the weeks and months after the Rapture. And they (White and Red) will bring further crisis to the world (enter the riders on the Black and Pale Horses) which serve to further solidify Satan's grip on a planet wracked with crisis. All told, a quarter of the world's population (we are [currently 7.5 billion](#)) will be killed by either the sword, famine, or pestilence.

Furthermore, what the Rapture does do is finally remove that decade's old benefactor from Israel's short list of allies. Because the *Rapture of the Church* removes Christians from the earth in a fraction of a second, the world will be reeling from the sudden shift in global dynamics. No longer will the US be the global super power it once was. Her economy will nose-dive overnight. Vacuums in leadership and expertise will be felt at every level of government and in the private sector. Even if 10% of the population were taken from the United States, that's still over 30 million citizens instantly removed from the political and economic infrastructure that have kept this nation afloat.

Even so, Maranatha!

Double Time

The three most dreaded words in the Army are, double time, March! For those not familiar with military drill and ceremony commands, this just means start running. Military folk has a far greater appreciation for and sensitivity to time in a way that most civilians cannot fully appreciate. For instance, if you're not ten minutes early to an event, you're late. If you have a formation at 0600 (depending on the level of formation-Division, Brigade, Battalion, Company) that really means you have to be there at 0530 (at the latest). Deployments? I think we invented the phrase "hurry up and wait."

Operationally speaking, success or failure is measured in successfully executing whatever it is you're doing at approximately T-Hour +/- 30 seconds. This becomes especially critical for those of us in MEDEVAC where we would get a mission over a radio, get dressed, get the mission briefing details, and get the aircraft ready, and launch within 15 minutes (or less)...at any time, day or night.

But I think the most significant differential between military and civilians, centers around lost time. If deployments have instilled anything in me in relation to time, it is to take advantage of the time you have with those you love. With your progeny, you will leave them as babies and come back to find toddlers. If you leave them as toddlers, you come back to kids. Leave them as kids, and you come back to tweens. Time tends to go by very fast when you're leaving every other year.

Assessment

But our God is the God of time. God created time when He put the firmament in place for man to use. (Gen. 1:14) Even more so, is the reality that because He created time, He is outside of the time-space continuum. Being outside of time, or rather, not constrained by it, means that He can see the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10) and already knows how this all plays out. Thus, when Jesus predicted the Temple would be destroyed (Matt. 23:37-24:3), He had already seen it happen and thus could declare with absolute certainty of its impending destruction. Of particular interest in His discourse on the Mt. of Olives, is the Parable of the Fig Tree. In this He says...

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (**Matt. 24:32**)

Numerous allusions and examples in both the Old and New Testament have alluded to the nation of Israel, as a fig tree. But only in one sense is this true as the late, great [Clarence Larkin](#) notes:

- ☐ THE VINE is a symbol of Israel's Spiritual privileges.
- ☐ THE FIG-TREE is a symbol of Israel's National privileges.
- ☐ THE OLIVE TREE is a symbol of Israel's Religious privileges

So it is in our time, that we have been privileged to see the fruits of the early Zionist movement bearing forth a nation, albeit not a particularly religious or spiritual one. (Ezek. 37:11)

33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (24:33)

Not only have we seen the nation of Israel restored to the table of nations, but considering all the other signs in conjunction to this, we who are watching sense this with ever greater intensity that the Lord is truly at the door!

34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Now to the truly puzzling part of the study. This generation will by no means pass away....to which scholar, student, preacher, and skeptic has either asked, tried to explain, or simply shrugged off at the conundrum the Bible presents-how long is a generation? Some say 30 years; other say 50. Some point to the part of the passage that says by no means pass away, as pertaining to the lifespan of a person. (**Ps. 90:10**)

Remember, before the 13th century, there were no chapter and verses in the Bible. The text that Matthew would have written originally would have all flowed together, so let us continue.

36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Clearly, Jesus knew that the timing surrounding His Second Coming was still far off into the future. He told His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and that takes time. (Matt. 28:19-20) As mentioned in last week’s brief, God uses time for many reasons, but one, in particular, is so that His enemy (Satan) cannot attempt to thwart God’s plans. I know what you’re saying in that God is God and Satan is not. He is simply a created being. Consider **1 Corinthians 2:6-8**

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

While God reveals things to His servants, prophets, and apostles, He hides His purposes from the enemy to frustrate any attempt at changing the narrative. Satan didn’t know that Christ came to die. Neither will he know exactly when Christ is returning for His Bride the Church at the Rapture. Also consider that God reveals things, not all at once, but incrementally, on a ‘need to know basis,’ at the appropriate time, to the appropriate audience.

The Rapture of the Church is not in view in the Olivet Discourse. Rather, the OD is a broad-brush overview, with a couple of specifics (v. 15 for example) to show the overall flow of events. Skeptics have long argued that there have always been wars, earthquakes, pestilences, etc. to be dismissive of Christ’s words here. But what they miss, is that Christ shows these things to be increasing like birth pangs, in size, frequency, and intensity.

Also, none of the disciples at this point (on the Mt. of Olives), Christ had not yet died and risen again, they had yet received the Holy Spirit’s permanent indwelling at Pentecost, and the church was not in view. Remember some of them were asking in **Acts 1:6-7**

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

Back to the OD, Jesus chose to keep it fairly generalized because Satan (or one of his minions) could have been ease dropping in on this conversation. Remember, this is a day before the Last Supper, so Judas Iscariot was still in their company.

But Jesus continues

37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be

I won't belabor the point pertaining to *the days of Noah and Lot*, only to say, that what Jesus hones in on, is the normalcy of everyday life. People weren't thinking about sudden destruction, and they were just going about their business of wickedness as if things would just continue forever. But speaking to the rapidity of which this will happen, when it happens, Christ continues...

Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Conclusion

Fair to say that given this warning, every generation for the past two thousand years has had cause to think they might be that generation. Only ours is the first generation since Christ uttered those words that have had Israel back in her land as a nation again. And things have been on overdrive (*double time!*) ever since. Our generation is the only one in which Israel has control of Jerusalem again. Is Israel the super-sign by which last-days prophecy hangs onto? I believe it is because the Bible teaches that. (**Gen. 13:15, 17:7-8; Isaiah 2, 11; Daniel 2, 9:24-27; Ezekiel 36-39; Zechariah 12, 14; Amos 9**)

I know many orthodox Jews do not believe coincidence or happenstance to be kosher. So is it coincidence that we have just lived through the last three [Jubilees](#) and watched God do amazing things pertaining to this tiny nation at each of the overlapping 50-year marks? Interesting also that Jubilees begins with a trumpet blast on the *Day of Atonement*.

□ 1897 (First Zionist Congress) until 1947 (UN approves Israel's statehood)
= 50 years (1 Jubilee)

□ 1917 (Balfour Declaration) until 1967 (Jews recapture Jerusalem in Six Day War)
= 50 years (1 Jubilee)

□ 1967 (Jerusalem) until 2017 (temple???)
= 50 years (1 Jubilee)

Some might argue that we could make the numbers mean whatever we want them to mean. Well, you really can't, unless you're into *revisionist history*. And we don't know what this year will bring, but if the pattern holds true, there are high hopes that this might yet be the year we see some significant prophetic movement. Consider the accompanying signs:

1. Trump (pro-Israel) was elected against all odds
2. Geopolitical alignment of Russia, Turkey, and Iran
3. Massive natural gas and mineral finds in Israel
4. Increase in natural and man-caused disasters
5. Technological breakthroughs in information, data collection, and weapons
6. Rapid development of genetic engineering
7. Collapse of the Christian-west, massive evangelism in the east again
8. Worldwide economic turmoil
9. Hostility towards all things Christian and Jewish
10. Population explosion in third world countries
11. Increase in supernatural phenomenon
12. Political instability due to war, terrorism, and violence

Seriously, the list could go on and on, but for brevity's sake, I'll keep it to just these twelve. From the time Noah exited the ark, until the 19th century, man was limited to the speed of horse. And in just these last 120 years, mankind has rapidly advanced on every front to feats never thought imaginable. I think those of us within the prophetic ranks have our priorities misaligned at times when talking to skeptics and naysayers. The argument these days shouldn't be us proving to them that we are in the last days, it should be them proving to us-we aren't.

Maranatha!

Coincidence, I Think Not

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places. **Ephesians 6:12**

The world is increasingly becoming unstable in virtually every sector. The world had been trending towards globalism since the end of World War II, but with the rise of fundamentalist Islam and human secularism, there has been pushback by way of nationalism and populism.

The *nationalist* movements seek to take back control of their nation-states from the global-elite who very much want to blur the borders, blur control, and blur sovereignty. *Populism* similarly, is an uprising from within a society, who want to take back their culture from something else that is high-jacking it. In our day, it is leftism (social justice, political correctness, socialism, identity politics, anti-Christian, etc.) and fundamentalist Islam that is actively and aggressively high-jacking our media, academia, and government.

Secular humanism is the general philosophy that seeks to replace the traditional underpinnings of Western society and values, with anything and everything other than that of the Judeo-Christian belief structure. I don't even think they care what replaces it, so long as it is not Christian. This is why they will tolerate the most intolerable of belief systems, Islam, but shun the grace and mercy of Christianity. This is the *spirit of antichrist*.

...and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. **1 John 4:3**

Assessment

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." **Revelation 12:12**

The reason we are seeing the ramped up turmoil in the world today is that Satan is sensing that he is losing all the momentum towards global governance he has gained over the last century. He is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, so he does not know how all this works out, except for what the Bible has already said about it. He does not know now when things will kick off, but he knows once the

Tribulation begins in earnest, he has a very short time. But until then, the timing remains the great unknown factor. So for him, there could be a year left, or hundred, which is why he always has to have a man waiting in the wings to take on the role of the Antichrist.

We (watching believers) sense that the time is soon because of all the converging signs that this current season is throwing at us, but we can't know the day or hour. But since Satan doesn't know either, he is forced to stir up all his anti-nationalist and anti-populist movements in the following places:

The United Kingdom, Greece, South Africa, the United States, France, Netherlands, Iraq, Russia, Ukraine, France, Mexico, Central America, the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia.

But Satan isn't just stirring up the nation and people groups; he is also using human institutions to do his bidding. The globalists (knowingly and unknowingly) have irrationally declared all-out war on President Trump and his nationalist/populist agenda. It is not that God needs Trump to make America great again, God is using this as a forcing function on Satan. In other words, God is forcing Satan to show his hand.

Whereas in the past, Satan's influence was like an undercurrent, corrupting everything that it touched. Now, Satan is being forced to overtly express his satanic agenda through the media, academia, and deep state agents who are actively creating a rebellion to thwart a return to a strong America. While the United States may not authoritatively rule the world, it is its greatest influencer.

The last thing Satan's globalist agenda needs is a strong, independent United States, bound under a Constitution created under the auspices of a Judeo-Christian worldview. Since the United States currently dominates the world militarily, economically, and politically, and influentially, as she goes, so goes the world. This struggle my friends is why we are at the escalation of the birth pangs. (Matt. 24:3-11)

Conclusion

Some things I have long pondered, and I keep finding myself returning too; specifically, the dates and numbers related to Scripture and prophetic events. I emailed Jack Kinsella about this back in 2013 I believe, of a revelation of sorts pertaining the Jubilees (although I hadn't linked the jubilees to the times yet). Needless to say, it has been on my mind now for a few years. Let me caveat this by

saying that God is not revealing new information to me because if that were the case, it would be equal to scripture. I believe that He (the Holy Spirit) impressed upon me to take heed to the significance of the dates and years as it pertains to Israel.

We know from other teachers (E.W. Bullinger, Clarence Larkin, etc.) that numbers have significance to them in scripture. Some put TOO much emphasis on them, while others NOT enough. I'm somewhere in the middle on this. I believe they are significant, but I don't think we can build a salvific doctrine off of it. With that said, I also don't believe in coincidence. I don't believe things happen randomly without God's say-so.

So let's take a look at some significant dates for Israel in the *post-Diaspora* era.

1897- First Zionist Congress convenes, led by Theodore Herzl. This was the first legitimate, political effort to get the Jewish movement back to the land of Israel.

1917-The Balfour Declaration was the first official act by the British, who were the current stewards of the land by mandate of the League of Nations. This defined territories and gave Jews the right to repatriate to what was then known as Palestine (former territory of the Ottoman Empire)

1947-November 29: United Nations Resolution 181 voted for allowing for the creation of a new Jewish State in their ancestral homelands

1948-May 14: Israel declares her independence

1967-June 7: Six-Day War begins when Israel is attacked simultaneously by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel defeats them, and gains back an undivided Jerusalem

1977-November: Some might ask what the significance of 1977 is. Well, unlike the popular notions that the Middle East **land for peace** initiatives began under Clinton, Rabin, and Arafat with the 1993 *Oslo Accords*, the actual process began in 1977-1978 with the [*Camp David Accords*](#). This included turning Jerusalem into an [international](#) city all three major faiths (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) could claim access too. We are at the very tail end of 40 years of this frustration, political machinations, and micro-wars. You could say it's been 40 years of testing for Israel (nationally speaking).

Two Points to Make

Here is why I think we are at the very cusp of the Rapture. I could be wrong, but let's say that the Rapture were not to happen for another 30 years. The further we move along in time, the more arbitrary and random the dates and times become. I understand Jesus said, the Lord cometh at an hour ye think not (Matt. 24:44), but historically and scripturally speaking, we know and read that God does not do things randomly (Galatians 4:4-5).

While the Church is not Israel, nor are we bound to her feasts and fate per se, I do believe that we are going to be used to bring about national Israel's tribulation and then redemption by way of the gatekeeper event known as the Rapture of the Church. Set aside the Church for a second, because we are neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new Creation in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

If there is anything we can take from Scripture, is that God has kept a very short, and tightly controlled leash on the nation of Israel. Furthermore, when Christ said that 'no man knoweth the day or hour,' He was speaking to specifics here. He could have said 'no man knoweth the year or even century of my return,' and that would be considered very broad in terms of time.

If I said, I would visit you at your house next Tuesday at 10 AM- that is a very specific time. If I said I was going to visit you this year- that is very broad in terms of time. So let us not make the mistake that we cannot know anything about anything about the time of the Lord's return. We cannot know the day or hour, but we should be able to recognize the season. (Mark 13:35-37; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; Rev. 3:3)

A principle worth mentioning here is the two witnesses. (2 Cor. 13:1-Paul quoting Deuteronomy 19:15)

This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.

Timeline

1) So from 1897 to 2017, it has been 120 years.

In **Genesis 6:3** (Concerning all mankind)

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

This could mean either that man's life would be no longer than 120 years (which Noah, Shem, Job, and Abraham are all apparent violations of), or that in 120 years, the judgment would come upon all mankind. I believe the latter explanation fits what transpired as a converging of events occurred: Methuselah dies at the age of 969 years the same year that Noah turns 600 years old, which was the same year that the flood (judgment) came.

2) From 1917 to 2017, it has been 100 years.

In **Genesis 15:12-16** (Concerning future Israel)

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

Here we have God prophesying over an unconscious Abraham, that in 400 years (four generations), his descendants would be in bondage. But in the fourth generation, they would be delivered. This is where we are dealing with a generation being 100 years long.

3) From 1947 to 2017, it has been 70 years (represents both judgment and fulfillment)

In **Jeremiah 25:11-12** (In relation to the Jews in Judaea)

And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy** years. 'Then it will come to pass, when **seventy** years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

Their enslavement by the Babylonians for exactly 70 years, was punishment and payment for idolatry and the 70 Sabbath years they had violated in the land of Israel. (Lev. 25:1-19; 2 Chron. 36:20-21; Jer. 25:8-12)

In **Daniel 9:24-27** (to the Jewish people and Jerusalem)

“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy...

We know the 70 Weeks are weeks of years. Genesis 29:18-28 validates the use of this as a means of measurement for time. $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. We know that 483 of those years were completed with Christ's death on the cross (Dan 9:26). This leaves one final week (7 years) to be completed. This final week though does not begin at the Rapture, but at the confirmation of a covenant between Israel, the Antichrist, and the many nations around her (Dan. 9:27). This further develops the idea that the Antichrist comes with a deceptive peace initiative that he fully plans to violate at a future point (Rev. 6's *rider on the white horse*; Dan. 7's *small horn*, Daniel 8's *little horn*, and Daniel 11's *willful king*)

4) From 1967 to 2017, it has been **50 years**

In **Leviticus 25:8-12** (50 equals Jubilee concerning Israel)

‘And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.

And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

5) From 1977 to 2017, it has been **40 years** (Judgment, testing)

Genesis 7:4 (concerning the world)

For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.”

Also: Exodus 16:35 (Israelites wandered in the desert 40 years), Goliath taunts Israel for 40 days (1st Sam. 17:16, Elijah fasted (1st Kings 19:8), Jesus temptation 40 days and nights (Luke 4)

In summary

1897-2017= 120 years

1917-2017= 100 years

1947-2017= 70 years

1967-2017= 50 years

1977-2017= 40 years

Do you see the narrowing window this is becoming? Is it coincidence that so many significant, well-established biblical numbers all align with 2017? I cannot say with 100% certainty that it is, because I can't see the future. But I worship the Lord our God, and He can. Is it a coincidence that all these align significantly with Israel? God could have reestablished Israel as a nation back in 1732, or 1849. Why 1947? Why did God set Trump to be the 45th president of the United States right at the end of these 40 years? God moves with purpose, and I am sure that this will all work out according to His will, and His plan.

I am not planting my battle flag on this particular hill and saying that something will definitively happen in 2017. At the same time, I do not want to be dismissive of them either. The Lord put these things on my mind years ago, before I was even knowledgeable about them so He must have had His reasons. He could return tomorrow. He could return 3 months from now. Or 100 years from now. But do the dates and spread of numbers (years) all just seem like some kind of random, cosmic joke, or perhaps some monumental coincidence? I think not.

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.

Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you... “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” **Rev. 3:3, 6**

Bend Until it Breaks

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these *times of ignorance* God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” **Acts 17:26-31**

Addressing the Greeks at Mar’s Hill in Athens, the Apostle Paul begins his discussion by complimenting (in a way) how religious these stoics, Epicureans, and philosophers were, even going so far as to dedicate an altar to “the unknown god.” Of note in this section of Scripture, is a phrase that Paul identified as the ‘times of ignorance,’ which God *overlooked*. While Paul doesn’t specifically state which times these were, one could assume he was referring to the antediluvian period before Noah’s flood, and also to those pagan civilizations since who believed in a “great spirit” in the sky, or some universal force, but had no way to conceptualize it since they had no frame of reference to do so.

But note also that God no longer “winks” at this ignorance as something He will ignore or let slide any longer. Because the Law was given to Israel and also the prophets, through whom God spoke. Through Israel came the Messiah who fulfilled both the Law and the prophecies concerning Himself, He now commands all men to repent because judgment is coming. And we can know judgment is coming, because God raised this Man Christ Jesus from the grave.

It was during these *times of ignorance* that came the bedrock all future lies would build upon. These lies were and are foundational to all false philosophies, false religions, and false ideologies that still plague mankind to this day. These lies intentionally create a false narrative in regards to the nature of both God and Man. These are:

- Man can become like God
- Man is inherently good
- If there was a God, He has long since abandoned us

All of these promote several false narratives, chief of which, states or implies that man has the potential to work his way back to redemption of his own accord. But we know according to Scripture, that we have all fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and even our very best is not good enough to meet God’s perfect standard of righteousness. While this thinking may have been excusable in those *times of ignorance*, mankind (for at least the last two thousand years) has had no excuse. But if that is the case, then how does these lies from the pit of hell, keep finding its way back into the psyche of each and every subsequent generation? But first...

If we were to demonstrate man's righteousness on an X-Y graph, the vertical Y-axis would equal the height of man's perfection, and the horizontal X-axis would equal time from left to right. What that would look like would be a reverse hockey stick. The immediate downward trajectory began at the fall of Adam and Eve from their created state of innocence, and represents mankind's ever-increasing appetite for violence and depravity. Each succeeding generation adopts and builds upon the failures of the previous' one's.

Invariably, every society, kingdom, empire, and nation that has ever existed has always moved along this same path without exception. That is because all of the aforementioned are filled with people, and people are filled with sin. Without divine intervention, sin always corrupts and destroys.

Man's sin is like a genetic error that keeps reappearing in the family tree. At its core lies the idea that we don't need God. This becomes something our adversary the Devil masterfully and dutifully repackages and regurgitates on a regular basis. Every religion, ideology, philosophy, and worldview that teaches redemption apart from Jesus Christ, is antichrist at the core and is anathema.

...and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. **1 John 4:3**

The *spirit of antichrist* is one which can mean either against, or in place of Christ. It seeks to replace our one and only Savior (John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:5) with one more amenable and palatable to man's darkened heart. We know one day that this *spirit of antichrist* will be personified into a single person, the Antichrist, and he will embody the totality of evil. If you think about all the depravity and wickedness in the world today, and imagine it being embodied into a single person, you would have the Antichrist. No wonder he is called the *son of perdition*, and the *man of lawlessness*.

But as man continues to pursue wickedness in an ever increasing capacity, the world continually sinks lower and lower to find a savior who embraces (and even encourages) man's sinful state. (See for [example](#)) But in man's descent arises another idea. If man can be like God, shouldn't man also be the arbiter of his own morality? The most recent examples we have seen of this is human secularism, and it has tainted every fabric of our society. Is it any wonder that we are having the issues we are today? *And every man did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25).

But sin, specifically in regards to false ideologies and philosophies, always starts off as an idea in a person's mind. That idea most likely had demonic influence applied to said person. He or she then starts off debating this idea (Marxism or Darwinism for example) amongst his or her peers. Because humanism appeals to man's basest nature, it is not difficult to get followers. But this humanistic philosophy doesn't just stay in ideological circles. Soon enough, it gains traction and begins to bleed over into academia, entertainment, religion, sexuality, and finally family. The family unit is the basic building block of any civilization. Once that foundation is cracked, said empire, nation, and kingdom are doomed. Tragically, we are witnessing probably the greatest

assault on truth, Christianity, sexuality, gender identity, marriage, and family the world has ever seen.

Well there was this one time before...*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Gen. 6:5).

Assessment

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **Luke 17:26-30**

I know there is already a lot of commentary on ‘the days of Noah and Lot’ out in the ether sphere. I don’t think I’m adding anything significant to the collective group-think for *remnant believers* (as Jan Markell would call us) on this topic. What I would add though, is that all cultures/societies/civilizations have a breaking point. Every nation and empire has a point of no-return. Sometimes these breaking points are determined by metrics measuring birth/death ratios. For example, if a nation drops below the 2:1 birth to death ratio, the survival of said nation may be at significant risk. If births drops below 1.7:1, a nation’s ability to survive becomes unrecoverable.

Other less tangible things may also be used as a metric...such as morality (or what a nation deems as morally acceptable) may point to its demise. For example, the Third Reich legally and culturally pushed Anti-Semitism to the point to where they arrived at *the Final Solution*. So bad was this destination that even to this day, some 70 years later the swastika is still reviled as one of the most evil symbols ever devised, because of what it once represented.

There is another metric though, and that is the divine one. After committing the blasphemy of desecrating the temple “vessels”, God’s handwriting appeared on the wall of Belshazzar’s courtroom. So shaken was he at witnessing this, that scripture records that not only would his knees not stop shaking, and his loins were loosed. King Belshazzar was instructed to bring in the now elderly Daniel, who explains both the words and the meanings behind them. He (and the Babylonian leadership) were weighed and found wanting, meaning that his kingdom would be taken from him that very night, when the Medes and Persians infiltrated Babylon-proper and killed the royals. You can read the full story at Daniel 5.

And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN

This *is* the interpretation of *each* word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” **Daniel 5:25-28**

Anne Graham Lotz and others have pointed out, that we are a nation under judgment. If that is true, what is the handwriting on the walls for us? Scripture doesn't give one specific, but many. Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilence, so on and so forth. These weren't mentioned for their peculiarity, but for their frequency and severity. In other words, the sign of the times would be when we see all these things rapidly occur, and to greater and greater damage. It can be shown statistically that both the severity, frequency, diversity of earthquakes has been hidden by agencies like NOAA (interesting irony) and the USGS. That's why we're getting earthquakes and volcanic activity in places we once considered 'dead' or 'inactive.'

The Pneumonic plague has reared its head again. Ebola and the Marburg viruses are also coming back with a fierceness. In fact, many of the more common viruses are becoming resistant to antibiotics. There is more famine today in a wider variety of places than ever before. Not necessarily because of lack of rain, but socialist governments mismanagement of its natural resources. Take Mao Tse Tung's "Great Leap Forward" where upwards of 60 million Chinese starved to death. The millions who starved in the 1990's in North Korea. Or those today in southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and other African nations are suffering. Things have gotten so bad in Venezuela, that the Maduro government has instructed people to eat their pets.

Is it war? We currently have around 17 active hot spots today globally, with dozens more waiting to happen. We have regional powers acting like terrorist organizations (North Korea, Iran, and Lebanon). But these regional powers, are backed by global powers (Russia, China) who actions/reactions threaten to destabilize the entire world.

Economically we have stressed our financial systems with massive national debt. This impacts sovereignty, stable currencies, stock markets, and inflation.

The two primary differences in our day vs. Noah's day, is that we have the technological and biological means to wipe out most of humanity ourselves. The proverbial bell was rung when we entered into the Atomic Age. We can't undo that. We can't undo the development and proliferation of chemical and biological Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). We can't undo the internet or computers. We have crossed too many red-lines technologically speaking, in regards to, quantum physics, genetics, and artificial intelligence that can't be undone. The state we are at now, is one where man is found at his most dangerous. This primarily because not only have we created the most dangerous weapons mankind has ever known, but we also lack the moral and ethical foundations to govern ourselves ethically.

Are we in the days of Noah? I would absolutely yes. We will, as God put it, only go so far though. He gave mankind then 120 years. Ironically, it's been a 120 years since 1897, when God began stirring the Jews to leave Europe and get back to their ancient homeland. Will we get more time? Unknown.

How far will this prophetic rubber band bend, before it breaks?

An Hour You Think Not

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, **when** will these things be? And **what** *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:1-3

One of the most common rebukes used to discourage people from studying prophecy or the *Rapture of the Church* is a passage taken from Jesus in the *Olivet Discourse*. In **Matthew 24:36**, Jesus states *but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*. On the surface, it appears that Jesus was trying to dissuade His disciples from trying figure out when exactly all these fantastical things He had just shared with them would occur. Yet, if Jesus was really trying to dissuade them from knowing, why explain in such great detail all the things He does concerning the original three questions they asked?

At the time of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus had not been arrested, tried, crucified, or resurrected so even the events surrounding even that very week was not fully clear to the disciples. At His arrest, the disciples scattered, Peter would go on to deny Christ three times, and they would watch in agony as their Messiah is publically and humiliatingly nailed to a cross. Even after His resurrection and subsequent forty days amongst them, the disciples were still in confusion as to what was to happen next.

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **Acts 1:6-8**

Assessment

We have the luxury today of reading all these events in our neatly chaptered and versed Bibles with a great deal of theological, historical, and archeological hindsight. We often read into the text this idea that the disciples should have known what was is clearly plain to us. They did not have a New Testament explaining all this to them. It would not be for some time after Christ ascended in which these future things would be revealed to them.

After Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit was now showing the Apostles all the things, which would take place for them then and in the days to come. This knowledge was not all given to Peter or James, but to each according to their ministry and to what God wanted them to know at the appropriate time. It was to the Apostle Paul that Christ revealed the mystery of this [new creation](#) known as the Church. Pulling from an ever growing Gentile audience and consisting of both Jew and Gentile converts, the Church would become in Christ neither Jew nor Gentile. The Church

would become a hybrid and unique entity conceived at Pentecost by the giving of the Holy Spirit and would continue to grow until some future point when the *fullness of the Gentiles* is complete.

God's mechanism for transferring His attention and purposes from the Church back to Israel, is known as [*the Rapture of the Church*](#). This event accomplishes several things, the first of which is fulfilling a promise Christ made to them (and us) in the *Upper Room Discourse* (**John 14:1-3**). That if He went away (He did), that He would return and take us to be where He is (He will). Then God would return His focus solely back upon the nation of Israel to finish that final week of *Daniel's Seventy Weeks* of which He determined ([*chathak*](#)) to them that He would complete the six items listed below.

- "Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
(1) To finish the transgression,
(2) To make an end of sins,
(3) To make reconciliation for iniquity,
(4) To bring in everlasting righteousness,
(5) To seal up vision and prophecy,
(6) And to anoint the Most Holy. **Dan. 9:24** (emphasis mine)

These things HAVE to happen. As mentioned in my article last week, God does not shrink away from revealing specific things to us and for us. On one hand, we have God revealing via the Angel Gabriel to Daniel the exact timing of Christ's *First Advent* to the earth as the God-Man. This ended exactly at the 69th week with the Messiah being cut off. On the other, what is not revealed to Daniel (or later to the disciples), is the 2,000-year gap in time we now refer to as *the Church Age* or the *Dispensation of Grace*. This is a unique time for a body of believers from every tribe, tongue, and nation who are brought into the singularly corporate body of Christ. This global drawing is what Paul referred to as *the fullness of the Gentiles* in **Romans 11:25**. It is a summation of what Jesus stated in two passages within Matthew's gospel.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and *then the end will come*. **Matthew 24:14**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age*." Amen. **Matt. 28:17-19**

Having now two thousand years of church history behind us, we can see with crystal-clear clarity that the Gospel has indeed gone out into all the nations. This is not to say that the Gospel has been embraced by every nation and taken root, but you can bet there are believers in every nation on earth and believers of every major tribe and tongue. This is why Satan has worked so diligently to blanket the earth with as many antichristian governments and religions as possible (e.g....Communism, Islam, atheism, etc.).

However, this brings me back to the original issue regarding **Matthew 24:36**; can we know when Christ will return at His Second Advent?

- The answer absolutely yes. It will be seven years from the start of that final 70th Week.
- What we cannot know is when that final week will start. That final week will not commence until after the Church is removed at the Rapture. The Rapture is indirectly tied to *the covenant* by way of sequential events. The Rapture will trigger the geopolitical reordering of the power on earth, allowing a covenant to be made at a future point by Israel with the many (Dan. 9:27).

Both the Church and subsequently the Church Age were a mystery both to Daniel and the other Old Testament Prophets as well as to the disciples. The disciples, as mentioned previously, asked Christ when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. They were still thinking in terms of the Old Testament prophecies and promises, which had been made to Israel. It would not be until the Apostle Paul later reveals that the Church has a different timeline and destiny than that of national Israel. Speaking to the believers at the church at Ephesus Paul writes...

...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. **Eph.1:9-10**

Paul had shared with the church in Rome...

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. **Romans 11:25**

Conclusion

We cannot know the day or hour of the Rapture simply because the Church as an extension of Christ Himself (we are His body), adopted heirs, and an object of His affection will continue to grow and mature until this *fullness of the Gentiles* comes to a culmination point. Will that culmination point be in 2017? It might be...but I do not know for certain. However, I do believe 2017 will be significant to Israel if the historical pattern holds true (1897, 1917, 1947, 1967, 1977, and 1987). [[As it turns out, it was!](#)]

This *fullness of the Gentiles* serves as a bookend of sorts, capping the age of the church from Pentecost until Rapture. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to earth in spectacular fashion ([Acts. 2:1-4](#)). At the Rapture, those Spirit-sealed believers are also removed from the earth in spectacular fashion (**Ephesians 1:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51-55**).

The Church is the singular, corporate, multi-membered *body of Christ*. I am not saying that no other person (Jew or Gentile) will be saved after the Rapture. We know that they do according to **Rev. 6:9-11** amongst other Revelation passages. In truth, the Gospel will continue into the Tribulation by the 144,000 Jewish male virgins and with the angelic proclamations in the Heavens (**Rev. 14:6-7**), but those who come to faith after the Rapture are not *Church-Age saints*.

Some might argue this point, but considering all the variations, we plainly see within humanity, within the angelic ranks, and within creation itself, speaks volumes to the idea that within the redeemed, there is also variation and distinctions. The Church-Age saints are as distinct from the Old Testament saints (or pre-Christ saints), as they will be from the post-Rapture saints. The main distinction itself coming from the knowledge of Christ. The OT Saints knew a Messiah would come, but they did not know exactly who, when, or how. They had faith that One would come and this time of waiting was completed with John the Baptist.

You yourselves bear me witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but *I must* decrease. **John 3:28-30**

The Church's knowledge of Christ and His first coming but were not eyewitnesses to it (except for those in Christ's day). We have to take things by faith and by God's word.

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed." **John 20:29**

Those who come to faith after the Rapture will be plunged into the darkest period of human history replete with supernatural signs, wonders, and judgments, as well as having witnessed the Rapture event itself. This *fullness of the Gentiles* is not to be confused with the *times of the Gentiles* which does not find its completion until the end of the seven-year Tribulation (**Luke 21:24**).

Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you **know** that summer *is* near. So you also, when you see all these things, **know** that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. **Matt. 24:32-36** (emphasis mine)

We often get hung up with the identity of the fig tree. But whether we attribute it to the nation of Israel (Judges 9:10-11; Jeremiah 24:1-10; Hosea 9:10; Mark 11:12-14; etc.), or not, we understand the intent of the parable. Christ said when its branch has become tender and puts forth leaves, *you know that summer is near*. He didn't say you may know, or you might know, but He said, you know.

Christ spent His precious time and energy conveying to His disciples (and to us) these signs of the times so that we will know that the season is near, even at the doors! If 2017 holds true to historical patterns, then something significant should happen as it regards to Israel (i.e...the fig tree). That means God is getting ready to conclude this current Church Age, and return His focus back to the nation of Israel. He did not bring her back out of national extinction and diaspora, to continue on indefinitely with her and the Church Age overlapping. That overlap will come to an end just as it did before and He will finish what He started with her regarding Daniel's 70 Weeks.

Like a countdown, we have seen 120, 100, 70, 50, 40, and 30 year-markers as well as three Jubilee cycles (two of which overlap) happening in the same period of time. Perhaps 2017 does come and go without a peep and we are still here. At this point, then I would really be looking up. Either 2017 comes and goes, or we do, but ***therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect*** (Matt. 24:44).

Originally written for the Omega Letter on May 14th, 2017.

A Little Leaven...

A believer moves through three stages in life: salvation (a one-time event), sanctification (a life-long event), and glorification (a permanent event). Satan actively attacks all three of these areas to either prevent a person from hearing the truth to become saved or by perverting the truth to keep a believer's growth in Christ stunted.

The best tactical strategy an adversary could ever have is to keep his enemy in a state of both confusion and disarray. We know that Satan (i.e., the adversary) has used this strategy of corruption generously over the course of human history. When he was not able to outright crush Israel or the Church, he chose a more subtle method. Corruption came in the form of idolatry, false religious practices, religiosity, pseudo, heretical, and apostate variations of the truth.

In reading the Old Testament (OT), we see that the Israelites struggled with these issues since the time of their deliverance during the Exodus. Likewise, the Church has had to deal with the following spiritual corruption over the past two thousand years via pseudo-Christian cults, heretical and apostate teachings, Judaizers, Eastern-Mysticism, Emergent movements, Seeker-Friendly, Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Prosperity and Social Gospels and so forth. But most of these error-laden movements are fairly obvious to anyone who actually reads their Bibles. These primarily impact issues surrounding salvation.

What is not so obvious are the stealth movements within orthodox Christianity. These are movements within Christendom that target born-again Christians already, and then seek to thwart or stunt their understanding of salvation, sanctification, and glorification. Some of these traditions and teachings were simply products of the times in which they lived. These are they which seem correct at a glance, but upon further review fall apart when put in context of the entirety of Scripture.

These are ones that tend to introduce ideas and teachings either exploiting gray areas within Scripture or misconstrue doctrines by over/under-emphasizing certain areas. By gray, I mean those areas that on the surface do not clarify positions with extreme clarity. These are Calvinism, Replacement Theology, Covenant Theology, Hebrew Roots, Lordship Salvation, and the eschatological positions of Amillennialism, Post-Millennialism, Historic Pre-Millennialism, Mid-Tribulation, Pre-Wrath Rapture, Dominionism, and Post-Tribulation Rapture.

All stealth movements find their strength in either teaching half-measures or by introducing non-biblically sourced creeds, opinions, theories, and dogmas (reinforcing the errors) to uninformed students. Half-measures would be teachings that are correct on certain points, but either questionable or incorrect in many others. Covenant theology, for example, theorizes that God had a work covenant with Adam in the Garden pre-fall. Yet, the word covenant is never used until Genesis 6 when God pronounced one with Noah and his family...some 1650 years after the Garden. Thus, Covenant theology inserts this non-existent idea into Scripture (eisegesis) to support its claim of validity.

The theological terms, Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace, do not occur in Scripture. If they are to be sustained it must be wholly apart from Biblical authority.

What is known as Covenant Theology builds its structure on these two covenants and is, at least, a recognition--though inadequate--of the truth that the creature has responsibility toward his Creator. Covenant Theology has Cocceius (1603-1669) as its chief exponent. "He taught that before the Fall, as much as after it, the relation between God and man was a covenant. The first was a Covenant of Works. For this was substituted, after the Fall, the Covenant of Grace..." Upon this human invention of two covenants, Reformed Theology has largely been constructed. Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, Volume IV (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948) p. 156

If one wanted to support a Hebrew Roots position for example, then one must extensively twist Paul's teachings to attempt to force the Pauline Epistles to say what they clearly do not. Paul battled extensively with the Judaizers who were attempting to reintroduce the tenets of the Mosaic Law back into the Church. Galatians and Hebrews are books which speak extensively against adding the law back into faith. Yet, Hebrew Roots groups either dismiss Paul's writings, or they twist his teachings.

If one wanted to promote Five-Point Calvinism, then one over-emphasizes predestination while simultaneously downplaying free will. Thus, overemphasizing predestination as a foregone conclusion quells the spirit of evangelism for many. Worse still, the unnecessary Calvinism vs. Arminianism debate has divided the church for centuries. All of the aforementioned views, either recognizable or stealth, focus only on the parts and not the sum of Scripture.

Eschatology

Satan has been particularly effective in twisting Christian eschatology over the past three millennia, so much so, that the Jews did not even recognize their Messiah when He was standing in their midst (Matt. 16:1-4). First and foremost, a good general (or leader) does not lay out His battles plans clearly so that the enemy can anticipate them. This is why Christ's first coming was both explained yet hidden within the passages of the Old Testament. We know in hindsight and with help by the Holy Spirit that Christ would:

- Be born of a virgin (Gen. 3:15; Isaiah 7:13-14)
- When He would come (Daniel 9:24-27)
- Be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- Confound the wise (Psalm 78:2-4, Isaiah 6:9-10)
- Would be rejected by His people (Isaiah 53:3)
- Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13)
- Become the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:5-12)
- Be crucified (at least 500 years before crucifixion was invented) (Psalm 22)
- Be crucified with criminals (Isaiah 53:12)
- His bones would not be broken (Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20)

- His hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10)
- Would rise again (Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10, 49:15)

But even with all this laid out in the Old Testament, neither Satan nor the Jewish and Roman authorities of Christ's day could figure out what exactly had to transpire in order for Him to fulfill His role as the Messiah.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **1 Cor. 2:6-8**

Assessment

So knowing the overall picture, how do the aforementioned cults, pseudo-Christian and stealth movement's maneuver through Scripture to draw away converts unto themselves? In part, they do so by ignoring the whole by favoring particular parts. This is akin to snake-handling churches exclusively focusing on passages like **Mark 16:17-18** and **Acts 28:2-5**, or churches that teach baptismal regeneration who primarily focus on **Acts 2:38** and **Romans 6:3** regardless of context and excluding what the rest of the Bible has to say about salvation. They also teach half-truths or add in extra-biblical doctrines, creeds, and dogmas that detract from the truth through the lens of men's opinions.

Some might posit why I included teachings like Calvinism or Amillennialism as stealth teachings and regard them in a negative light? Calvinism, like Roman Catholicism, has many devout believers under their umbrellas. It's not the believers I am attacking, but the system by which they promulgate. It is unnecessary and unbiblical.

As the Apostle Paul succinctly stated, a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6). Leaven, in context, is not the physical leaven which causes bread to rise, but false teachings that Jesus alluded to as the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:5-12). In regards to Christianity (post-death, burial, and resurrection), the aforementioned religions, sects, movements, and beliefs that either add to or take away from the simplicity of the Gospel, become in effect, no Gospel at all (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-5).

So what did they teach? The Pharisees taught blind, external obedience to the Law of Moses, plus what they added in (i.e....traditions of men) as fences around the Law. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels, the spirit, and resurrection. Relatively speaking, both of these views could be seen as extremes on a spectrum of what constitutes a biblical faith.

On one end of the spectrum, you had a view that promoted militant obedience to the Law, missing the intent of the Law for the letter of it.

On the other end, you had almost a complete dismissal of the supernatural nature of our faith.

Pharisees

Is the Law of no effect to the Christian? Yes and no. Were it not for the Law, we would not know we need a Savior. At the same time, if one IS a born-again Christian, then the law is of no effect, neither saving nor perfecting what Christ has already completed through the perfect gift of eternal life through His sacrifice at Calvary. Thus keeping the law (post-salvation) is much like paying on a house you have already paid off. So any religion or belief system that states you must do X, Y, Z in order to be saved, BEYOND placing your faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for Salvation, is NO Gospel at all. Don't take my word for it, what does the Bible say?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **John 3:16**

...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **Romans 10:9-10**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Sadducees

Like the Sadducees of old, any religion that denies the supernatural nature of our faith, our Scripture, and our God, is a dead religion. It might be a moral one, and it might be beautiful in its observances and rituals, but it's as dead as the dinosaurs. If one denies the resurrection, then one could never be a Christian as Paul astutely observes (1 Cor. 15:12-14). We see this denial of a supernatural faith particularly evident in regards to eschatology. One might view an eschatological view as irrelevant to one's salvific state (to which I agree), but the wrong eschatological view can be very damaging to one's sanctification and one's discernment.

For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. **Acts 20:27-30**

...Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. **2 Peter 1:20-21**

...Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. **Rev. 19:10**

Conclusion

So why do I seemingly always harp on bad eschatology? Well, a false eschatology does one of three things to a believer: It promotes apathy (or lethargy), undue fear (fight or flight response), or false triumphalism (which ultimately leads to disillusionment). How can a Christian mature in the faith if one's view of how things end is clearly wrong and/or misguided? As we are now at

the end of this age, it is harder and harder for believers to hold on to the truth, when that truth is continually painted as subjective or unknowable.

Why does it matter what my "eschatological" position is, or whether I am a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 Point Calvinist? Who cares if the Church replaces Israel? So what that certain well-known evangelist promotes Lordship Salvation? People today will say "why make major issues out of minor ones?" Shouldn't we as Augustine once stated, practice in essentials, unity, in doubtful matters, liberty?

You could hold to Augustine's philosophy if you never wanted to mature in the faith, or as a body of mature believers effectively working toward the same ends...which of course is the Great Commission. Churches divide over interpretations, and these interpretations are almost always unnecessary deviations from what the Bible actually teaches.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

My argument isn't just about salvation, but sanctification. How do we grow IN Christ? What is the end state for the believer? Are we just to be content with milk and never move onto meat? Granted there are no perfect Biblical hermeneutics, theologies or theologians on this side of the veil (1 Cor. 13:12). That is not an excuse but a reality. But our imperfection and shortsightedness are not licensed to add or subtract from the totality of God's word.

Furthermore, how (like the parable of the sower and the seed) do we expect those who received salvation to become fruit-bearing believers beyond salvation if they can't grow deep roots? You grow them with solid, well-rounded, BIBLICAL teachings that do not hold back the whole counsel of God but teaches it in due measure as determined not by men, but by the Holy Spirit. Having a proper understanding of soteriology is as important for the believer as is a proper understanding of ecclesiology or eschatology. A little leaven in one doctrine soon comes to corrupt them all. All these doctrines (when properly understood) effectively balance and build upon each other to make a well-rounded, well-grounded, mature believer in Christ for the sole purpose of becoming who God intended us to become...

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. **Ephesians 4:11-15**

A Game of Thrones

After eight painful years of democrats running Washington D.C., and by extension, large portions of the world, November 8th, 2016 will forever be branded in their minds as an American version of “[Nakba Day](#).” This *day of calamity* has engendered much angst, aggression, and vitriol because it caught them completely unaware. All the “experts” had Hillary Clinton enthroned as president with electoral landslide. This is because liberals in media, academia, and Hollywood had become so entrenched and brainwashed with their own propaganda that they truly believed their reign of power would never come to an end.

This level of complete disconnect from reality, really only has two examples that even quantify as comparable in recent times: Adolph Hitler’s belief that he could usher in a 1,000 year Reich, and our modern-day North Korean propagandists promoting Kim Jong Un as a demi-god. Unfortunately for most of American, liberal angst and disillusionment do not remain shuttered in safe-spaces very long. It is seething and seething leads to violence, and violence to lawlessness. And because their political losses were so massive, the lefts’ only options remaining are either outright civil war or *death by a thousand cuts*. It should be no surprise that no US President has ever been more grateful to trade in the blistering political intrigue of D.C., for the blistering Saudi Arabian summer heat as President Trump is.

As noted author and professor, Victor Davis Hanson rightfully stated in a recent television interview, this [relentless and vitriolic onslaught](#) on the President (and anyone associated with him) as a *slow-motion coup*. It is open and active attacks are meant to derail and dethrone the current US President by any means necessary. In other words, it is active political warfare meant to override the results of the election by other means.

Unfortunately, Pres. Trump has almost as many enemies on the right, as he does on the left. Fair to say when you threaten to *drain the swamp*, it rattles all the cages. Entrenched power (right or left) does not go quietly into the night. Liberals, globalists, and socialists despise the restraints put on power by the Constitution and have been trying to usurp it for the better part of two centuries. If Obama was meant to be the death-stroke to the Constitution, then Hillary was certainly meant to be the nail in its coffin. Trump’s victory thus derailed all that and has rattled the doors to the very *gates of hell* itself, awakening a dark and angry spirit.

Assessment

Although the current political and intrigue might seem unprecedented, it was, however, not unforeseen. God has already seen how this plays out and as One who appoints kings and kingdoms (Daniel 2:20-22), this is working out exactly according to His plans and His purposes. Trump was meant to win at this particular point in history. I believe that while we don’t/can’t know the plans and purposes exactly, we can make some interesting observations about the signs of the times.

As mentioned in previous briefs, I believe that in dealing with the nation of Israel, God has used times and patterns in time to draw attention to their unique role they play on the world's stage. God seemingly dealt with Israel in times past in reoccurring [490-year cycles](#). The last (Daniel's 70 Weeks) has one remaining *week of years* left to finish. Although I am not a prophet nor omniscient, I can read what God's word has to say and apply a little bit of geopolitical common sense to our current day and age to forecast likely outcomes. A recap:

- 1897-2017=**120 years**, First Zionist Congress convenes
- 1917-2017=**100 years**, *Balfour Declaration*
- 1947-2017=**70 years**, UN Partition Plan approved on 29 November 1947. Israel waits till May 14th, 1948 to declare statehood triggering first Arab-Israeli War.
- 1967-2017=**50 years**, Israel regains all of Jerusalem back in *Six Day War*
- 1977-2017=**40 years**, beginning of "Land for Peace" with the [Camp David Accords](#)
- 1987-2017=**30 years**, *Temple Mount Institute* founded

Let's say hypothetically that all of these numbers and their alignment with biblical patterns are completely coincidental. Let's say that I and others are just reading way too much into 2017 this year is no more significant to Israel than 2013 was. How much longer then, does the nation of Israel share the same global stage as the universal body of Christ (i.e., the Church)? If we look back at the first century, Israel and the Church only overlapped by 37-38 years roughly. We know God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9), so perhaps that explains why we are approaching 70 years this time around. So the two things we can know for certain is that Daniel's 70th Week will play out exactly according to Scripture, and the Church is not destined to be on the earth when this does happen. (1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 5:1-11, Revelation 3:10)

Puzzling Pieces

It is interesting that we see Donald Trump shock the world by taking the highest office of the most powerful nation on earth in the 40th year after the beginning of the *Camp David Accords*. As you know, the Camp David Accords began a 40-year unicorn-hunt trying to find this ever-elusive peace deal. The only problem with any Arab-Israeli peace deal is that it's hard to have real peace with a group of people who have sworn to annihilate you and drive you off into the ocean. Thus, the West (the EU and US) have only ever become increasingly drunken with political blindness that they could divide and parcel out Jerusalem to whomever they chose and peace would ensue (Zech. 12:2-3).

I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. **Joel 3:2**

Trump has called the Israeli-Palestinian peace deal the [ultimate](#) deal he'd love to broker. But he's also stated that any peace deal, ultimately, has to be one that both the Israelis and Palestinians unequivocally supports. His Jewish son in law [Jared Kushner](#), along with his daughter Ivanka, are set to play central roles in any future peace deal. Part of this deal is making the Sunni Arabs happy by ensuring their own continued authority in a region racked by upheaval and coup d'états

thanks in part to Obama's [Arab Spring](#). Trump is set to openly endorse (a US first) the creation of an Arab [NATO](#), which is designed specifically to counter terrorism and the growing Iranian threat of destabilization across the Middle East. This, of course, will have the unintended (or perhaps intended) consequence of driving Iran further into Russia's bearish arms. This will naturally draw in another Middle East outcast, *Erdogan's Caliphate* (formerly known as Turkey), and any other nation too destabilized to muster a proper army. I am looking at you Sudan and Libya!

Any student of the Bible already knows where this article is headed. [Ezekiel 38-39](#) is a prophecy about a coming war (never been fulfilled) in which an alliance of nations come against Israel in the last days called the [battle of Gog and Magog](#). The nations mentioned for sure are Libya (Phut), Sudan/Somalia (Cush), and Iran (Persia). Other nations we can be fairly certain of through historical references look an awful lot like Russia and Turkey. A wise old man once said, "If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck." We see in the Middle East a resurgent Iran, aligned tightly with a resurgent Russia, and drawing in an angry Turkey (see the reference back to ducks).

In this war, the modern day equivalents of Europe (merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof) and Saudi Arabia (Sheba and Dedan) do not side with Israel, but merely lodge a complaint at this gross example of wanton violence committed by Gog and Magog's coalition. If the Arab's were to form a NATO-type organization, and they are only slightly more inclined to be friendly to Israel as they would be Russia/Iran alliance...how does that old saying go "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake" (Napoleon Bonaparte)...what do they have to lose? The answer: nothing. They're letting one enemy fight another while it weakens both.

As crazy as we may like to think Russia, Turkey, and Iran might be, they will not make a military move like that so long as the United States remains firmly entrenched in Israel's good graces (or vice-versa). Something has to sideline the United States first and potentially make it so that the EU has no time or taste for action in regards to coming to Israel's aid. To be fair, the EU doesn't have much military muscle, to begin with, so without US backing, the EU could not march off for another Holy Land Crusade even if it wanted too.

So the real question is, what sidelines the United States from backing one of our strongest allies?

Two of the most likely courses of action could come in the form of some type of economic-Armageddon which makes it impossible for the US to act even if it wanted too. Or it could be *the [Rapture of the Church](#)*, which would at the very least, decimate the US's ability to project military power abroad by instantly removing millions of people from the United States, thus throwing the nation into massive turmoil. Strategically speaking, having a lot of born-again Christians in a nation is not geopolitically good for that nation as we draw near the end. Which is perhaps why we see the aggressiveness of the antichrist spirit infecting every aspect of American life.

[Psalm 2](#) notes that the leaders of the world are actively working against God and His Anointed (Jesus Christ). We see the United Nations and almost every government ignoring the persecution of Christians worldwide, and also working to divide and diminish Israel. The last days according

to the Bible are replete with passages which speak to two basic categories: increased evil and violence and that all the nations of the world will come against Israel. We need only look around today to see a world embroiled in violence and wickedness. We need to look no further than the United Nations, EU, and former US administration's continued assault against Israel's existence. Setting aside the time-date "coincidences" of the last 120 years, IF these are not the tell-tale signs of the very last minutes of the last hour, I do not know what is. But God does. And God looks at man's scheming and machinations, of setting up thrones made of crumbly sand and HE laughs. A frightening thought indeed.

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
"Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
"Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion."

Even so, ***Maranatha!***